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Word Of The Day

refractor

A *refractor* is a kind of lens that bends light to form a focused image. A telescope that uses this type of lens to bring distant objects into view is also known as a *refractor*.

The word *refractor* comes from *refract*, "to break or bend the natural course." In the case of a telescope, it's light that's being refracted, or bent, as it passes through a lens. A second lens magnifies the image, making it possible to see distant stars and planets. Today, most large telescopes used by astronomers to see very distant objects are reflecting telescopes that use mirrors rather than refractors.

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A comprehensive guide to correct word choice

scrimp / skimp

These words are two sides of the same coin: ways to get more or to make something go further. One side is about saving; the other is about spending less.

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prescribe / proscribe

Warning! These similar sounding words have very different meanings. To *prescribe* is to recommend and to *proscribe* is to forbid. One little letter makes a big difference.

amoral / immoral

Both have to do with right and wrong, but *amoral* means having no sense of either, like a fish, but the evil *immoral* describes someone who knows the difference, doesn't care, and says "mwah ha ha" while twirling a mustache.

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correlation* / *corollary

A *correlation* is exactly what it sounds like: a *co-relation*, or relationship — like the *correlation* between early birds waking up and the sun rising. But *corollary* is more like a consequence, like the *corollary* of the rooster crowing because you smacked it in the beak. Both words love the math lab but can hang with the rest of us, too.

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conscious* / *conscience

Both words have to do with the mind, but it's more important to be *conscious*, or awake, than *conscience*, or aware of right and wrong. Remain *conscious* while listening to your friend's moral dilemma so you can use your *conscience* to give good advice.

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wave* / *waive

To *wave* is to move to and fro, like when you wave your hand. Hello there! To *waive*, with a sneaky "i," is to give up your right to do something.

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Finally, a dictionary with a soul



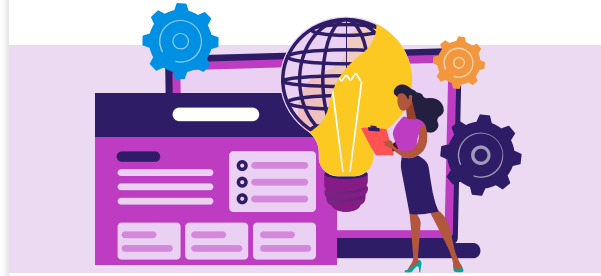
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