

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Accept and Except**

**Accept** is a verb.

- **Example:** Timothy **accepted** the scholarship to Austin Peay State University.
- **Example:** Jenkins is willing to **accept** his responsibility.
- **Example:** All those invited to next week's writing conference have **accepted**.

**Except** can be a conjunction, a preposition, or a verb.

- **Example:** Everyone in the class went to the game **except** Alyson.
- **Example:** The scholarship covered everything **except** a parking space.
- **Example:** I wouldn't have accepted anything **except** a job in Tennessee.

Word	accept	except
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to receive something offered</li><li>• to believe something is correct</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to exclude or leave out something</li><li>• something that is other than</li></ul>

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**Affect and Effect**

**Affect** is a verb that can have an effect on, make a difference to, or an influence on.

- **Example:** Rainfall **affects** plant growth.
- **Example:** An early frost in Florida can **affect** the orange crop negatively.

**Affect** can be used as a noun only when referring to a display of emotion.

- **Example:** Georgette took the news of her company moving to Chicago with little **affect**.

**Effect** can be a noun that means a result and a verb that causes something to happen.

- Effect can follow these words: the, any, an, into, on, take, or. (Affect cannot!)
  - **Example:** The new manager is bound to **effect** positive changes in the office.
  - **Example:** What **effect** did the schedule of games have on the team?
  - **Example:** The special **effects** in movies today are aided by computers.
- How to remember:
  - **A** is for **action** and **E** is for **end result**.

Word	<b>affect</b>	<b>effect</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to make a difference, have an effect on, or to influence</li> <li>• a display of emotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to cause something to happen, to bring about</li> <li>• a change which is a result or consequence of an action or case</li> </ul>

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**Advise and Advice**

**Advise** means to inform (someone) about a fact or situation in a formal or official way.

- Example: Our reservations staff will **advise** on when this option is available.
- Example: I'd **advise** you to schedule a tutoring appointment.
- Example: To **advise** someone is similar to assisting them.

**Advice** is the suggestion or recommendation itself that is offered in the form of advisement.

- Example: I really need to get some basic financial **advice**.
  - Example: My **advice** to you is to invest your money early.
  - Example: When a therapist advises someone, they are offering **advice**.
- **Hint:** If you replace the word in question with “assistance” and your sentence still makes sense, “advice” is probably the correct choice.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Advise</b>	<b>Advice</b>
<b>Definition</b>	a <b>verb</b> that means to offer suggestions or recommendations about the best course of action	a <b>noun</b> that means a suggestion of the guidance offered with regard to future actions

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Commonly Confused Words

**Allude and Elude**

**Allude** is a verb that means to make an indirect reference to.

- Example: She kept **alluding** to him but would never say his name.
- Example: We can only **allude** to some of these points.

**Elude** is a verb that means to escape or to evade.

- Example: They **eluded** the zombies through their wit and survival training.
  - Example: The cause of the disease continues to **elude** researchers.
- **Hint:** Elude starts with an E and so does Escape. To elude is to escape.
  - **Hint:** Allude starts with an A and so does Absent. Since to allude is to make an indirect reference, a direct reference is absent.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Allude</b>	<b>Elude</b>
<b>Definition</b>	to reference something indirectly	“to evade” or “to escape” perception or understanding

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**A lot, Alot, and Allot**

**A lot** is a noun with an article that means “a big amount or number.”

- Example: The conference is going to be **a lot** of extra work.
- Example: I like **a lot** of toppings on my pizza.

**Alot** is a spelling mistake, is not a word, and should be corrected to “a lot”.

- Wrong Example: I have **alot** of homework to do today.
- Correct Example: I have **a lot** of homework to do today.

**Allot** is a verb that means to give or to divide (something) to someone as a share or task.

- Example: I will **allot** a radio to each group.
- Example: You need to **allot** enough time to finish your writing assignment.

Word	a lot	alot	allot
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a <b>noun</b> that means a large extent or a large amount.</li> <li>• an <b>adverb</b> that means to a great extent or to a great degree.</li> </ul>	a spelling mistake	a <b>verb</b> that means to give out, apportion, divide, or to distribute.

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**Any body, Anybody, Any one, and Anyone**

**Any body** is a noun phrase referring to an arbitrary body.

- Example: **Any body** in space can be mistaken for a planet.
- Example: Although we searched the area, we couldn't find **any body**.

**Anybody** is an indefinite pronoun referring to an unspecified person.

- Example: I didn't know **anybody** at the library.
- Example: **Anybody** is welcome to come to the picnic today.

**Any one** emphasizes singularity and means any single person or thing.

- Example: My mother took me to the candy store and told me I could have **any one** I wanted.
- Example: The school only allows for students to attend one class at **any one** time.

**Anyone** is an indefinite pronoun that refers to an unspecified person.

- Example: It is hard to find **anyone** who thinks that leaving their door unlocked is a good idea.
- Example: Has **anyone** seen my backpack?

Word	<b>any body</b>	<b>anybody</b>	<b>any one</b>	<b>anyone</b>
Definition	a noun phrase referring to an arbitrary body.	any person or group.	any person at all.	any single object or person.

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Commonly Confused Words

**Bear and Bare**

**Bear** as a noun refers to an animal that can be described as a large, furry mammal. As a verb it refers to carrying the weight of, supporting, enduring, giving birth to, and yielding fruit.

