



# Choice and Choose

## What's the difference?

The words **Choice and Choose** can be confusing for ESL students. During a private lesson, my student was telling me about her favorite Ramen restaurant. She wanted to tell me about the options you can get in your soup but she confused the words **choice and choose**. I wrote this blog post to help other people use these confusing words correctly.

The word CHOICE is a noun and CHOOSE is a verb

**choice** **noun** an act of choosing between two or more possibilities

- I hope I made the right **choice**.

**choose** **verb** to decide which thing or person you want out of the ones that are available

- There are so many options, it's hard to **choose**.

This post has everything you need to master this English grammar. Lots of real examples, a pronunciation guide, a video, a free PDF download, and more! Keep reading.

## Choice or Choose?

One of my private English students was describing her favorite restaurant in Tokyo. She told me

- "This is my favorite ramen noodle restaurant. You can ~~choise~~ how much garlic you want in your soup."

I know what my student meant, but the word choice is incorrect here. The correct word is choose.

- "You can **choose** how much garlic you want in your soup."

Here's why - CHOOSE is a verb. In a sentence, a verb will follow the modal verb *can* to show that something is possible.

It's possible to CHOOSE the amount of garlic you want in your ramen noodles. You *can* CHOOSE.

CHOICE is a noun. Nouns don't follow the modal verb *can* in statements.

<b>choice</b> <b>noun</b> an act of choosing between two or more possibilities; something that you can choose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our agency helps people make more informed career <b>choices</b>.</li><li>• I wonder if I made the right <b>choice</b>.</li></ul>
<b>choose</b> <b>verb</b> to decide which thing or person you want out of the ones that are available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You <b>choose</b> -I can't decide.</li><li>• We can <b>choose</b> how much garlic we want in our soup.</li></ul>

# Choice - Meaning and Pronunciation

**choice** noun [pronunciation CHOY-S (sounds like **voice**)]

① **an act of choosing between two or more possibilities**

I now had a clear **choice**: either I accept their terms or I leave.

She had no **choice** but to quit work. (= this was the only thing she could do)

**Choice** is a countable noun. The plural form is **choices**. [pronunciation CHOY-SIZ (sounds like **voices**)]

Leaders must make good decisions and tough **choices**.

You can learn more about using Singular and Plural Nouns correctly at my blog post [HERE](http://Worldenglishblog.com/singular-and-plural-nouns/)

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A Synonym of Choice is **option**

She had to quit her job to take care of her son. There was no other **option**.

② **a person or thing that is chosen**

Blue was my first **choice**, but they didn't have any blue shirts in my size.

Hawaii is a popular **choice** for winter travel.

② Choice Synonyms - selection, pick

Hawaii is a top **pick** for winter travel.

## When to use the noun Choice

Nouns can be the subject or the object of our sentences, and we can identify them from the sentence pattern. Nouns will follow articles, adjectives, possessive forms, numbers, and determiners.

I must make a **choice**. (The singular noun *choice* follows the article **a**)

Leaders must make good decisions and tough **choices**. (The plural noun *choices* follows the adjective **tough**)

It's my **choice**, not yours. (The noun *choice* follows **my**. This is the possessive form of I)

You have two **choices**. You can stay and behave or you can leave. (The plural noun *choices* follows the number **two**.)

She had no **choice** but to quit. (The noun *choice* follows the determiner **no**.)

## Choose - Meaning and Pronunciation

**choose** verb [pronunciation CHEW-Z (chew sounds like new)]

**to decide which thing or person you want out of the ones that are available**

You can **choose** how much garlic you want in your soup.

# Choose Verb Conjugation - choose chose chosen

## Verb tenses

Infinitive – TO CHOOSE

I have **to choose** between going to Canada or England to study English. (I must decide which of the two choices will be better for me.)

Present simple – CHOOSE

I **choose** Canada. (Canada is the country I want to visit to study English.)

Present simple Third-person singular – CHOOSES [pronunciation CHEW-ZIZ (in English the letters ES at the end of a word are pronounced like IZ)]

My class will vote after lunch. I hope everyone **chooses** Canada. (I hope everyone wants to go to Canada to study abroad.)

Past simple – CHOSE [pronunciation CHOH-Z (chose sounds like goes)]

The vote is over, everyone **chose** Canada! Yay! (All my classmates decided that they want to go to Canada.)

Past participle – CHOSEN [pronunciation CHOH-ZEN (chosen sounds like frozen)]

We can stay in a dormitory or with a Canadian family. I haven't **chosen** which one yet. [Haven't chosen is the perfect tense. HAVE + the past participle. Learn more about perfect tense grammar [HERE](#)]

Continuous tense – CHOOSING

Oliver is at the electronics store **choosing** a new computer. It's between a DELL laptop and a MacBook Air. (Oliver is deciding which computer he wants right now.)

Choose Synonyms - select pick decide

## Choice and Choose - Word origins

The NOUN choice comes from

Middle English: from Old French chois, from choisir 'choose', of Germanic origin and related to choose. [SOURCE](#)

The VERB choose comes from

Old English cēosan, of Germanic origin; related to Dutch kiezen. [SOURCE](#)

Although the origins of **choice** and **choose** may be different, the NOUN choice means 'the act of choosing' so we can think of these words this way.

