difference

1 Noticing differences

Match the two halves of these sentences:

1. I used margarine instead of butter, so
2. This coffee is half the price of that one and yet
3. As humans we can
4. It looks and feels exactly like a genuine five-pound note, but I'm sure anybody with a trained eye will
5. The medical treatment he's receiving seems to be working and

a. *you can certainly see a difference. He doesn't look so tired and he has some colour in his cheeks.*
b. *spot the difference immediately.*
c. *I hope nobody notices the difference.*
d. *you really can't tell the difference. They taste almost the same.*
e. *detect small differences in smell but a dog's nose is much more sensitive.*

Go back and underline all the verb + *difference* collocations.

2 Common adjective collocations

Use the following adjectives in these sentences:

fundamental *irreconcilable* *no*
real *striking* *subtle*

1. I couldn't tell the two paintings apart until an expert pointed out the very ..... differences between them.
2. I don't think Charles and Edward will ever see eye-to-eye on anything again. Over the years ..... differences of opinion have developed between them.
3. Please give generously to our charity. A donation of just £1 can make a ..... difference to the quality of life of children in some of the poorest countries in the world.
4. There are ..... differences between the capital and the rest of the country. The rich lifestyle of the area around the city is in sharp contrast to the poverty of the rural areas.
5. It makes ..... difference to me whether she goes or stays. It doesn't really affect me.
6. The ..... difference between you and me is that you like spending money and I like saving it!

When you have finished this exercise and the next, go back and underline all the expressions with *difference*.

3 Big differences

Match the two halves of these sentences:

1. Putting in central heating made
2. There's a substantial difference
3. Although there were marked differences on how to spend the money
4. There's a big difference between
5. When my brother said sorry for what he had said about me,

a. *between the opinions of men and women on the issue of abortion.*
b. *a world of difference to my parents' house.*
c. *the service on the two airlines.*
d. *it made all the difference.*
e. *the finance group made a decision in a surprisingly short time.*

Go back and underline the adjective + *difference* collocations.

4 Difference + preposition

Complete the sentences below with a suitable preposition:

1. There are significant differences ..... the legal systems of England and Scotland.
2. The difference ..... price is so small it's not worth arguing about.
3. He doesn't earn much so the extra money will make a big difference ..... him.
4. If you're thinking of a holiday ..... a difference, why not try Finland?

Notes

1. In 3-5 the expression 'all the difference' means that there was a complete change:
   I've decided to stay on the committee.
   > Great! That'll make all the difference! We didn't want to lose your experience.
2. 'Differences' can mean 'arguments':
   Let's forget our differences and be friends again.
   My mother asked us to settle our differences.
   We've had our differences in the past, but we're friends again.
3. Note this common question:
   He's speaking Dutch, not German! Don't you know the difference?

LIVEWORKSHEETS