- Verb Example: This bridge can **bear** over 50 tons.
- Noun Example: The **bear** tried to eat the food from our camp.

**Bare** means minimal or only the most basic or important. As a verb it means to uncover or to expose.

- Example: Don't walk around outside in your **bare** feet.
- Example: They would have liked **bare** wooden floors throughout the house.

**Bare** in British English can be defined as a determiner that means a large amount or number of and as an adverb that means very or really.

- Determiner Example: There were **bare** people waiting to get in.
- Adverb Example: The questions are **bare** difficult.
  
- Hint: A good way to remember the difference is a **bear** has **ears**.

Word	Bear	Bare
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>noun:</b> a large, heavy mammal that walks on the soles of its feet, having thick fur and a very short tail.</li> <li>• <b>verb:</b> carry the weight of; support, to endure, to give birth, and to yield fruit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>adjective:</b> without addition; basic and simple.</li> <li>• <b>verb:</b> uncover and expose to view.</li> </ul>

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Commonly Confused Words

**Brake and Break**

**Brake** is a device used to stop your car from a moving position.

- Noun Example: In a car, the **brake** pedal on the floorboard can reduce the speed.
- Verb Example: If your car is approaching the hill, you need to **brake**.

**Break** is an interruption of some kind.

- Noun Example: We've been working all day. When can we expect a **break**?
- Verb Example: Another driver cut me off and I had to **brake** suddenly.

Word	Brake	Break
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>noun:</b> device used to stop your car from a moving position.</li><li>• <b>verb:</b> make a moving vehicle slow down by using a brake.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>noun:</b> an interruption of continuity</li><li>• <b>verb:</b> separate or cause to separate into pieces</li></ul>

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Commonly Confused Words

**Cacao and Cocoa**

**Cacao** is a plant and is often referred to by the beans of the cacao tree. When you call something a cacao product you mean that it is made from non-roasted cacao seeds.

- Example: **Cacao** trees grow well as understory plants in humid forest ecosystems.
- Example: Chocolate comes from the **cacao** tree.

**Cocoa** describes products that are related to or made from cocoa, such as cocoa butter or cocoa powder. To make cocoa products, the seeds must be roasted at a high temperature.

- Example: This chocolate bar has the highest percentage of **cocoa** on the market.
- Example: They always had a cup of **cocoa** when winter came.

**Coco** is a shortened abbreviation for the word “coconut.”

- Example: It smells like **coco**, mango, and pineapple.
- Example: Other palm trees found are the date, bamboo, palmyra, **coco** and dom.

Word	Cacao	Cocoa	Coco
<b>Definition</b>	the tree that bears cacao seeds, which are contained in large, oval pods that grow on the trunk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• products that are related to or made from cocoa</li> <li>• hot chocolate-flavored drink</li> </ul>	short for coconut

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**Choose, Chose, and Choice**

**Choice** is a decision made that is used as a subject in a sentence.

- Example: You always have a **choice**.
- Example: The green skirt was a great **choice**.
- Example: Garrett has to make a **choice** between French and German classes.

**Choose** is the present tense verb form of the word “choice” (making a decision).

- rhymes with snooze.
  - Example: I **choose** Georgina and Sam for my group project.
  - Example: What would you **choose**?
  - Example: Make sure you **choose** the time zone that applies to your exact location.

**Chose** is the past tense verb form of the word “choice” (a decision made).

- rhymes with lose.
  - Example: Last winter, I **chose** not to go on vacation.
  - Example: She **chose** to pursue a career in law.
  - Example: I wonder why they **chose** this spot.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Choice</b>	<b>Choose</b>	<b>Chose</b>
<b>Definition</b>	a <b>noun</b> that refers to the act of selecting something	<b>present</b> verb tense of the noun choice	<b>past</b> verb tense of the noun choice

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Commonly Confused Words

**Cite, Sight, and Site**

**Cite** is to quote a passage especially as an authority.

- Example: To avoid plagiarism, always **cite** the sources you use in every paper.
- Example: Be sure to **cite** all of your sources, even ones you don't quote directly.

**Sight** is the ability of vision or something that is seen and to see, to notice, or to observe.

- Example: The **sight** of such an important historical site filled me with awe.
- Example: A fleet of ships was **sighted** in the North Sea.

**Site** is the position or location of something.

- Example: Be careful around that construction **site**.
- Example: This is the **site** of an ancient castle.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Cite</b>	<b>Sight</b>	<b>Site</b>
<b>Definition</b>	to acknowledge, quote, or mention by providing facts, proof, evidence, or examples	a view or the ability to see and a verb that means to see	the position or location of something

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**Council, Counsel, and Consul**

**Council** is a group of people appointed to make decisions.

- Example: The **council** hereby denies your request for additional funding.
- Example: We have appointed a **council** to oversee important matters.

**Counsel** is another word for advice.

- Example: He assisted me with good **counsel** and encouragement.
- Example: Seek **counsel** from those who are wiser than you.

