Using Words Correctly

It’s not just for pros.

Also -- who’s a pro at this?
Words have meaning

They weren’t created to make your life harder.

Some of them, however, were created by idiots.
English is dumb - but it’s all we’ve got.

Just like in athletics, therefore (see: the in-field fly rule), we must memorize some dumb rules in order to play the game.

Note: You can be an amateur (Little Leaguer/C student/entry-level employee) without memorizing anything. If that satisfies you, stop reading now.
There/Their/They’re

There: a place.
- We’re going over there to beat up the guy who invented these words.

Their: shows ownership by a group.
- We’re going to see their dog about biting the head off the guy who invented these words.

They’re: they are.
- They’re quite nice people, even if they always get words wrong.
Fill in the blanks

I’ve been thinking of getting a dog. I hear dogs are nice. 1_________ also very good companions. 2_________ is a kennel just south of town with many different breeds. I think I’ll visit them. I hear 3_________ prices are pretty good.
We’re spending Memorial Day weekend with my parents. It’s 4_______ 40th wedding anniversary, so we’re going to 5_______ cabin by the ocean. 6_______ are lots of things to do up 7_______.

Mom and Dad aren’t driving up with us; 8_______ driving up separately on Friday. I hope 9_______ drive goes ok. 10_______ getting a bit older, and it’s hard for them to see at night sometimes!
How did you do?

1. They’re
2. There
3. Their
4. Their
5. Their
6. There
7. There
8. They’re
9. Their
10. They’re
Scores:

9-10: A
8: B
7: C
6-0: Bad day at the office.
Another grammar nightmare

- **ITS**
  - Hi. I am possessive.
  - I indicate belonging, as in, “That’s its name.”

- **IT’S**
  - Hi. I’m a contraction.
  - I mean “it is.” As in: “It is easy to get these two confused.”
It’s/Its

It’s: it is

✓ It’s raining outside. It’s never going to stop.

Its: possessive

✓ The printer prints quickly. That is its job.
✓ The table lost its legs in the move.
Fill in the blanks:

1_____ my greatest wish that you leave this class knowing how to use these phrases. I know 2_____ difficult, but 3___ something that will stick with you. You can always consult your grammar book if you get confused; that’s 4_____ job.
Fill in the blanks:

5___ a terribly rainy day. My car hates rain. 6___ very old and 7___ windshield wipers don’t work very well. Plus, since I had to walk through the rain to get to it, now 8___ floorboards are coated in mud. 9___ not a great situation. 10___ got to be summer soon, right?
How’d you do?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>It’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>It’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>It’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>It’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>It’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>It’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>It’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scores:

9-10: A
8: B
7: C
6-0: Bad day at the office.
To/Too/Two

To: a preposition suggesting movement.
- We’re going to the movies.

Too: also.
- We’re going to see Avatar, too.

Two: a number.
- Two Oscars isn’t bad.
Fill in the blanks

Last weekend, I saw Iron Man 1___. We went 2___ the Cinemark theater 3___ see it. I want 4___ see Thor, 5___, when it comes out next summer.

In this one, Tony Stark’s best friend gets an Iron Man suit, 6____. They go 7___ war with one or 8___ bad guys who work for Justin Hammer. One of them has an Iron Man suit, 9___, which he wears 10___ defend himself against the real guy.
How did you do?

1. Two
2. To
3. To
4. To
5. Too
6. Too
7. To
8. Two
9. Too
10. To
Scores:

9-10: A
8: B
7: C
6-0: Justin Hammer wins.
Knowing is half the battle.

Ways to cope with not getting these right:

1. Practice! (Online quizzes)
2. Find and replace
3. Learning Center
4. Highlighting during proofreading
5. Avoidance?