

# Word Play – which word do you use?

**Regularly posted Word Play tips will look at words that are often used incorrectly.**

## Word Play Tip #2: Practice or practise?

Australian and British English distinguish between usage of this word as a noun (practice) or a verb (practise). As a noun, 'practice' is a tangible thing, like a table is a tangible thing; for example you visit your doctor at his/her medical practice and go to football practice. A process, a habit or a routine (or similar) could be standard practice, world's best practice, usual practice or customary practice.

As a verb, 'practise' is about activity that attaches to a subject (e.g. I, He, They). "I practise my ball skills at football practice." "My mother practises witchcraft in her spare time." "How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practise, practise, practise!"

### Tips:

- How to remember the noun/verb versions? 'Ice' is a thing, a noun, so 'practice' is the noun.
- People practise things, often to get better at them (sports, skills).
- People practise activities associated with a custom, craft, profession or religion ("My doctor practises Chinese medicine", "John is a practising Muslim.")
- It is ALWAYS practising or practised, NEVER practicing or practiced.
- 'Practice' as a noun can have a plural ("The doctor owns three medical practices", "This business has several customary practices.")
- The use of 'practise' or 'practices' is determined by the number of people/ things in the subject of the sentence – one or more than one: "John [singular subject] practises his guitar skills every day" or "Wendy and Anne [more than one in subject] practise singing together twice a week."
- US English uses 'practice' in all instances, so Carnegie Hall is reached through "Practice, practice, practice." (Also practiced, practicing.)

## Word Play Tip #1: issue or edition?

In publications, an 'issue' is a discrete output, say, the January issue of a magazine. An 'edition' is when that January issue comes out in two or more versions, such as an Australian edition and a US edition.

Daily newspapers generally come out in editions; the newspaper published on 10 January 2011 may have come out in first, second and third editions (or more), with content changes between each one. (Editions are used to make corrections, to insert new stories or to include or update breaking news stories without halting production or disrupting distribution.)

Books also can be published in editions (you may see 2nd edition, 3rd edition on the imprint page), which denotes significant content changes over the earlier version.

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