

Except, expect and accept

These words are often confused.

Except is a preposition. It should be followed by a noun which acts as its object.

Everybody came except John.

Here the noun John acts as the object of the preposition except. Except shows the relationship between 'everybody' and 'John'.

Expect is a verb

I expected him to call but he didn't.

We expect her to win the first prize.

Accept is also a verb.

She accepted the invitation.

Past and passed

Past can be used as a preposition, but passed cannot be used like this.

I walked past the school.

It is past your bedtime.

Past can also be used as an adverb. In this case, it is not followed by a noun.

A policeman walked past.

Passed is a verb. It refers to the action of passing.

She has passed the test.

Note that the word past usually refers to time or distance.

Into and Onto

The word into is a preposition. It is usually written as one word.

King Midas turned everything he touched into gold.

When she kissed the frog it turned into a handsome prince.

Sometimes the words in and to appear next to each other in a sentence. In this case, they should be written as two words.

The minister himself stepped in to avert a PR crisis. (NOT The minister himself stepped into)

Onto

Onto is a preposition.

He threw the hat onto the roof.

The difference between into and onto is similar to the difference between in and on.