CHOICE is the NOUN form of the verb choose.

CHOOSE is the VERB form of the noun choice.

## Choose vs Chose - The Past Tense

Chose is the past tense of the verb choose. Watch this spelling! One letter (o) can change the meaning and pronunciation. I teach my students this trick to help them remember.

"I choose to watch James Bond every Friday. I like 007." CHOOSE is spelled with two O's. If there are two of the same letter side by side in a word we can say double *that letter*.

"Her name is Jillian. Spelled J-I-double 'L'-I-A-N."

007 is James Bond's license to kill. We often read the number zero as 'oh' when speaking.

"I live at *six oh two* (602) West Duffield street."

007 is read as "Double Oh Seven" so "I choose to watch James Bond..." reminds me that CHOOSE (chewz) is spelled C-H- double 'Oh' -S-E

\*Every Friday tells us that we need to use the present tense. (CHOOSE) If something happens **every** week we won't use the past tense (CHOSE).

## CHOOSE Vs. Make a CHOICE

The noun CHOICE can be used with the verb **make**. This has the same meaning as CHOOSE. Compare

The bakery has chocolate and vanilla cake but you can only have one for your party. **Make A CHOICE** soon, the bakery is closing.

The bakery has chocolate and vanilla cake but you can only have one for your party. CHOOSE soon, the bakery is closing.

A: If I accept the promotion I'll get a raise but I have to move away from my hometown. I don't know if I should.

B: It's a big decision, you should think about it carefully.

A: You're right but my boss wants my answer tomorrow! I have to **make** a CHOICE tonight!

OR - I have to CHOOSE tonight!

\*The synonym DECIDE is also possible here:

I have to DECIDE tonight!

Do a deep dive into HAVE TO and MUST verb grammar at my blog post [HERE](http://Worldenglishblog.com/have-to-or-must-grammar-guide/)

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## Collocations with CHOICE

Choice is often used with these adjectives:

Good/excellent choice

Bad/poor choice

Informed choice (The adjective informed can mean *based on an understanding of the facts of a situation*.)

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- Customer: I'll have the Pacific salmon.  
Waiter: *Excellent choice* sir! The salmon was just flown in this morning.
- Her life is a tragic story of bad luck and *poor choices*.
- I wanted to make an *informed choice* about the private school I will send my daughter to.

## Choose Between Two Things

We can have many things to choose from, but if there are only two options we can use the preposition **between** to show that our choices are limited. We can only select one person or thing from two options.

- After graduation, I have to CHOOSE **between** finding a job right away or taking some time off to travel.
- I woke up late today. I had to CHOOSE **between** missing my train or skipping breakfast. (I got to work on time but I'm so hungry now!)
- A: Who do you think will get the promotion?  
B: I don't know, both Ryan and Kelley are great choices. The boss will have to CHOOSE **between** the two of them, it won't be easy.

## Expressions with Choose and Choice

**Choose the path of least resistance** = Choose the easiest way of doing something

- I just agreed with the team so we could get started. I choose the path of least resistance.  
- *I decided it was easiest to agree with the group so we could start working. It was easier to agree now than to disagree and spend more time talking.*

Other versions of this expression are also used.

- **Follow** the path of least resistance.
- **Take** the path of least resistance.

**Drug of choice** = Any habit, activity, or vice that one is particularly fond of or dependent upon.

- I rarely drink cola, it's not good for you. If I do order a soft drink at a restaurant, Pepsi is my **drug of choice**. I like Pepsi better than Coke.

**Spoiled for choice** = To have so many good options for something that choosing just one may be difficult.

- My new apartment is surrounded by great cafes. If I ever want to relax with a nice cup of coffee I'm **spoiled for choice**.

**Beggars can't be choosers** = if you are desperate for something and it is given to you, you can't complain about its quality. If you beg for something you don't get to choose.

- I needed a car and my uncle gave me his old pick-up truck. It's green and rusty but **beggars can't be choosers**.

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## CHOICE as an Adjective

**choice** adjective (especially of food) of very good quality

- Those were some **choice** steaks we ate last night. (The steaks were good quality)

## Choice or Chose

Another common error can come from confusing the noun CHOICE with the past tense CHOSE because they are similar. **CHOY-S** and **CHOH-Z**. Here's another trick for remembering which word to use.

*Yesterday* I **chose** to buy some new **clothes**.

The adverb *yesterday* places us in the past tense.

The past tense of choose is **chose** (CHOH-Z) which sounds like the noun **clothes**. (CLOZE)

Remember this sentence and think about it whenever you need to decide if you need to use the correct past tense.

## Choice or Choose? Conclusion

Now you know that CHOICE is a noun and it will be used after articles, adjectives, possessive forms, numbers, and determiners.

The verb CHOOSE will follow a subject and change tense depending on when the verb happened. Use the tricks you learned in this post to remember these words and you won't mistake them anymore.



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