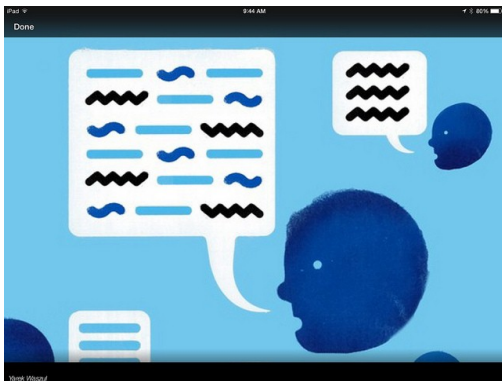


Difference between ‘how about’ and ‘what about’ and how to use it

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If you aren't a native speaker, learning right English can be quite a task. The reason being, a lot of words and phrases we use are colloquial and don't really adhere to the [rules of English language](#). That is why the difference between how we use and understand certain phrases and why it would mean something entirely different to a native speaker. The biggest problem arises when we use certain words and phrases interchangeably. The most basic example of it would be when people use 'a couple' when they actually mean 'a few'. When you say, 'a couple of spoons' it means two spoons, because 'couple' denotes two. If it is more than that, you should be saying 'a few'. But often people use 'a couple' to denote two or even more than that. And that's the reason why a lot of phrases are used in a wrong way colloquially. Another such example would be the phrases 'how about' and 'what about'. If you are confused about how and when to use these phrases, then let me show you a simple trick:



Break the phrase to understand what it means

Let's take 'How about' first. When you isolate the word 'how', you have a word that is open to suggestion of action or possibilities. 'How should we do this?' or 'How is the weather?' Now when you add the word 'about' to it, it means that you are asking for the other person's opinion and suggestion.

Person 1: Hey, it's my day off tomorrow. Want to go for a movie?

Person 2: No, there are no good movies in the theatre currently.

Person 1: Then how about we go to the museum?

Person 2: Didn't we just go there?

Person 1: Right. How about we go to the park?

Person 2: That sounds like a great idea!

So, you see, you use 'how about' to present an idea or suggestion, and take the other person's opinion on it. Now when do you use 'what about'? Again, let's break the phrase and understand

what it means.

'What' is a question that you ask to get answers. 'What is that colour', 'What should I do' – all these are questions for which you need a definite answer or solution. When you add the word 'about', it means that you are either objecting to the idea presented to you or talking about a potential problem that needs to be addressed.

Person 1: Hey, it's my day off tomorrow. Want to go for a movie?

Person 2: But what about the assignment we need to submit on Monday?

Person 1: We can both sit and finish it day after tomorrow.

Person 2: And what about my French class tomorrow?

Person 1: Oh, didn't you see the notice? Tomorrow's class has been cancelled.

Person 2: Great! Let's go for a movie then.

This shows that you use the phrase 'what about' when you have an issue that needs to be addressed and you are presenting it to get a solution. Use both the phrases correctly, as interchanging it will change the complete meaning of your [conversation](#).

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-By Chander Madan

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