



Commonly Confused Words

<p>Accept/except/exempt Accept: to take or receive an offering Tom accepted his award with a smile. Except: to exclude, not include Everyone in the tute, except for 1 student, clapped. Exempt: free from obligation She is exempt from doing JST 112.</p>	<p>Adverse/averse Adverse: opposing, unfavourable The ship battled against adverse winds. Averse: reluctant to accept, disinclined They were averse to Parade at 7.30am in winter.</p>
<p>Advice/advise Advice:(noun)-information, counsel The tutor gave good advice. Advise(verb):to give info, to counsel The officer advised the driver to slow down.</p>	<p>Affect/effect Affect:(verb)to influence, to produce change He was affected by his first experience of death. Effect: (verb)to enact,to bring about The Wood Royal Commission effected a change in police culture. Effect: (Noun) the result, consequence Breath Testing has had an effect on the road toll.</p>
<p>Allot/a lot Allot: (verb)to distribute , to assign They were allotted equal shares in her estate. A lot: (lot=noun) many, much -always two words. There was a lot to do in Tri 3.</p>	<p>All ready/already All ready: every individual person or thing is prepared We are all ready to begin the shuttle run. Already: by this time Officers were already there when the SES arrived.</p>
<p>All right/alright All right:(interjection) I agree to your order/proposal All right! I'll come now. All right:(adverb)as desired, satisfactorily, certainly That's the man all right Alright: (adverb) used as an alternative to all right All right: (adjective) safe & sound, in good condition. He's all right!</p>	<p>All together/altogether All together: all acting at same time or jointly We pulled all together at the tug-o-war rope. Altogether: (adverb) completely, wholly The warders were not altogether surprised that the inmate was back in jail.</p>
<p>Among/between Among: used when referring to several people, events, things or members of a group The various gangs fought among themselves. Between: used when referring to two people, things or events. It is difficult to choose between the top two speakers.</p>	<p>Amount/number Amount: Used for items that can't be counted or divided (effort, air, sunshine, noise, work, money) He put a huge amount of effort into that essay. Number: used for times that can be counted or divided (voices, dollars, metres, options people) A surprising number of people came to the protest.</p>
<p>Appraise/Apprise Appraise: to judge as to quality, size, weight Sgt Jones appraised the danger at the accident scene. Apprise: to inform, to advise. I apprised the ambos of the driver's condition.</p>	<p>Ascent/assent Ascent: (noun) a climb, a rise The last part of the Mt Everest ascent is gruelling. Assent: (verb) to give agreement to The bill passed by Parliament has received the Royal assent.</p>

<p>Assistance/assistants Assistance: help, support; aid Render every assistance at the accident scene. Assistants: more than one helper There were two assistants at the Police Driver Training School..</p>	<p>Assure/ensure/insure Assure: to state with confidence I assure you that I'm right. Ensure: to safeguard or make certain of something Please ensure the gate is locked. Insure: to protect people or goods against possible harm or loss by monetary compensation Her motorbike was not insured against theft.</p>
<p>Bare/Bear Bare: without covering His bald head was bare. Bear: to carry; to endure; an animal The AFL player had to bear the pain of his injury.</p>	<p>Born/borne Born: having come into existence by birth The new baby was born at midnight. Borne: (past participle of the verb 'to bear') carried He has borne the pain of that knee injury for months.</p>
<p>Bought/brought Bought: past tense of 'to buy' I bought a beer at the pub. Brought: past tense of 'to bring' The dog brought its bone to the back door.</p>	<p>Brake/break Brake: part of a vehicle; slow down; stop When the traffic light turns red, brake immediately! Break: to divide into pieces Please break the chocolate into six pieces.</p>
<p>Censor/censure Censor: (verb) to restrict publication of It was censored because of the pornographic scenes. (noun) the person appointed to restrict publication of or to alter the content of a film, book etc. The censor demanded film cuts. Censure: (verb) to pass unfavourable comment on somebody (for something), to rebuke She censured the two students for poor conduct. (noun) disapproval, criticism They passed a vote of censure against him because he ignored the loud cries for help.</p>	<p>Cite/site/sight Cite: to speak or write words from a book She cited a direct quote from Eijkman (1998). Site: a place where a building is, was, or will be Where is the site for the new police station? Sight: the ability to see My eyesight is fading.</p>
<p>Compare to/compare with Compare to: to point out the similarities between two things, to liken The taste of Daffodil margarine can be compared to Flora. Compare with: to point out the differences between two things, to evaluate one thing against another Goulburn's winters are freezing compared with Brisbane's.</p>	<p>Complement/compliment Complement: (verb) to complete or fill up The weekly tutes complement the lecture. (noun) full number There was a full complement of staff at school today. Compliment: (verb and noun) praise (verb) My compliments on your muscular six pack! (noun) "Thank you for the compliment".</p>
<p>Conscience/conscious Conscience: (noun) one's internal sense of right and wrong Ethical decisions often rely on one's conscience. Conscious: (adjective) being aware of something He was conscious of being followed.</p>	<p>Contemporary/modern Contemporary: (adjective) belonging to same time Many contemporary authors disagree with writers of the past century. (noun) a person who live at the same time as another She and I were contemporaries at College. Modern: (adj) up to date; relating to the present Nike is a modern brand of joggers.</p>
<p>Continual/continuous Continual: recurring regularly He made a continual weekly phone to his Mum. Continuous: going on without interruption Coles had continuous opening 24 hours a day.</p>	<p>Council/counsel Council: (always noun) a group of people meeting to decide or to confer upon issues The Crookwell City Council meets once a week. Counsel: to give advise Listen to the counsel of your elders!</p>
<p>Councillor/Counsellor Councillor: the member of a council The Councillor was re-elected. Counsellor: an adviser They saw a counsellor after the traumatic incident.</p>	<p>Currant/current Currant: a dried seedless grape, a small berry Toasted muesli contains lots of currants. Current: (noun) a flow; The current of the Shoalhaven River is rapid. (adjective) happening now The current news is being televised live</p>

