



THE FORMER & THE LATTER

In formal English, we use the terms *“the former”* and *“the latter”* to refer back to the first and last item of a set respectively.

The following mnemonic will help you to remember the difference:

Former = **F**irst / **L**atter = **L**ast

Examples:

- My boss offered me more money or a company car and I chose **the former**. (I chose more money)
- My son has done very well in both schoolwork and martial arts, and has won a number of competitions in **the latter**.
(in martial arts)
- Given the choice between being right or being kind, I would most certainly choose **the latter**. (I'd choose being kind)

Important note:

Never use *“the former”* and/or *“the latter”* after a list of more than two items.

Examples:

My hobbies are playing football, training with weights, and dancing, but the ~~former~~ is my true passion. **INCORRECT**

My hobbies are playing football, training with weights, and dancing, but the **first** is my true passion. **CORRECT**