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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Vocabulary

### -ic and -ical



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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#### **Catherine**

Hello! I'm Catherine, and this is Rob.

#### **Rob**

Yes, hello! And welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary. Today we're talking about adjectives that end in **i-c**, pronounced **ic**, and adjectives that end in **i-c-a-l**, pronounced **ical**.

#### **Catherine**

First, let's listen to Hannah. She's talking about her favourite books.

#### **Rob**

Our question today is: why does Hannah get most of her books from the library? Listen carefully and find out!

#### **INSERT**

##### **Hannah**

I'm always reading! I like **classic** English novels, by writers like Jane Austen or Charles Dickens. I also like non-fiction; especially books about interesting **historical** characters. I love buying books, but it's so expensive! Mostly, I borrow books from the library. It's much more **economical**.

#### **STING**

##### **Catherine**

So, why does Hannah prefer to get her books from the library? Because it's more **economical**.

##### **Rob**

Hannah mentioned that she likes to read novels. Do you remember what type of novels she likes to read? Listen once again:

#### **INSERT | CLIP |**

I like **classic** English novels, by writers like Jane Austen or Charles Dickens.

**Catherine**

Hannah said she likes to read **classic** novels. The word **classic** ends in **i-c**. It's an adjective that describes something that's a particularly good example of a category – or a particularly famous example.

**Rob**

So, novels by Jane Austen and Charles Dickens are **classic**, because they're particularly good, and very famous, examples of novels. And they've been popular for a long time, so we could say they've stood the test of time.

**Catherine**

Exactly, a bit like you Rob.

**Rob**

Thank you.

**Catherine**

You're welcome. But be careful because people often confuse **classic** with another adjective: **classical**. Now **classical**, ending in **i-c-a-l** has a slightly different meaning – it describes a formal and often quite old style of art in forms such as painting, theatre, architecture and so on. Rob, do you like **classical** music?

**Rob**

Oh. Occasionally, but I do find it a bit heavy going.

**Catherine**

A bit much is it?

**Rob**

Sometimes, yes.

**Catherine**

You're more of a Beyoncé man?

**Rob**

Yes, that's me.

**Catherine**

OK, so let's listen again to another clip:

**INSERT 1 CLIP 2**

I also like non-fiction; especially books about interesting **historical** characters.

**Catherine**

**Historical** is another **i-c-a-l** adjective – and it means 'connected to stories about the past'. So Rob – name me a **historical** character that you particularly identify with.

**Rob**

That's a hard one, but I'd say Captain Cook. He liked to travel and he went round the world discovering new places, which is something I like to do.

**Catherine**

You do, don't you.

**Rob**

So I can identify with him, yes. Moving on... now the **i-c** adjective - **historic** - has a slightly different meaning: it describes something important, or something that will people will remember for a long time.

**Catherine**

So, if something really important and amazing happens today, we'll say **today is a historic day**. Like the day Newcastle United wins the European cup Rob!

**Rob**

OK, in your dreams I think.

**Catherine**

Well maybe, but if it ever happened it would be a **historic** day. Now a quick pronunciation tip for you: we pronounce **historic** and **historical** with the stress on the same syllable in both words, the '**to**'. And it's the same with **classic** and **classical**: in both words, the stress is on the same syllable, this time, '**cla**'.

**Rob**

So: **Historic, historical. Classic, classical.**

**Catherine**

Yeah.

**Rob**

Now listen again to one more clip:

**INSERT 1 CLIP 3**

Mostly, I borrow books from the library. It's much more **economical**.

**Rob**

So, we use the adjective **economical** – or as some people say, **economical** – with **i-c-a-l** when something is cheap, or good value for money.

**Catherine**

But the adjective **economic** with **i-c** has a different meaning: **economic** means 'connected to the subject of money and finance'.

**Rob**

So, we might say, **the bus is more economical than the train**, and we would say, **the country has economic problems**.

**IDENT**

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**Catherine**

And we're talking about adjectives that end in **-ic** and **-ical**.

**Rob**

Like **economic** and **economical**.

**Catherine**

And now it's time for a little quiz! Listen to this, then answer question one.

[sfx: music]

**Rob**

Question one: was that an example of **classic** music, or was it **classical** music?

**Catherine**

It was **classical** music. Not too much for you Rob?

**Rob**

No, it's enough, just enough.

**Catherine**

Okay, question two: if you watch a film about the past, is it a **historic** film or a **historical** film?

**Rob**

It's a **historical** film. Last question! If you read the news about business and the financial markets, are you reading the **economic** news or the **economical** news?

**Catherine**

And that's the **economic** news. And that's the end of the quiz. Well done!

**Rob**

Yes, well done. Finally, here's a piece of vocabulary learning advice. Learning vocabulary alone is okay, but it's often more effective to work together with a study partner. Find someone who is learning English, get together regularly, and give each other vocabulary tests!

**Catherine**

There's more about this at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again soon for more 6 Minute Vocabulary. Bye!

**Rob**

Bye!

## Vocabulary points to take away:

### Some adjectives with -ic and -ical:

#### **classic**

a very good, or well-known, example of a category

'I like **classic** English novels, by writers like Jane Austen or Charles Dickens.'

#### **classical**

describes a formal and often quite old style of art in forms such as painting, theatre, architecture etc.

'I don't like modern buildings at all. I much prefer **classical** architecture.'

#### **historic**

very important for a lot of people; it will be remembered for a long time

'Nelson Mandela's release from prison was a **historic** event in world history.'

#### **historical**

connected to stories about the past

'I also like non-fiction; especially books about interesting **historical** characters.'

#### **economic**

connected to economics, the study of money and finance.

'The **economic** situation is not good. Our sales have fallen again.'

#### **economical**

cheap; good value for money

'Mostly, I borrow books from the library. It's much more **economical**.'