<p>Deposition/disposition Deposition: testimony under oath Her deposition was made public in the court of law. Disposition: mood; temperament; arrangement After medication, his disposition became depressive.</p>	<p>Device/devise Device: (noun) a plan, scheme, trick The latest vehicle safety device is the air bag. Devise: (verb) to plan, invent, plot scheme "Ask the chief to devise a plan".</p>
<p>Elicit/illicit Elicit: (verb) to bring about He was able to elicit more information by questioning the suspect. Illicit: (adjective) illegal The illicit drugs were confiscated.</p>	<p>Eligible/illegible Eligible: able to be chosen Where can I find an eligible bachelor? Illegible: unable to read The essay was illegible, so he was asked to type the next draft.</p>
<p>Emigrant/immigrant Emigrant: someone leaving a country permanently (noun) Emigrants are often people fleeing their war torn country. Immigrant: a new settler in a country Many immigrants come from overseas after the war.</p>	<p>Eminent/imminent Eminent: important, distinguished, highly respected Mother Theresa was an eminent person. Imminent: (adj) about to happen Black clouds and strong winds indicated a storm was imminent.</p>
<p>Explicit/implicit Explicit: clearly stated (adj) He gave the driver explicit directions on how to get through the traffic. Implicit: implied, not expressed openly(adj) I have implicit faith in your abilities.</p>	<p>Formally/formerly Formally: ceremonially (adj) I needed to dress formally for the wedding. Formerly: happening before this, (adverb) in earlier times, previously This College was formerly known as the Academy.</p>
<p>Hear/here Hear: using the ear to detect sound Here: indicating place It is difficult to hear the music from the back seat. The library is over here.</p>	<p>Incidence/incident Incidence: the extent of a thing or the range in which it happens The incidence of drink driving was high on Saturday nights. Incidents: more than one event, happening Both incidents took place on the same day.</p>
<p>Inter/intra Inter: between two or more Interstate travel involves crossing state borders. Intra: within one Intrastate travel allows you to see more of the state.</p>	
<p>Its/it's Its: the possessive, belonging to The book has lost its cover. It's: the contraction of it is It's time to leave the building now.</p>	<p>Judicial/judicious Judicial: (adj) of, done by, proper to a court of law The judicial decision will be handed down on Friday. Judicious: (adj) sensible, showing sound judgement, wise It is judicious to consult a variety of sources.</p>
<p>Lead/led Lead: (noun) a metal; or going before (verb) to go before Silver and lead are metals. Can you lead the discussion in your group? Led: the past tense and the past participle He led the way through the crowd.</p>	<p>Less/fewer Less: used with things which can not be counted - milk, bread The canteen needs less bread today. Fewer: used with things which can counted – litres/slices/loaves We will need fewer slices of bread for lunches.</p>
<p>Lose/loose Lose: unable to keep/find; to not win Don't lose the key because the door will be locked. Loose: not tightly fitted This shirt feels too loose.</p>	<p>Licence/license Licence: (noun) freedom, authorisation to do something He has his driver's licence in his pocket. License: (verb) to give someone the freedom to do something Clubs are licensed to stay open until late.</p>

