

Commonly Confused Words

Affect—*verb*. to have an influence on. “The rain will *affect* whether recess can be outside.”

Effect—*noun*. a result, something caused by an action. “The *effect* of rain is that recess will be inside.”

All right—*adjective*. 1. acceptable, or in satisfactory condition. “The bike looked small, but it was *all right* for Lucy.” 2. To be okay. “Chris fell down the stairs, but he was *all right*.” 3. Correct. “The newspaper is not always *all right*.” **Not** “alright”

All ready—*adjective*. fully prepared. “When we were *all ready*, we left for the movies.”

Already—*adverb*. by this time or another specific time. “The movie had *already* started by the time we sat down.”

All together—*adverb*. all at the same time. “Everyone has to pay attention if we are going to sing *all together*.”

Altogether—*adverb*. completely, entirely. “That lie is *altogether* not true.”

Break—1. *Verb*. to separate, detach, or smash. “The class will *break* into small groups after lunch.” “The neighbor will be angry if the boys *break* his window again with the ball.” 2. *Noun*. a separation or crack. “The dog escaped through the *break* in the fence.” 3. *Noun*. an interruption. “When everyone finished their work, we took a *break* for lunch.” 4. The beginning of the morning. “Many people get up at the *break* of dawn, rising with the sun.”

Brake—1. *Noun*. a thing that stops or slows action and movement. “Cars need good *brakes* to be safe.” 2. *Verb*. to slow down or stop action and movement. “Leslie *braked* when a cat crossed in front of the car.”

Capital—*noun*. a town or city that is the official center of a government. “Every state has a *capital*. Washington, D.C. is our nation’s *capital*.” 2. *Noun*, wealth or value. “The girls used the *capital* from their allowance to start a lemonade stand.”

Capitol—*noun*. the building where government meets. “The *capitol* has a big, round dome and is very beautiful.”

Choose—*verb*. to decide on and pick out. “Manny gets to *choose* what he wants for lunch today. He *chooses* pizza.”

Chose—*verb, past tense*. To have decided on and picked out. “Lola *chose* to stay home when her sisters went to the park.”

Coarse—*adjective* 1. rough, or of low quality. “*Coarse* cloth makes itchy britches.” 2. common, vulgar, not refined. “Swearing and other *coarse* language is not appropriate.”

Course—*noun* 1. progress or movement in a particular direction. “The *course* of the detective’s investigation took him straight to the villain.” 2. the path toward a particular direction. “The honors student was on a *course* toward success.” “Using a map can help you stay on *course*.” 3. “of course”—naturally, without doubt.

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Complement—1. *noun*. something that completes or makes whole. “Vanilla ice cream is the perfect *complement* to apple pie in apple pie a la mode.” 2. *verb*—to complete or make another thing whole. “Vanilla ice cream *complements* apple pie.”

Compliment—1. *noun*. an expression of praise, appreciation, or congratulation. “Julia received many *compliments* on her new haircut.” 2. *verb*, to praise, admire, or congratulate. “Jon *complimented* Bruce on his home run.”

Counsel—1. *noun*. advice or guidance. “I always use my mom’s *counsel* when I do not know what to do.” 2. *noun*. the act of exchanging ideas and opinions. “The knights held *counsel* to decide what to do with the dragon.” 3. *verb*. to give advice to. “The teacher *counsels* his students about writing papers.”

Council—*Noun*. a group of people who meet to discuss and make decisions. “The town *council* agreed to build a playground in the neighborhood.”

Desert—1. *noun*. an arid, dry body of land. “The *desert* is very hot during the day and freezing at night, making it a dangerous place to travel.” 2. *verb*, to leave empty or alone, abandon. “Although Paul was exhausted, he never *deserted* his post to go to bed.”

Dessert—*noun*. a usually sweet course that generally comes after the main part of a meal. “There is rice pudding for *dessert* if you finish all of your dinner.”

Principal—1. *noun*. a leading or important person. “The school *principal* inspires the students to achieve their best.” 2. *adjective*. most important. “The show almost did not go on when the *principal* actor was sick.”

Principle—*noun* 1. a general or basic truth, on which other truths or theories can be based. “Scientific theories are based on *principles* of testing and evidence.” 2. a rule of conduct. “Cheating is against common *principles* of trust and honesty.” 3. a rule or law of nature. “The *principle* of gravity explains a lot about our world.”

Sight—1. *noun*. something that is seen. “The lights and decorations for the festival made our street a *sight* to be seen.” 2. *noun*. the act, process, or capacity for seeing. “As people age, many lose their sharpness of *sight*.” 3. *verb*. to get or catch a view of. “When Paul Revere *sighted* the British army coming, he sounded an alarm.”