**Consul** is an ambassador or representative in a foreign land.

- Example: The British **consul** in Spain had held the post for many years.
- Example: We have no ambassador in Paraguay, but we have a **consul**.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Counsel</b>	<b>Consul</b>
<b>Definition</b>	a group of people that come together to consult, give advice on, or deliberate a certain matter	advice given	an official appointed by a government to reside in a foreign country to represent the commercial interests of citizens of the appointing country

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**Conscious and Conscience**

**Conscious** is an adjective that means characterized by or having an awareness of one's environment.

(Mental Awareness)

- o Example: We are unaware of any **conscious** life on other planets.
- o Example: They were worried they might faint at the sight of the blood, but they remained **conscious**.

**Conscience** is a noun defined as an awareness of morality in regard to one's behavior. (Moral Awareness)

- o Example: The burglar must have had a turn of **conscience** because he returned all of the stolen goods.
  - o Example: They had a guilty **conscience** because they cheated on the test.
- Hint: To be **conscious** is to be aware of your **surroundings**. Both of these words have “**ou**’s” in them.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Conscious</b>	<b>Conscience</b>
<b>Definition</b>	to perceive or notice with a degree of controlled thought or observation	an inner feeling or voice viewed as a guide to the rightness or wrongness of one's behavior

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**Desert and Dessert**

**Desert** is a dry, barren area of land, especially one covered with sand, that is characteristically desolate, waterless, and without vegetation. It also means to abandon, empty, and leave.

- Example: A true friend will never **desert** you when you need a helping hand.
- Example: The **desert** is so arid that nothing can grow there.
- Example: We went to the **desert** and ate a dessert.
  - Hint: The ‘Sahara Desert’ is a ‘desert.’ Notice the single ‘s.’

**Dessert** is the sweet course eaten at the end of a meal.

- Example: I thought we’d have strawberries and cream for **dessert**.
- Example: There’s nothing like a luxurious **dessert** to give a menu a final flourish.
  - Hint: The extra “s” is in the food because you will always want more.
  - Hint: Strawberry shortcake’ is a ‘dessert’. Notice to two ‘s’s.

Word	Desert	Dessert
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a dry area with very little precipitation and very few animals and plants</li> <li>• to abandon, empty, leave</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the last course of the meal that usually consists of something sweet</li> </ul>

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**Device and Devise**

**Device** is a noun referring to a tool, machine, or piece of equipment designed for a specific purpose, often used in technology and engineering.

- Example: The new fitness tracker is a helpful **device** for monitoring your daily activity.
- Example: Engineers created a portable **device** that purifies water using solar energy.
- Example: My smartphone is a versatile **device**.

**Devise** is a verb meaning to plan or invent a method, procedure, or system by careful thought; to create or formulate.

- Example: The team will **devise** a detailed plan for the product launch next month.
- Example: After much research, the scientists **devised** a new method to improve crop yields.
- Example: She needs to **devise** a more effective schedule to balance work and personal life.

Word	<b>device</b>	<b>devise</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a thing created or modified for a specific purpose, especially mechanical or electronic equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (v) plan or invent by careful thought</li> <li>• (n) leave property to someone through a will</li> </ul>

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**Discreet and Discrete**

**Discreet** is an adjective used to describe a noun that is careful or prudent in speech or actions, especially to avoid causing offense or attracting attention.

- Example: The **discreet** employee kept the company's confidential information private.
- Example: The doctor was **discreet** when discussing the patient's medical history, ensuring that privacy was maintained in front of the family.

**Discrete** is an adjective meaning separate or distinct; not continuous or connected.

- Example: The research study analyzed three **discrete** groups of participants based on their age.
  - Example: In mathematics, **discrete** numbers can only take certain values, such as whole numbers.
- *How to remember:*
    - Discreet has an "e," which can remind you of "ethics" or "elegance"
    - Discrete has "ete," similar to "separate,"

Word	<b>discreet</b>	<b>discrete</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• careful and circumspect in speech or actions to avoid offense or gain advantage</li> <li>• intentionally unobtrusive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• individually separate and distinct</li> <li>• not connected or continuous</li> </ul>

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## **Disc and Disk**

### **American English**

**Disc** is used when referring to a phonograph record, and optical disc (audio compact disc or videodisc), a tool found on a plow (disc harrow), a component of a brake system (disc brakes, and disc jockey).

- Example: A **disc** jockey, more commonly abbreviated as DJ, is a person who plays recorded music for an audience.
- Example: The compact **disc** is a miracle of modern technology.

**Disk** is the preferred spelling for all general references to thin circular objects

- Example: I think the **disk** drive in my computer is about to crash.
- Example: Do you want to go out and throw some **disk**?

### **British English**

**Disc** is the standard choice in British English.

- Example: The optic **disc** or optic nerve head is the point of exit for ganglion cell axons leaving the eye.
- Example: This **disc** includes the piano sonata in C minor.

**Disk** is used to refer to all things computer related.

- Example: The data is stored in the floppy **disk**.
- Example: The magnetic **disk** drive symbolized a monumental advance in mass-storage technology.

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**Does and Dose**

**Does** is the verb form of do and is defined as the process of performing a task.

- Is a an **auxiliary verb** used to form questions or negatives.
  - Example: What **does** he do for work?
  - Example: Tarrah **does** her homework as soon as she gets home.
  - Example: **Does** it work properly?

