

Commonly Confused Words
APSU Writing Center Handout

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** parking spaces.
- **Example:** I wouldn't have accepted anything **except** a job in Tennessee.

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**.

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 like 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.

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.

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.

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?

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**.

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.

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.

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 must 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.

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 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.

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**.

Conscious and Conscience

Conscious is an adjective that means characterized by or having an awareness of one's environment. (Mental Awareness)

- **Example:** We are unaware of any **conscious** life on other planets.
- 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)

- **Example:** The burglar must have had a turn of **conscience** because he returned all of the stolen goods.
- **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.

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.

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.

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,"

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 on the floppy **disk**.
- **Example:** The magnetic **disk** drive symbolizes a monumental advance in mass-storage technology.

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.

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”.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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".

Lay and Lie

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 act**, 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.

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.

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 misplacement 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.

Me and Myself

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.

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.

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.

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.

Raise and Rise

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

Present Tense

Is a transitive verb that **acts**, 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.

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, $13/2$, $\sqrt{2}$, π , 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."

Seam and Seem

Seam is a noun 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.

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.

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.

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.

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**.

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.

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.

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 eat at five.

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.

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.

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.

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**.

Well, We'll and Will

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.

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?

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**.

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.

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