

Commonly Misused Words

Accept, Except:

Accept is a verb meaning to receive. *Except* is usually a preposition signifying exclusion.

Example: I will *accept* all the packages *except* that one.

Except is also a verb meaning to exclude.

Example: Please, *except* that item from the list.

Affect, Effect:

Affect is usually a verb meaning to influence. *Effect* is usually a noun meaning result.

Example: The drug did not *affect* the disease, and it had several adverse side *effects*.

Effect can also be a verb meaning to bring about.

Example: Only the president can *effect* such a dramatic change.

There, Their, They're:

There is an adverb specifying place; it is also an expletive. (**Ex:** *There* is a wasp in here.)

Their is an adjective specifying possession. (**Ex:** *Their* love will last forever.)

They're is a contraction combining “they” and “are.” (**Ex:** I love these socks because *they're* so soft.)

To, Too, Two:

To is a preposition. (**Ex:** Sally goes *to* school.)

Too is an adverb. (**Ex:** Brandon is *too* young for school.)

Two is a number. (**Ex:** He is only *two* years old.)

Your, You're:

Your is a possessive pronoun.

You're is a contraction of “you” and “are.”

Example: *You're* going to catch a cold if you don't wear *your* coat.

Hint: Sound out “you are” in the sentence. If it works in the sentence, it can be written as *you're*. If it sounds awkward, it is probably supposed to be *your*.

Example: *You're* shoes are muddy. “*You are* shoes are muddy.” That doesn't work, so it should be written as “*Your* shoes are muddy.”

Lie, Lay:

Lie means “to recline or rest on a surface.” Its principal parts are *lie, lay, lain*.

Lay means “to put or place.” Its principal parts are *lay* (present), *laid* (past).

Hint: Chickens *lay* eggs. I *lie* down when I am tired.

Who, Which, That:

Which and *That* should refer to things, not people. (In some cases, *that* may be used in reference to a group of people)

Who should be used to refer to a person or people.



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