

eCommonly Confused Words

Some words are closely related to other words because they might have either the same sounds or the same meaning. Here is a list of many of the words that can cause confusion.

| | |
|--|--|
| ACCEPT -to receive ex: He <u>accepts</u> defeat well. | EXCEPT -to take or leave out ex: Please take all the books <u>except</u> for the red one. |
| Adverse - unfavorable, harmful ex: The report warned of <u>adverse</u> weather. | Averse - strongly dislike, oppose ex: As the boss, he is not <u>averse</u> to authority. |
| AFFECT (V) -to influence ex: Lack of sleep <u>affects</u> the quality of life. | EFFECT -(N), the result, ex: The storm had a negative <u>effect</u> on the road. |
| A LOT (two words)-many. Ex: He owns <u>a lot</u> of comic books. | ALOT (one word)-Not the correct form. This is NOT a real word |
| ALLUSION -an indirect reference ex: The professor made an <u>allusion</u> to Virginia Woolf's work. | ILLUSION -a false perception of reality ex: They saw a mirage: that is a type of <u>illusion</u> one sees in the desert. |
| ALL READY -prepared ex: Dinner was <u>all ready</u> when they arrived. | ALREADY -by this time ex: I <u>already</u> have two kids. |
| ALOUD - out loud ex: The <u>students</u> read the book aloud. | ALLOWED - permitted ex: They are <u>allowed</u> to play ball in the house. |
| ALTER - to change ex: She had to <u>alter</u> her plans. | ALTAR - a sacred table ex: The books are on the <u>altar</u> |
| ALTOGETHER -entirely ex: <u>Altogether</u> , the presentation went well. | ALL TOGETHER -gathered, everything in one place ex: We were <u>all together</u> at the family reunion last year. |
| APART -to be separated ex: The chain-link fence kept the angry dogs apart. | A PART -to be joined with ex: A part of this plan involves getting started at dawn. |
| ASCENT - climb ex: The plane's <u>ascent</u> made my ears pop. | ASSENT -agreement ex: She voiced her <u>assent</u> loudly. |
| BAD (Adj) - Not good ex: She was in a <u>bad</u> accident. | BADLY (Adv) - Not well ex: She feels <u>badly</u> about her grades. |
| BATED - suspense ex: We waited with bated breath for results. | BAITED - with bait attached ex: John baited the hook with a worm. |
| BREATH -noun, air inhaled or exhaled ex: You could see his <u>breath</u> in the cold air. | BREATHE -verb, to inhale or exhale ex: If you don't <u>breathe</u> , then you are dead. |
| CAPITAL -government; financial resources ex: The <u>capital</u> of Virginia is Richmond. ex: The firm had enough <u>capital</u> to build the new plant. | CAPITOL -the actual building in which the legislative body meets ex: The governor announced his resignation in a speech given at the <u>capitol</u> today. |
| CITE -to quote or document ex: I <u>cited</u> ten sources in my paper. | SIGHT -vision ex: The <u>sight</u> of the flag arouses different emotions. |
| COMPLEMENT -noun, something that completes; verb, to complete ex: The mushrooms <u>complement</u> the soup. | SITE -position or place ex: The new office building was built on the <u>site</u> of a cemetery. |
| COMPLIMENT -noun, praise; verb, to praise ex: The professor <u>complimented</u> Betty on her proper use of a comma. | |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>CONSCIENCE-sense of right and wrong ex: The student's <u>conscience</u> kept him from cheating on the exam.</p> | | <p>CONSCIOUS-awake ex: I was <u>conscious</u> when the burglar entered the house.</p> | |
| <p>COUNCIL-a group that consults or advises ex: The members of the <u>council</u> voted in favor of an outdoor concert in their town.</p> | | <p>COUNSEL-to advise ex: The parole officer tried to <u>counsel</u> the convict before he was released.</p> | |
| <p>DESCENT- movement upward ex: The climbers made a safe <u>descent</u>.</p> | | <p>DISSENT- disagreement ex: His <u>dissent</u> with the leaders was obvious</p> | |
| <p>DISINTERESTED- impartial ex: He was <u>disinterested</u> in kid's progress.</p> | | <p>UNINTERESTED-not interested ex: I am <u>uninterested</u> in politics.</p> | |
| <p>Dual- two parts ex: he has a <u>dual</u> personality.</p> | | <p>Duel- contest, fight ex: they decided to <u>duel</u> to the death.</p> | |
| <p>ELICIT-to draw or bring out ex: The teacher <u>elicited</u> the correct response from the student.</p> | | <p>ILLICIT-illegal ex: The Columbian drug lord was arrested for his <u>illicit</u> activities.</p> | |
| <p>EMINENT-famous, respected ex: The <u>eminent</u> podiatrist won Physician of the Year</p> | <p>IMMANENT-inherent intrinsic ex: They are inseparable and immanent of the society</p> | <p>IMMINENT-ready to take place ex: A fight between my sister and I is <u>imminent</u> every day.</p> | |
| <p>INSURE- provide compensation ex: The law says you must <u>insure</u> your car.</p> | | <p>ENSURE- to make certain ex: Please <u>ensure</u> you are on time for work.</p> | |
| <p>ITS-of or belonging to it ex: The baby will scream as soon as <u>its</u> mother walks out of the room.</p> | | <p>IT'S-contraction for "it is" ex: <u>It's</u> a beautiful day in the neighborhood.</p> | |
| <p>LEAD-noun, a type of metal ex: Is that pipe made of <u>lead</u>?</p> | | <p>LED-verb, past tense of the verb "to lead" ex: She <u>led</u> the campers on an over-night hike.</p> | |
| <p>LIE-no direct object ex: I have a headache, so I'm going to <u>lie</u> down for a while.</p> | | <p>LAY-direct object ex: "<u>Lay</u> down that shotgun, Pappy!" The sheriff demanded of the crazed moonshiner.</p> | |
| <p>LIGHTENING-to make lighter ex: <u>Lightening</u> your hair can be damaging.</p> | | <p>LIGHTNING ex: The <u>lightning</u> struck the tree.</p> | |
| <p>LOSE (V)-to misplace or not win ex: I always <u>lose</u> my keys.</p> | | <p>LOOSE (Adj) to not be tight; ex: His pants were so <u>loose</u> that he could not run.</p> | |
| <p>NOVEL-noun, a book that is a work of fiction. Do not use "novel" for nonfiction; use "book" or "work." ex: Mark Twain wrote his novel <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> when he was already well known, but before he published many other works of fiction and nonfiction.</p> | | | |
| <p>PASSED-verb, past tense of "to pass," to have moved ex: The tornado <u>passed</u> through the city quickly, but it caused great damage.</p> | | <p>PAST-belonging to a former time or place ex: Who was the past president of Microsquish Computers? ex: Go <u>past</u> the fire station and turn right.</p> | |
| <p>PRECEDE-to come before ex: Pre-writing precedes the rough draft of good papers.</p> | | <p>PROCEED-to go forward ex: He proceeded to pass back the failing grades on the exam.</p> | |

