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Principal vs Principle - Know the Difference

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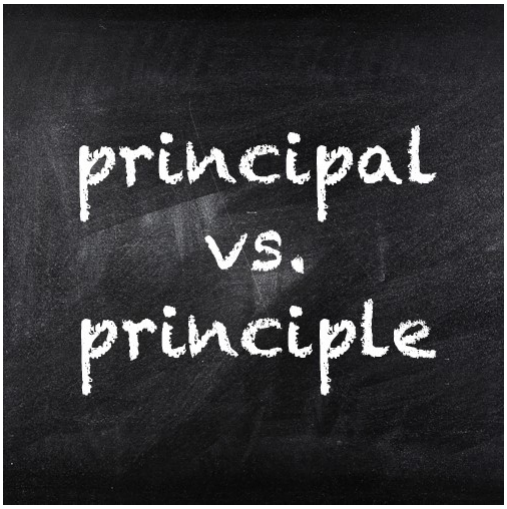
English, as a language, has a wide range of homophones which are commonly confused. One of them is principal and principle. Let's understand the meaning and its uses.

Principal

Principal refers to a person of high authority or prominence, someone who holds or plays an important role. Principal is both an adjective and a noun. As an adjective, it refers to the most important or chief person. As a noun, in finance, principal refers to a loan amount requiring repayment. Whereas in law, principal refers to a person having prime responsibility for an obligation or the main actor in the execution of a crime.

Examples

- Mrs. Hema is the new principal our college.
- In the first years in which you pay back your loan, the majority of each payment goes towards interest rather than principal.
- The principal cause of her suicide was herself.
- The police highlighted my principal concern in his opening sentence.
- The principal aim of the company is to double the profit this year.



Principle

According to Oxford dictionary, "Principle means a fundamental idea or general rule that is used as a basis for a particular theory or system of belief". So basically principle refers to a legal, natural, moral rule or standard and is only a noun.

Examples

It is a basic principle of criminal law that the accused is innocent until proven guilty.

I will not do it because it is against my principles.

Alfred fights for his principles if he thinks they are right.

She has a strong moral principles, just like her dad.

In his first book, Ptolemy sets out the general principles of astrology.

One of the best ways to find out the difference is by looking at the last three letters of the word. If it is “princiP-A-L”, it should be looked as your pals. Because only people can be pals. And if the word is “princiP-L-E” it means rule, truths or standards. A truth or a rule cannot be your pal.

You can use this reminder to remember it “The principal has his principles.”

Hope the above explanation has cleared the difference between principal and principle. For more English learning and grammar related blogs, browse through our articles. Improve English on the go with the help of our Simple English app. You can also join our online spoken English class and learn the nuances of English.

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-By Chander Madan

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