**Dose** is the noun defined as a quantity of a medicine taken or recommended to be taken at a particular time.

- Example: Francis took a **dose** of cough medicine before bed.
- Example: My doctor prescribed me a **dose** of vitamins.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Does</b>	<b>Dose</b>
<b>Definition</b>	to perform (an action, the precise nature of which is often unspecified).	a quantity of a medicine taken or recommended to be taken at a particular time

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**Elicit and Illicit**

**Elicit** is a verb that means to draw something out of (evoke, extract, obtain, bring, evince).

- Example: They invariably **elicit** exclamations of approval from guests.
- Example: Dr. Peters **elicits** answers from his students in class.
  - Dr. Peters draws out (action) answers (object of verb) from his students.
- Hint: Remember **elicit** and **evoke** both start with the letter “e”.

**Illicit** is an adjective that refers to something that is forbidden either by laws or customs (immoral, illegal, improper, prohibited).

- Example: Words considered **illicit** in Victorian times are in common usage in publications today.
- Example: The car enthusiasts held an **illicit** race on Beachside Avenue at 1:00am.
- Hint: Remember **illicit** and **illegal** both start with the letter “i”.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Elicit</b>	<b>Illicit</b>
<b>Definition</b>	a verb that means to evoke or draw out	an adjective that refers to something that is forbidden

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**Emigrate, Immigrate, and Migrate**

**Emigrate** is used when permanently relocating from a home country to a new country.

- Example: My parents **emigrated** from India about 10 years ago.
- Example: We are **emigrating** from Honduras.

**Immigrate** means to arrive in a new country after leaving another.

- The step after emigration that focuses on where you are going, not where you left.
  - Example: Our whole family **immigrated** to Japan for my mother’s job opportunity.
  - Example: To be closer to his family, he **immigrated** to Canada.
- Hint: You **immigrate** “into” places. You **emigrate** “from” places.

**Migrate** is often temporary and often refers to animals that move to different climates when the seasons change.

- Example: My grandparents **migrate** to Florida once the weather gets cold in the Northeast.
- Example: After **migrating** south to Mexico, monarch butterflies hibernate until spring.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Emigrate</b>	<b>Immigrate</b>	<b>Migrate</b>
<b>Definition</b>	the act of <b>leaving</b> a country to live in another	the act of <b>entering</b> a country to live	to <b>temporarily</b> travel to a different place

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**Gage and Gauge**

**Gage** is defined as something deposited to guarantee good faith.

- Example: He thought it was time to throw down the **gage** to his opponent.
- Example: Can you **gage** what her reaction is likely to be?

**Gauge** is a noun defined as a standard dimension, quantity, or capacity. It is also a verb that means to measure dimensions, evaluate, or estimate.

- Example: Use a thermometer to **gauge** the temperature.
  - Example: The instrument can **gauge** a distance with the push of a button.
- **Hint:** A gauge is both a *measurement* and a *measurement tool*. Gauge and measure both have the letter “U” in them. If you can pair these two words by the common letter “u,” you will be all set.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Gage</b>	<b>Gauge</b>
<b>Definition</b>	something given as security against an obligation; a pledge	an instrument that measures the amount, the volume, or the magnitude of something

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**He's and His**

**He's** is the contraction of “he is” or “he has”.

- Example: **He's** moving to Clarksville, Tennessee.
- Example: It shouldn't make any difference if **he's** adopted.

**His** is possessive and means “belonging to him”.

- Example: I didn't ask about **his** family tree.
- Example: The boy who sat beside him was **his** son.

Word	He's	His
Definition	is the contraction of “he is” or “he has”	is possessive and means “belonging to him”.

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**It's and Its**

**It's** is the contraction for "it is".

- Example: Some days I think **it's** a wonderful world.
- Example: **It's** time to buy a new battery.

**Its** is the possessive form of "it" and is the state of belonging.

- Example: **Its** tires spun out of control on the ice.
- Example: This laptop battery loses **its** charge quickly.

<b>Word</b>	<b>It's</b>	<b>Its</b>
<b>Definition</b>	is the contraction for "it is"	is the possessive form of "it" and is the state of belonging

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**Idea and Ideal**

**Idea** is a concept or a formulated thought of opinion (thought, suggestion, or concept).

- Example: The book club members shared their **ideas** on how to interpret the novel's ending.
- Example: The student had an **idea** of how to reduce paper waste on campus.

**Ideal** is a model of something perfect or something without an equal (perfect, optimal, or best).

- Example: He's the **ideal** candidate for the job.
- Example: Zoe's **ideal** evening includes a cozy dinner with close friends and a captivating movie.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Idea</b>	<b>Ideal</b>
<b>Definition</b>	a <b>noun</b> that means a thought or suggestion as to a possible course of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a <b>noun</b> that means a person or thing regarded as perfect</li><li>• an <b>adjective</b> that means satisfying one's conception of what is perfect; most suitable</li></ul>

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**Illusion and Delusion**

**Illusion** refers to either something that is not as it appears or a misperception.

- Example: The relative calm of the jungle gives an **illusion** of safety and peace.
- Example: The intricate set design in the theater produced the **illusion** of an enchanted forest.

**Delusion** is a dangerous misperception or an idea that misleads a person into dangerous patterns of thought.

- Example: Edward appears to be suffering under the **delusion** that he is still the king.
  - Example: Jane's **delusion** convinced her that everyone was conspiring against her, even her closest friends.
- Hint: For a dangerously deceptive idea, choose delusion. Since delusion and dangerous both begin with the letter "d".

