

## COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS

1. **Advise** is a verb while **advice** is a noun.  
He **advised** the student to take English.  
Take my **advice** and go home.
2. **Affect** is always a verb meaning to influence or attack or to touch the emotions. The noun **effect** means the result of a cause.  
Smoking **affects** the heart. Drugs have side **effects**.
3. **Altogether** means wholly or thoroughly.  
**All together** means in a group.  
This test is **altogether** unnecessary.  
They were **all together** at the restaurant.
4. **Cite** means to quote or refer to an example. **Sight** means to have the power of vision.  
**Site** means a place where something is or was situated.  
John will **cite** a portion of Poe's most famous poem.  
One's **sight** enables one to see many things.  
The Smiths are going to build a home on that **site**.
5. **Except** means to exclude or to make an exception.  
**Accept** means to approve or to receive.  
Everyone **except** John is going to the party.  
Linda was **accepted** at Georgia Tech.
6. **Fewer** is used with plural nouns and refers to number.  
**Less** is used with singular nouns and refers to amount.  
**Fewer** students were in class today, so discussion took **less** time than usual.
7. **Hear** is a verb meaning to listen. **Here** is an adverb meaning time or place, and it is the opposite of **there**.  
You **hear** with your **ear**.  
If you want to have a party, have it **here**.
8. **Lay (laid, laying)** means to put or to place.  
**Lie (lay, lain, lying)** means to rest or to recline.  
Please **lay** the book on the table.  
Jim is going to **lie** down and rest for awhile.
9. **Lose** is a verb, but **loose** is usually an adjective.  
Did you **lose** your umbrella? This belt is too **loose**.
10. **Past** means gone by, over, or having existed in a previous time.  
**Passed** is the past tense of the verb to pass, meaning to go by.  
This **past** weekend a car **passed** me going at least 80 mph.
11. **Right** means correct. **Write** means to trace or to inscribe with a pencil, pen, or similar device. **Rite** is a custom or a ceremony.  
Mary gave the **right** answer to the question.  
Students have to **write** their answers on a sheet of paper.

A Bar Mitzvah is a **rite** of passage.  
The author of a play, however, is a **playwright**.

12. **Then** refers to time or order, and **than** is used in comparisons.  
We are going shopping and **then** to the movies.  
Billy would rather watch TV **than** read books.
13. **There** is an adverb referring to a place or a point in time or an expletive. **Their** is a possessive pronoun. **They're** is a contraction for they are.  
Put the book over **there**. **There** is nothing to do in Duluth.  
**Their** car is in the shop. **They're** not going with us.
14. **To** means toward or in the direction of. **Too** means also, in addition, or besides. **Two** is a number.
15. **Weather** refers to climate, but **whether** is used to introduce an alternative.
16. **Won** is the past tense of the verb to win, and **one** is a number.
17. **Whole** means entire or complete, and a **hole** is an opening or cavity.
18. **Whose** is a possessive pronoun, and **who's** is a contraction for who is.  
**Who's** going to find out **whose** book this is.
19. **Your** is a possessive pronoun, and **you're** is a contraction for you are.  
**You're** not going to like what they did to **your** car.

NOTE: Additional spelling hints may be found in Harbrace College Handbook, Chapters 18 and 19.