

## Th- Words for English Language Learners

When words look alike, it is easy to mix up their meanings. Many words in English begin with th- but have very different meanings and uses. Here are some common ways to use these th- words:

Word	How to use it	Example
<b>the</b> (adjective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use it to mark certain nouns (both singular and plural) when they are specific or already known.</li> <li>Use it to mark a unique natural object.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The</u> cat we found is yellow and brown.  <u>The</u> cats we found seem to be siblings.  <u>The</u> men have already moved <u>the</u> furniture.  <u>The</u> sun is the center of our solar system.</p>
<b>this</b> (adjective or pronoun)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use it before a singular or non-count noun to indicate something you've already mentioned, or to emphasize it, if it is nearby.</li> <li>Use it to replace the noun.</li> </ul>	<p><u>This</u> book is my favorite one.  <u>This</u> water is cold.  <u>This</u> is my car; <u>that</u> one over there is his.  <u>This</u> is my favorite.</p>
<b>these</b> (adjective or pronoun)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use it like the plural of <i>this</i> before a plural noun.</li> <li>Use it to replace a plural noun.</li> </ul>	<p><u>These</u> books are my favorite ones.  <u>These</u> parking spaces are for motorcycles; <u>those</u> are for staff.  <u>These</u> are for motorcycles.</p>
<b>that</b> (adjective or pronoun)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use it before a singular or non-count noun to indicate something you've already mentioned, or to emphasize it if it is not nearby.</li> <li>Use it to indicate something distant.</li> <li>Use it to replace a singular noun.</li> </ul>	<p><u>That</u> book was already checked out.  Put <u>that</u> milk in the refrigerator.</p> <p><u>This</u> is his car; <u>that</u> car over there is mine.  <u>That</u> was already completed.</p>
<b>those</b> (adjective or pronoun)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use it like the plural of <i>that</i> before a plural noun.</li> <li>Use it to replace a plural noun.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Those</u> books were already checked out.  <u>Those</u> were already checked out.</p>
<b>than</b> (conjunction)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use it to compare two things.</li> <li>Use it in preferences to mark the thing you <i>don't</i> prefer.</li> </ul>	<p>You are taller <u>than</u> he is.  I'd rather drink water <u>than</u> soda.</p>
<b>then</b> (adverb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use it to indicate time, that something occurs after something else.</li> </ul>	<p>First I'll finish my homework; <u>then</u> we can go to the movies.</p>
<b>their</b> (adjective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use it to show plural possession or ownership.</li> </ul>	<p>We'll stop at <u>their</u> house first.</p>
<b>there</b> (adverb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use it to indicate "at that place" or "to that place."</li> <li>Use it to begin certain sentences and expressions (the subject and verb change to different positions).</li> </ul>	<p>We camp <u>there</u> every July; we go <u>there</u> to fish.  <u>There</u> are a lot of people waiting in line.  <u>There</u> is no good reason for him to be late.</p>
<b>they</b> (pronoun)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use it to replace a plural noun that functions as the subject of a sentence.</li> </ul>	<p><u>They</u> [Rina and Steven] will help us move in March.</p>
<b>them</b> (pronoun)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use it to replace a plural noun functioning as an object (direct object, indirect object, or object of a preposition) in a sentence.</li> </ul>	<p>We'll help <u>them</u> [Steven and Rina] move soon.  She'll give <u>them</u> the rental forms <u>then</u>.  Your help means a lot to <u>them</u>.</p>

Contributed by Rosemary McKeever