<b>Word</b>	<b>Illusion</b>	<b>Delusion</b>
<b>Definition</b>	a <b>noun</b> that is a thing that is or is likely to be wrongly interpreted by the senses.	a <b>noun</b> that is a false belief or judgment about external reality, held despite incontrovertible evidence to the contrary

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**Lay** is defined as putting something down, especially gently or carefully.

- Present Tense
  - Is a transitive verb that **takes action**, which means it is doing something.
    - Example: I **lay** the paper on the table.
    - Example: You **lay** the cover on the desk.
  
- Past Tense
  - Lay become laid in the past tense and it includes the verbs “has” , ”have” , and “had”.
    - Example: Dr. Johnston **laid** her newborn baby in the crib yesterday.
    - Past Participle Example: The student had **laid** their assignment sheet on the table.

**Lie** is defined as a state of being or remaining in a way or direction.

- Present Tense
  - Is an intransitive verb and **does not take action**, which means it is unmoving.
    - Example: I **lie** on the sofa.
    - Example: We **lie** beside the ocean.
  
- Past Tense
  - Lie becomes lay in the past tense and the past participle of lie is lain.
    - Example: The pencils **lay** neatly in the box.
    - Example: His instructions have **lain** unused.

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**Lead, Led, and Let**

**Lead** has many definitions but can be determined by the way in which it is used in a sentence.

- Example: Sarah **lead** the class to the library.
- Example: I will follow your **lead**.
- Example: Whenever David goes on a walk, he makes sure to keep his dog on a **lead**.
- Example: **Lead** is soft and malleable, and also has a relatively low melting point.

**Led** is the past tense of the verb lead meaning to be in charge of and to guide.

- Example: The students were **led** to the writing center.
- Example: They **led** us to believe we were welcome guests.

**Let** is the ability to allow something to happen or occur. It can also be a synonym of the word rent.

- Example: Francisco **let** the students write on the board.
- Example: Marco **let** his flat out to his college roommate.

Word	Lead	Led	Let
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to be in charge or command of</li> <li>• a leash for a dog or other animal</li> <li>• a heavy metal that is denser than most common materials</li> </ul>	<p>the past tense of to lead or be in charge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to allow something to happen</li> <li>• allow someone to have the use of (a room or property) in return for regular payments; rent.</li> </ul>

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Loose and Lose**

**Loose** is defined as something that is not firmly or tightly fixed in place; detached or able to be detached.

- Example: My shoelaces are **loose**.
- Example: There's a wild dog running **loose** in the street.
- Example: The button is **loose** on my shirt.

**Lose** is defined as the act of misplacing or being unable to find something or someone.

- Example: I win, you **lose**!
- Example: She had no time to **lose**, but must get ready at once.
- Example: The football team did not **lose** any games last season.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Loose</b>	<b>Lose</b>
<b>Definition</b>	not firmly or tightly fixed in place; detached or able to be detached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to misplace or become unable to find (something or someone)</li><li>• the opposite of win</li></ul>

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Me** functions as the subject of the sentence and refers to oneself or “I”.

- Example: What did you want **me** to say?
- Example: You answer **me**, but you don't hear **me**.

**Myself** is a reflexive pronoun that is used when referring to yourself earlier in the sentence.

- Example: I'm going to make **myself** a sandwich and get back to work.
- Example: I always pictured **myself** driving a van instead of a truck.

<b>Word</b>	<b>me</b>	<b>myself</b>
<b>Definition</b>	functions as the subject of the sentence and refers to oneself or “I”	a reflexive pronoun that is used when referring to yourself earlier in the sentence

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Palette, Palate, and Pallet**

**Palette** refers to the flat board or tablet that painters hold while painting.

- Example: Cynthia is gifted at using her entire **palette** to bring a portrait to life.
- Example: Their music was unique, offering a distinctive **palette** of tones and instruments.

**Palate** is a word relating to the sense of taste and often expresses an appreciation for finer subtleties in flavor.

- Example: Rose developed a refined **palate** for cheese after living in Paris for a decade.
- Example: A cool mint soup can be a perfect second course because it clears the **palate** nicely.
- Hint: Palate is conveniently spelled with the word ate at the end.

**Pallet** is a noun that usually refers to a small, low, portable platform (usually made of wood) on which goods are placed for storage or moving, as in a vehicle or a warehouse.

- Example: The shop owner decided to announce a special sale after receiving an extra **pallet** of rugs.
- Example: He spent the night watching over the animals in the barn, finally drifting to sleep on a **pallet** of old burlap sacks.

Word	Palette	Palate	Pallet
<b>Definition</b>	a thin board or slab on which an artist lays and mixes colors	the roof of the mouth and a person's appreciation of taste and flavor	a portable platform on which goods can be moved, stacked, and stored

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Peak, Peek, and Pique**

**Peak** is defined as the top or maximum of something.

- Example: I climbed to the **peak** of the mountain.
- Example: You can really tell when the traffic **peak** hours are.

**Peek** is to look at something quickly.

- Example: I took a quick **peek** at the card to my left and read the name.
- Example: The girl **peeked** at her birthday present when her parents were out.

