BBC Learning English
Q and A of the Week 你问我答
Electric and electrical
两词区别

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Neil: Hello, I'm Neil. Welcome to Question and Answer of the week.

Feifei: 大家好，我是冯菲菲。在《你问我答》节目中我们会回答你在英语学习中遇到的语法和词汇问题。Today's question is from Wang Ying.

Question

Hello, my name is Wang Ying, I'm from Ningbo. I'm always confused about adjectives like 'electric' and 'electrical', 'electronic' and 'electronical'.

So my question is how you distinguish adjectives that end with "ic" and "ical".

Feifei: Wang Ying 的这个问题问得很好，我上学的时候对这几个词的区别也很模糊。I remember getting very confused over these words when I was a student.

Neil: Yes, these words can be very confusing! Let's explain them one by one. We use 'electric' to describe things to do with current and voltage, things that produce, produced by, carry or use electricity.

Feifei: 我们用 electric 来描述和电流、电压有关的东西，这些东西可能是用来发电的、由电产生的、用电的或是导电的。比方说表述发电的"发电机"electric generator。

Neil: Electric generators are used to produce electricity.

Feifei: 由电产生的"电流"electric current.

Neil: An electric current is produced by electricity.

Feifei: 用于导电的电源插头 electric plug.

Neil: An electric plug is used to carry current to an appliance.

Feifei: 用电的"电灯泡"electric light bulb.

Neil: An electric light bulb uses electrical power.

Feifei:	Neil, we should probably explain the word 'electrical' now you've mentioned 'electrical power'.
Neil:	Yes, we use 'electrical' to describe things that are related to electricity.
Feifei:	我们用 electrical 来描述与电有关的事物。
Neil：	These things can be an industry, a component, a machine or a device.
Feifei:	通常我们所说的与电有关的东西包括以下几个方面：首先，可能是一个行业 industry.
Neil:	Electrical engineering.
Feifei:	电机工程 electrical engineering.
Neil:	Electrical connector.
Feifei:	作为连接传递电信号的"电接头"。
Neil:	Home electrical appliance.
Feifei:	家用电器。还有 electrical fault 电器故障，electrical test 电器测试等等。
Neil:	Now Feifei, tell us something useful to remember about these words.
Feifei:	区分这两个词的最好办法就是记住用 electric 来描述一个和电有直接联系的东西，而用 electrical 来描述和电有关的，但不一定是连电的、带电的。OK, next let's look at the word 'electronic'.
Neil:	The word 'electronic' usually describe a device that has or operates with the help of many small components which control and change the current passing through the device.
Feifei:	That sounds very complicated. Electronic 通常修饰一个使用很多不同小部件来控制或改变电流的一种设备。Can you give us some examples please?
Neil:	Yes, I can. So for example, an electronic calculator.
Feifei:	电子计算器 electronic calculator.
Neil:	An electronic keyboard.

Feifei: 电子键盘。

Neil: Nowadays, we hear things like electronic mail – email, electronic book – ebook, electronic banking – ebanking etc. These activities are usually done on a computer over the internet.

Feifei: 还有大家现在都很熟悉的电子邮件 email - electronic mail, 电子图书 ebook – electronic book, 网络银行 electronic banking – ebanking. 这里用 electronic 来描述通过使用电子设备完成的一个动作。

Neil: Finally the adverb 'electronically' means things or processes that are done using a computer. We can say 'The result of your exams will be sent to you electronically'.

Feifei: 考试成绩会以电子形式 electronically 传送给你，这里"电子形式"指的是用邮件发送。

好了，希望以上我们所讲的内容回答了 Wang Ying 的问题。最后我想说我个人觉得掌握英语里易混淆单词的最好的方法就是多学多练，见得多了也就不怪了。

Neil: If you have a question, please send it to us electronically to questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk.

Feifei: 当然你也可以在微博上给我们留下你的问题。Thanks for listening and do join us again for another Question and Answer of the week.

Neil: Ah, I just got a shock (jokingly).

Feifei: Bye.