

Confusing Words and Usage Errors

Similar words that are spelled differently (**homonyms** or **homophones**) can be tricky. Here are some of the most commonly confused words and phrases. If you can't distinguish between them, you need to look them up in the dictionary or a grammar guidebook and learn the difference. Homonyms are particularly dangerous on computers since spell-checkers will not spot them.

These words confuse students by sounding alike.

1. *affect / effect*
2. *accept / except*
3. *advice / advise*
4. *all ready / already*
5. *all together / altogether*
6. *allusion / illusion*
7. *anyone / any one*
8. *awhile / a while*
9. *cite / site / sight*
10. *conscience / conscious*
11. *forth / fourth*
12. *its / it's*
13. *may be / maybe*
14. *past / passed*
15. *principal / principle*
16. *than / then*
17. *there / their / they're*
18. *to / two / too*
19. *whether / weather*
20. *who's / whose*

Other words, while not homonyms, are also frequently confused, misused or misspelled.

1. *amount / number*
2. *fewer / less*
3. *further / farther*
4. *lie / lay (past tense: lay, laid)*
5. *lead / led*
6. *that / which*
7. *loose / lose*
8. *precede / proceed*
9. *raise / rise (and raised / risen)*
10. *between / among*
11. *can / may / might*
12. *could of / could have*
13. *hanged / hung*
14. *regardless / irregardless*
(no such word in the later case)
15. *more unique, more straight*
(these absolute words don't take comparatives)
16. *quit / quite / quiet* (these three are often mistyped)
17. *quote (verb) / quotation (noun)*
18. *who / whom*
19. *who / that*