**Pique** is to excite by a challenge and to raise curiosity.

- Example: The book's cover **piqued** my interest.
- Example: In a fit of **pique**, she threw her phone across the room.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Peak</b>	<b>Peek</b>	<b>Pique</b>
<b>Definition</b>	to reach a highest point and the pointed top of a mountain	to look quickly	a feeling of irritation or excitement cause by a challenge

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Quiet, Quite, and Quit**

**Quiet** refers to an absence of noise and uproar.

- Example: Early in the morning the streets are empty and **quiet**.
- Example: We spent a **quiet** evening at home.

**Quite** is to a certain or fairly significant extent or degree; fairly.

- Example: It's **quite** warm outside today.
- Example: The house we bought needs **quite** a bit of work.

**Quit** is to stop, to discontinue, or to leave.

- Example: Daniel decided to **quit** his second job in order to focus on school.
- Example: Janice had to **quit** playing tennis when she was called home for dinner.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Quiet</b>	<b>Quite</b>	<b>Quit</b>
<b>Definition</b>	to make little to no sound	to some degree, fairly, and not completely	to stop doing something or to leave

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

## **Raise and Rise**

**Raise** is defined as elevating something to a higher level or position.

- Present Tense
  - Is a transitive verb that **takes action**, which means it is doing something.
    - Example: I **raise** chickens on my farm.
    - Example: Students are encouraged to **raise** their hands during class.
  
- Past Tense
  - raise becomes raised in the past tense.
    - Example: The students **raised** some great questions in the lecture last week.
    - Example: Yesterday, my dad **raised** my car to change a flat tire.

**Rise** is defined as the process of getting up or going to a higher position.

- Present Tense
  - Is an intransitive verb and **does not take action**, which means it is unmoving.
    - Example: I **rise** from my bed each morning.
    - Example: The tide will not **rise** until later.
  
- Past Tense
  - rise becomes risen in the past tense and it includes the verbs “has” , ”have” , and “had” .
    - Example: My cousins have **risen** before 7:00 AM every morning since school started.
    - Example: The rooster had **risen** yesterday morning.

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Reel and Real**

**Reel** is a noun that refers to a cylindrical object that holds whatever winds around it such as film, thread, fishing line, and masking tape. As a verb it is the act of winding something in a circular motion.

- Example: He handed over the **reel** of film for the movie night at the theater.
- Example: Modern fishing **reels** have complex attachments to aid in casting and winding up fishing line.

**Real** is something that is true, genuine, actual, and significant. In math it is defined as one of an infinite set of quantities that can be represented by a point on the number line.

- Example: **Real** life is much different from fairy tales.
- Example: -6,  $13/2$ ,  $\sqrt{2}$ ,  $\pi$ , and 5 are all **real** numbers.
- Example: She looked away from the scene, unwilling to believe what she saw was **real**.

- **Hint:** Real with an "a" is the "actual thing."

Word	Reel	Real
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a <b>noun</b> that means a spool of long, narrow material wound around a cylinder</li> <li>• a <b>verb</b> that means to wind into a spool and to stagger or stumble</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having the quality of existence or truthfulness</li> <li>• a synonym for the word "very"</li> <li>• a math number</li> </ul>

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Seam and Seem**

**Seam** is a nouns that means the place where two pieces of fabric or other material are joined.

- Example: Mary took her new dress to a seamstress to have a **seam** adjusted.
- Example: Extra work is needed if you must have a **seam** between two pieces of trim on a wall.

**Seem** is a verb that means to appear or to give an impression.

- Example: It would **seem** that there are no appointments available for today.
- Example: You two **seem** to get along well together.

- **Hint:** Seam contains an “a” and the word “apron” is a garment that has seams.

Word	Seam	Seem
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a <b>noun</b> that means a line along which two pieces of fabric are sewn together in a garment or other article</li><li>• where two things meet</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a <b>verb</b> that means to give the impression or sensation of being something or having a particular quality</li></ul>

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

## Set and Sit

**Set** is defined as putting something down.

- Present Tense
  - Is a transitive verb that **takes action**, which means it is doing something.
    - Example: I **set** my homework on the counter.
    - Example: Can you **set** the table for dinner?
    - Present Participle Example: I am **setting** her backpack on her desk.
  
- Past Tense
  - Set is also set in the past tense.
    - Example: The professor **set** the papers on the desks last week.
    - Example: When did you **set** the meeting time for?

**Sit** is defined as a a period of sitting or to ride or keep one's seat on.

- Present Tense
  - Is an intransitive verb and **does not take action**, which means it is unmoving.
    - Example: She always **sits** by the window.
    - Example: All we could do was **sit** and wait.
    - Present Participle Example: Thomas had been cat-**sitting** for me.
  
- Past Tense
  - Sit becomes sat in the past tense.
    - Example: The red uniform **sat** well on his small frame.
    - Example: I **sat** next to him at dinner.

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Shelf and Shelve**

**Shelf** is a raised, horizontal surface used for storing things.

- Example: A **shelf** along one wall provides extra space for smaller plants.
- Example: Please put the vase on the top **shelf** of the kitchen cabinet.

**Shelve** means to place or arrange (items, especially books) on a shelf. It also means to decide not to proceed with (a project or plan), either temporarily or permanently.