Learning Resource Center – Writing Center

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>PRINCIPAL-(Adj) most important; (N) a person who has authority ex: The principal ingredient in chocolate chip cookies is chocolate chips. ex: The <u>principal</u> of the school does the announcements each morning.</p> | <p>PRINCIPLE-a general or fundamental truth ex: The study was based on the <u>principle</u> of gravity.</p> |
| <p>QUOTE-verb, to cite ex: I would like to <u>quote</u> Rule in my paper.</p> | <p>QUOTATION-noun, the act of citing ex: The book of famous <u>quotations</u> inspired us all.</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Reign- To rule ex: The king's <u>reign</u> was 40 years.</p> | <p>Rein- guide/control; strap to control animal ex: The <u>rein</u> on the horse works well.</p> | |
| <p>RELUCTANT-to hesitate or feel unwilling ex: We became <u>reluctant</u> to drive when the road became icy</p> | <p>RETICENT-to be reluctant to speak; to be reserved in manner. ex: Even the <u>reticent</u> members participated.</p> | |
| <p>STATIONARY-standing still ex: The accident was my fault because I ran into a <u>stationary</u> object.</p> | <p>STATIONERY-writing paper ex: My mother bought me <u>stationery</u> that was on recycled paper.</p> | |
| <p>SUPPOSED TO-correct form for "to be obligated to" or "presumed to" NOT "suppose to" ex: Our plane is <u>supposed to</u> arrive later in the day.</p> | <p>SUPPOSE-to guess or make a conjecture ex: Do you <u>suppose</u> we will get to the airport on time? When is our plane supposed to arrive? We are supposed to check our bags before we board, but I suppose we could do that at the curb and save time.</p> | |
| <p>THAN-use with comparisons ex: I would rather go out to eat <u>than</u> eat at the dining hall.</p> | <p>THEN-at that time, or next ex: I studied for my exam for seven hours, and <u>then</u> I went to bed.</p> | |
| <p>THEIR-possessive form they ex: <u>Their</u> house is at the end of the block.</p> | <p>THERE-indicates location (think of "here and there") ex: <u>There</u> goes my chance of winning the lottery!</p> | <p>THEY'RE-contraction for "they are" ex: <u>They're</u> in Europe for the summer--again!</p> |
| <p>THROUGH-by means of; finished; into or out of ex: He plowed <u>through</u> the other team's defensive line.</p> | <p>THRU-abbreviated slang for through; not appropriate in standard writing ex: We're <u>thru</u> for the day!</p> | <p>THREW-past tense of throw ex: She <u>threw</u> away his love letters.</p> |
| <p>THOROUGH-careful or complete ex: John <u>thoroughly</u> cleaned his room; there was not even a speck of dust when he finished.</p> | <p>THOUGH-however; nevertheless ex: He's really a sweetheart <u>though</u> he looks tough on the outside.</p> | |
| <p>TO-toward ex: I went <u>to</u> the University of Richmond.</p> | <p>TOO-also, or excessively ex: He drank <u>too</u> many screwdrivers and was unable to drive home.</p> | <p>TWO-a number ex: Only <u>two</u> students did not turn in the assignment.</p> |
| <p>WHO-pronoun, a person ex: Jane wondered how Jack, <u>who</u> is so smart, could be having difficulties in Calculus.</p> | <p>WHICH-pronoun, replacing a singular or plural thing(s); not used to refer to persons ex: <u>Which</u> section of history did you get into?</p> | <p>THAT-used to refer to things or a group or class of people ex: I lost the book <u>that</u> I bought last week.</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| | |