<p>Objectivity/subjectivity Objectivity: the manner of approaching a subject etc without prejudice or preconceived notions They put personal feelings aside and approached the topic with great objectivity. Subjectivity: the manner of approaching a subject etc from a personal or emotional point of view. Responding to characters in a book requires some degree of subjectivity.</p>	<p>Pacific/specific Pacific: appeasing, making peace The Pacific Ocean acquired its name because it was fairly free from storms and usually peaceful. Specific: definite, explicit, precise We require specific details to complete our investigation.</p>
<p>Passed/past Passed: the past participle form and the past tense form of the verb, to pass I passed that exam by ten marks. Phew! Past: (noun) the time before the present; (adjective) having already happened In the past, children were seen but not heard.</p>	<p>Patience/patients Patience: forbearance, calmness, constancy in labour, etc Dealing with children requires great patience. Patients: people under someone's care The patients in the emergency ward will be moved today.</p>
<p>Personal/personnel Personal: private, of one person Leave your personal belongings over there. Personnel: employees, staff All personnel must have a health check.</p>	<p>Plain/plane Plain: ordinary, clear I prefer a plain colour. It was plain to see that the event had distressed them. Plane: aircraft; tool; level of development The plane was due to land an hour ago. A plane is a useful woodworking tool.</p>
<p>Practicable/practical Practicable: able to be carried out / put into practice It's not practicable for all staff to be on leave at the same time. Practical: useful, serving a purpose It was more practical to fly to Brisbane than to drive.</p>	<p>Practice/practise Practice: (noun) training, a repetitive exercise Basketball practice begins next week. Practise: (verb) to train, work out They need to practise before the concert.</p>
<p>Presence/presents Presence: state of being A police presence will be required at the game. Presents: gifts She received many presents on her birthday.</p>	<p>Principal/principle Principal: most important; sum of money; head of school The principal actors will arrive tomorrow. Early repayments can reduce the principal on a loan. Mr Haywood is the principal of their school. Principle: rule, standard We will discuss the principle of equal opportunity tomorrow.</p>
<p>Relative/relevant Relative: connected (with), having relation (to) Your success is relative to the effort you make. Relevant: having some bearing on, pertinent, to the point The library contains relevant material for your essay.</p>	<p>Respectfully/respectively Respectfully: with respect I asked respectfully if I could be excused. Respectively: relating to each factor in the order in which they are given I wrote to Tom, James and Peter respectively.</p>
<p>Stationary/stationery Stationary: (adjective) having a fixed place The train was stationary at the platform. Stationery: (noun) writing materials Pencils, pens and notepads are all items of stationery.</p>	<p>Storey/story Storey: a set of rooms on one level They are building a second storey on their house. Story: a narrative or anecdote, a tale He reads a story to his son every night.</p>
<p>To/two/too To: (preposition, conjunction, adverb) expressing direction, contact We need to go to the library. Two: (numeral/adjective) one added to one There are two police officers outside. Too: (adverb) more than enough, in addition I have too many books to carry. She will need a password too.</p>	<p>There/their/they're There: (adverb) denoting place The library is over there. There are several different points of view. Their: possessive Their assignment is due tomorrow. They're: contraction of they are They're going the wrong way.</p>

<p>Then/than Then: at that time; in that case You must complete the test then leave the room. Than: used to make comparison He is taller than the rest of the group.</p>	<p>Through/threw/thorough Through: to enter one side and exit the other Go through the door and turn left. Threw: past tense of throw I threw the paper in the bin. Thorough: complete/in great detail A thorough investigation will reveal the truth.</p>
<p>Waist/waste Waist: middle of body or garment The belt felt too loose around his waist. Waste: to use carelessly; discarded objects Don't waste paper. The waste will be taken to the recycling depot.</p>	<p>Weather/wether/whether Weather: climate, atmospheric conditions The weather today is cold and windy. Wether: castrated ram All ewes and wethers are in that paddock. Whether: (adverb) expression of doubt I don't know whether to arrive early or not.</p>
<p>Were/where/we're Were: the past tense form of the verb to be We were going there yesterday but changed our minds. Where: (adverb) denoting place Where is the parade ground?</p>	<p>Who/whom Who: relative pronoun referring to subject of a verb Who is going tonight? He is the only student who needs to go early. Whom: relative pronoun referring to object of a verb To whom is he referring? I asked her about whom she was speaking.</p>
<p>Whole/hole Whole: complete The whole group will arrive tomorrow. Hole: an opening There is a hole in the roof.</p>	<p>Who's/whose Who's: contraction of who is Who's waiting outside? Whose: possessive pronoun Whose book is on the chair?</p>
<p>Wrapped/wrapt Wrapped: enveloped, enclosed We wrapped Christmas presents all night. Wrapt: absorbed, enraptured, mentally transported They were wrapt in the wonderful music.</p>	<p>Your/you're Your: possessive pronoun, belonging to you Your assignment is due tomorrow. You're: contraction of you are You're going the wrong way.</p>

This table is based on: Russell-Matthews, F. (1990). *The essay writing handbook*. Melbourne: Nelson. pp.76-88.