- Example: I think we are going to **shelve** this idea.
  - Example: We had catalogued and **shelved** all the books shipped in that day.
- **Hint:** Since shelve and verb both contain the letter “v”, remembering that shelve is a verb should be a relatively simple proposition.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Shelf</b>	<b>Shelve</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a horizontal surface upon which things can be placed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to put something on a shelf</li><li>• to postpone an idea or action</li></ul>

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Sore and Soar**

**Sore** means to be physically tender (as from overuse or injury): feeling or affected by pain.

- Example: I went rowing yesterday for the first time in years, and my arms are **sore** today.
- Example: He accused me of being a **sore** loser.

**Soar** means to fly high in the sky.

- Example: Temperatures will **soar** over the weekend, say the weather forecasters.
- Example: The song's **soaring** melody sounded joyful and optimistic.

- **Hint:** Remember that **soar** is related to flying while **sore** is related to pain.

Word	Sore	Soar
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a painful and uncomfortable feeling because of injury, infection, or too much use</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to fly or rise high in the air</li><li>• to maintain height in the air without flapping wings or using engine power.</li></ul>

**APSU Writing Center**  
 Commonly Confused Words

**Sole and Soul**

**Sole** refers to one of something and can also be the bottom of a foot or shoe.

- Adjective Example: The **soles** of my feet hurt from walking barefoot through hot sand.
- Noun Example: The **sole** purpose of our secret mission is to gather info.
- Verb Example: I need to **sole** my shoes.

**Soul** the spiritual essence of a being and can also be a musical genre.

- Example: Alicia was the heart and **soul** of our group, and now she is gone.
  - Example: She was a vocalist who combined blues and **soul**.
- **Hint:** If you are referring to the bottom of a foot or shoe, remember that *sole* and *shoe* both end with the letter **E**.

Word	Sole	Soul
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• belonging exclusively or otherwise limited to one usually specified individual, unit, or group</li> <li>• the bottom of a foot or shoe</li> <li>• to replace the bottom part of a shoe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the essence or embodiment of a specified quality</li> <li>• a musical genre (soul music)</li> </ul>

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Suit and Suite**

**Suit** refers to a set of clothes or one of the four categories in a deck of cards.

- Example: The job would **suit** someone with a business background.
- Example: When playing the card game, you must follow **suit** until you can no longer do so.

**Suite** refers to a set of rooms, or a set of musical pieces designed to be played together in sequence.

- Example: Kevin wants a **suite** with a kitchen and a living room.
- Example: Bach's orchestral **suites** are prime examples of Baroque sensibilities.

- **Hint:** Suit and suite are both nouns, but only suit can be a verb. If you're using the word as a verb, choose suit.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Suit</b>	<b>Suite</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a set of outer clothes made of the same fabric and designed to be worn together</li><li>• to go well with or to enhance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a set of rooms designated for use or for a particular purpose</li><li>• a set of instrumental compositions, to be played in succession</li></ul>

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Their, They're, and There**

**Their** is the possessive pronoun form of the word “they”.

- Example: I'm going over to **their** house.
- Example: **Their** shoes are green.

**They're** is the contraction for “they are”.

- Example: **They're** heading in that direction now.
- Example: You're convinced **they're** not real?

**There** is a position or place.

- Example: The library is over **there**.
- Example: Daniel and his father would ride **there** on horseback.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Their</b>	<b>They're</b>	<b>There</b>
<b>Definition</b>	the possessive pronoun form of the word “they”	contraction for “they are”	a position or place

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**To, Too, and Two**

**To** is the preposition that means toward or in the direction of.

- Example: I'm going **to** bed early.
- Example: That's easy for you **to** say.

**Too** means very or also.

- Example: It's not **too** late to change your mind.
- Example: Love you **too**, Mom.

**Two** is the cardinal number between one and three. (2)

- Example: We may stay there a night or **two**.
- Example: It's now **two** o'clock and you ear at five.

<b>Word</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Too</b>	<b>Two</b>
<b>Definition</b>	toward or in the direction of	In addition; as well; besides; also	the number 2

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Then and Than**

**Then** can be a noun, an adverb, and an adjective.

- It is used to refer to a specific time, talk about sequences of events, or describe a previous state.
  - Example: If you don't study for the test, **then** you might not pass.
  - Example: She told me that she would meet me at the park, but **then** realized she had a doctor's appointment.
  - Example: He unlocked his car, got inside, and **then** started the engine.

**Than** can be a conjunction and a preposition.

- It is used when comparing clauses or expressions, introducing a preference, and signaling an exception or contrasting conditions.
  - Example: Winter is taller **than** he is.
  - Example: The book is more interesting **than** the movie.
  - Example: I would rather dance **than** swim.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Then</b>	<b>Than</b>
<b>Definition</b>	is used to refer to a specific time, talk about sequences of events, or describe a previous state.	is used when comparing clauses or expressions, introducing a preference, and signaling an exception or contrasting conditions.

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**This and These**

**This** is singular and is placed before or refers to to one noun.

- Example: **This** is our home.
- Example: Is it always like **this**?
- Example: But **this** wasn't just any trip.

**These** is plural and is placed before or refers to multiple nouns.

- Example: **These** are beautiful, Kiera.
- Example: How is your mother doing **these** days?
- Example: Nobody could answer **these** questions.

