University of Catania

Words and phrases that can confuse

Electric-Electrical-Electronic

Electric-Electrical-Electronic

Electric refers to anything that works with electricity i.e. *An electric kettle, electric lights, electric heaters, electric cars, electric fields, electric train, electric fan.*
"Electric" is used before a device or machine that runs on electricity. It is used with a specified object.

Electrical refers to something related to electricity and is used for things that produce or process electricity such as *electrical faults, electrical components, electrical generators and electrical outlets, electrical short circuit, electrical energy, and electrical tape.*
"Electrical" is also used in a more general sense, to refer to more ambiguous nouns. "electrical" is also used when the object is specified, but the object is not run on electricity, but is related to electricity i.e. *Electrical engineer*. It is also a broad term for anything that uses electricity.

Electronic describes devices that manipulate electrical current internally with switches, such as microprocessors, and printed circuit boards using transistors. It is also used for virtual forms of things that were traditionally in the physical world, such as *electronic stores, electronic gadgets, electronic ticket, electronic music, electronic climate control, electronic vehicle charging station and electronic books.*