Site—*noun* 1. a place or scene of an occurrence. “The construction *site* was noisy and dusty.” 2. a local position of a building, monument, etc. “It took months for the committee to decide on a *site* for the new town center.”

Stationary—*adjective* 1. fixed in one place, unable to be moved. “No matter how fast he pedaled, Steve couldn’t make the *stationary* bike go anywhere.” 2. unchanging. “**Stationery**—*noun*. materials for writing. “Sue’s *stationery* set has pretty matching paper and envelopes.”

Their—*adjective*. relating to or belonging to “them”. “*Their* presentation was exciting to watch because of the group’s enthusiasm.”

There—1. *adverb*. in or at that place, to or into that place, etc. “Carl wants to go to the beach next summer, because his friends will be *there*.” 2. *adverb*. At that point or stage. “Stop right *there*— I think you have said enough.”

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They're—*contraction*. They are. “*They're* on a winning streak.” “*They're* having a surprise party for their friend.”

Aid—1. *verb*. To help or assist. “Jack *aids* the students who need extra help when he is finished with his work.” 2. *noun*. Something that is of help or assistance. “Posters and charts can be very helpful visual *aids*.”

Aide—*noun*. A person who acts as an assistant. “The new *aide* brings a lot of knowledge to the classroom and is very helpful.”

Among—*preposition*. 1. In company with, or in the class of. “Most people are happiest when they are *among* friends.” “Spanish is *among* my favorite classes.” 2. Through all or most of. “There is a lot of complaining *among* the students about getting too much homework.”

Between—1. *preposition*. From one to the other of. “Julius flies *between* New York and California to visit both of his parents.” 2. *preposition*. Joining or linking. “There is a special connection *between* twins.” 3. *preposition*. By the common action of, taking the combined effect of. “The boys ate a whole pizza *between* them.” “*Between* the new baby and work, James’ mother has little time for him.” 4. *adverb*. In an interval space. “The soccer field is *between* the school and the playground.”

Ascent—*noun*. The act of climbing up. “The slippery ice made the walk up the hill seem like an impossible *ascent*.”

Assent—*verb*. To agree to something, give approval. “Many cultures require children to get their parents’ *assent* before marrying.”

Belie—*verb*. To give a false idea of. “Jackie’s tall height *belie*s her young age.”

Besides—*preposition*. Except for, or in addition to. “Neil likes all desserts, *besides* ones that are nutty.” “Thom is a good student and holds a job *besides*.”

Elicit—*verb*. To draw out. “Part of a teacher’s role is to *elicit* answers from her students.”

Illicit—*adjective*. Illegal. “One can get in a lot of trouble for *illicit* activities.”

Fewer—*adjective*. Not so many, a smaller number of. “There are *fewer* birds returning every year because of the decrease in their habitats.”

Less—*adjective*. Not so much, being a smaller amount. “There is *less* food and protection for wild animals as forests are cut down and built on.”

Imply—*verb*. To express indirectly, to suggest rather than say plainly. “Joe’s frown *implied* that he was unhappy, but he would not say a thing.”

Infer—*verb*. To arrive at a conclusion. “Joe’s friends *inferred* that he wanted to be left alone from his grumpy attitude.”

It’s—*contraction*. It is or it has. “*It’s* too bad that Jill is sick.” “*It’s* been a while since Jack went away.”

Its—*possessive pronoun*. Of or belonging to it. “The dog does not know that it is *its* own tail that it is chasing.”

Commonly Confused Words

Loose— *adjective*. Not tight-fitting or attached tightly. “The collar was too *loose* for the dog, so it was able to get out of it and run away.”

Lose— *verb*. 1. To fail to keep or find. “It is very frustrating to *lose* things.” 2. To be deprived of. “As a result of her lies, Karen *lost* her parents’ trust.”

Precede— *verb*. To come before. “Learning to walk *precedes* the ability to run.”

Proceed— *verb*. To carry on an action, process, or movement. “In spite of the setbacks, they *proceeded* with the original plan.”

Who’s— *contraction*. Who is. “*Who’s* going to the movies tonight?”

Whose— *adjective/possessive pronoun*. Of or belonging to a person. “Jill had to take care of Jack, *whose* crown was broken from the fall.” “*Whose* jacket is still in the closet?”

Your— *adjective/possessive pronoun*. Of or belonging to “you.” “I found *your* shoes under the table.”

You’re— *contraction*. You are. “*You’re* a great friend.”

Yours— *possessive pronoun*. refers to something that belongs to you. “I found these shoes under the table. Are they *yours*?”