<b>Word</b>	<b>This</b>	<b>These</b>
<b>Definition</b>	used to identify a specific person or thing close at hand or being indicated or experienced	used to identify specific persons or things close at hand or being indicated or experienced

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Though, Thought, Through, and Thru**

**Though** is a conjunction known as “despite the fact” and an adverb that means “however”.

- Example: You knew that **though**, didn't you?
- Example: He looked as **though** he had been through the mud.

**Thought** is the past tense of “to think” and can also be an “idea or concept”.

- Example: I never **thought** I could do it.
- Example: The children **thought** the new game was very funny.

**Through** is defined as continuing in time toward completion of .

- Example: I can hear voices **through** the wall.
- Example: You need a powerful saw to cut **through** metal.

**Thru** is only used in informal speech and is **not** acceptable in academic writing.

- Example: We'll be in New York Tuesday **thru** Friday.
- Example: The reason is driven by a belt connected **thru** a pulley.

Word	Though	Thought	Through
<b>Definition</b>	and yet or however	an “idea or concept”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• among</li> <li>• continuing in time toward completion of</li> </ul>

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**We're, Were, and Where**

**We're** is a contraction for “we are”.

- Example: That's what **we're** going to do.
- Example: Let's go by and take a look at your truck while **we're** in town.

**Were** is a past tense form of the verb “to be”.

- Example: They **were** walking down the road.
- Example: We **were** all together.

**Where** refers to a specific location.

- Example: **Where** are you going?
- Example: The pen is right **where** you left it.

**Wear** is to put on a specific outfit or to become diminished by constant use.

- Example: You should **wear** a coat.
- Example: Her shoes had begun to **wear**.

Word	We're	Were	Where	Wear
<b>Definition</b>	a contraction for “we are”	a past tense form of the verb “to be”	refers to a specific location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to put on a specific outfit</li> <li>• to become diminished</li> </ul>

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Well** can mean very much, to a great degree, or completely. It can also mean in a good way or to a high standard.

- Example: Knead the dough **well**, then divide it into four pieces.
- Example: It's just as **well** you brought an umbrella. It's going to rain.

**We'll** is a contraction (shortened form) of “we will” or “we shall.”

- Example: I guess **we'll** see.
- Example: I think **we'll** have a break now.

**Will** used to talk about what is going to happen in the future (certain or planned). It can also be used when referring to something that always or usually happens.

- Example: **Will** you join us for a cup of coffee, Evie?
- Example: Fruit **will** keep longer in the refrigerator.

Word	Well	We'll	Will
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a good or satisfactory way</li> <li>• a watering place</li> </ul>	contraction of “we will” or “we shall”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• express the future tense, requests, capacity, etc.</li> <li>• intended desire or wish</li> </ul>

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Who, Who’s, Whose, and Whom**

**Who** is a pronoun that functions as the subject of a sentence, so it will always refer to the person performing the action.

- Example: **Who** are you looking for this time?
- Example: The man **who** works at the coffee shop is very friendly.

**Who’s** is a contraction (shortened form) of “who is” or “who has.”

- Example: **Who’s** eaten at this restaurant before?
- Example: Kamilah is the teacher **who’s** in charge of the field trip.

**Whose** is the possessive form of the pronoun “who.”

- Example: She’s the student **whose** handwriting is the best in my class.
- Example: **Whose** books are these?

**Whom** is a pronoun that acts as the object of a verb or preposition (often the person that is acted upon).

- Example: She is the woman **whom** I met at the library.
- Example: To **whom** was the letter addressed?

Word	Who	Who’s	Whose	Whom
<b>Definition</b>	a pronoun that refers to the <b>subject</b> of the sentence	contraction of “who is” or “who has”	shows possession of or relating to whom or which	a pronoun that refers to the <b>object</b> of the sentence

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Your and You're**

**Your** is a possessive adjective and modifies nouns.

- Example: How do I get to **your** house?
- Example: I left **your** gloves in the drawer next to the front door.

**You're** is a contraction of the two words you are.

- Example: I'll go to the library if **you're** going to be there as well.
- Example: The judges' expressions are indicating that **you're** the winner of the competition.

- **Hint:** No matter which word you think should be placed into the sentence, substitute it with you are and see if the sentence still makes sense. If it still makes sense, use **you're**. If it does not, use **your**.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Your</b>	<b>You're</b>
<b>Definition</b>	the possessive form of you and indicates that you own something	A contraction (or shortened version) of the words "you" and "are"

**APSU Writing Center**  
Commonly Confused Words

**Yours and Your's**

**Yours** is a second person possessive pronoun and is used to refer to a thing or things belonging to or associated with the person or people that the speaker is addressing.

- Example: Jim's order is still being prepared, but **yours** is already delivered.
- Example: You can stay here or come with us; the choice is **yours**.

**Your's** is an incorrect formation of the second person possessive pronoun.

- If you do find yourself torn between your's and yours, just spell out your's as if it were a contraction.
  - Is this suitcase yours?
  - Is this suitcase your's?
  - Is this suitcase your is?

<b>Word</b>	<b>Yours</b>	<b>Your's</b>
<b>Definition</b>	a second-person possessive pronoun that indicates possession	Is never correct. You may see it written on occasion, but it counts as a misspelling or grammatical error.

## APSU Writing Center

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