These words are often confused.

**Actual** means ‘real’; **actually** means ‘really’ or ‘in fact’. These words are often used to correct mistakes or misunderstandings.

*The book says that she was 38 when she won the Nobel Prize, but her **actual** age was 42.*

‘Hello, James. Glad to meet you.’ ‘**Actually**, my name is Peter.’

These words can also be used to make things clearer or more precise.

*I have got a promotion. Actually, they have made me the manager.*

*She was so angry that she **actually** broke everything she saw before her eyes.*

In British English, **actually** is often used to break bad news.

‘I hope your mother is doing well.’ ‘Well, actually, she is terribly ill.’

**Actually** can also be used to suggest that the hearer’s expectations were correct.

‘Did you enjoy the movie?’ ‘Very much, actually.’

**Actual** and **actually** cannot be used to suggest ideas such as present, current, up to date, at this moment, now or at present.

*What is the current situation? (NOT What is the actual situation?)*

*Last year she was earning more than what she earns now. (NOT Last year she was earning more than what she earns actually.)*

*We cannot do anything at this moment. (NOT We cannot do anything actually.)*