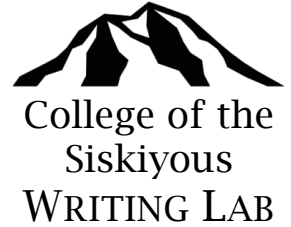


# COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS



**INTRODUCTION:** Seeing these words in context will help you determine the correct spelling of words that are often misspelled.

## **accept/except**

Will you **accept** the invitation to John's birthday party?

To **accept** is to receive.

Everyone will be attending **except** Susie.

**Except** means "not including."

## **access/excess**

Place the new catalogs on the table where students will have **access** to them.

To have **access** to means to be able to get.

There is **excess** paper in the recycle bin that we can use for scratch paper.

**Excess** means extra.

## **advise/advice**

Your counselor can **advise** you on what classes to take next semester.

**Advise** is a verb.

Your counselor's **advice** will be very helpful when it is time to register.

**Advice** is a noun.

## **affect/effect**

The weather report may **affect** your decision to go skiing.

**Affect** is a verb.

Skiing during a snowstorm can have a dramatic **effect** on visibility.

**Effect** is generally a noun.

## **already/all ready**

The request for 300 more copies was **already** sent to the Print Shop.

**Already** means something has occurred.

The order will be **all ready** in three days.

**All ready** means completely prepared.

## **among/between**

You can distribute this candy **among** the three of you.

**Among** refers to more than two people.

You can split this candy **between** the two of you.

**Between** refers to two people.

**amount/number**

The **amount** of sand on a beach would be difficult to measure.

**Amount** is for objects we can't count, such as sugar or salt.

The **number** of seagulls is much easier to count.

**Number** is for objects we can count.

**conscience/conscious**

Let your **conscience** be your guide.

Your **conscience** is what helps you do the right thing.

The patient was not **conscious** during the operation.

**Conscious** is the state of being awake or aware.

**decent/descent**

This website will be a **decent** reference for my research paper.

**Decent** means good or acceptable.

We will begin our mile **descent** back to land in five minutes.

**Descent** refers to movement downward. It also refers to one's heritage.

**dessert/desert**

Cheesecake is a delicious **dessert**.

**Dessert** is something sweet to eat.

The Mojave is a **desert** in California.

A **desert** is a place with little water or rain.

**fewer/less**

There are **fewer** people here than we expected.

**Fewer** is for countable objects.

The salt shaker is **less** than half full.

**Less** is for non-countable objects.

**its/it's**

The puppy was chasing **its** tail.

**Its** is the possessive form of "it."

**It's** fun to watch the puppy play.

**It's** is a contraction of "it is."

**knew/new**

He **knew** there was going to be a spelling test today.

**Knew** is past tense for "know."

The **new** books have finally arrived.

**New** is the opposite of "old."

**lead/led**

Michael is going to **lead** a group of novice climbers up the mountain.

**Lead** is the present tense.

Last year he **led** only advanced groups.

**Led** is the past tense of “lead.”

Don’t use paint that has **lead** in it.

**Lead** is a metal.

**loose/lose**

Your shoelace is **loose**.

**Loose** is the opposite of tight.

Tie your shoe so you don’t **lose** it.

**Lose** is a verb meaning “misplace.”

**passed/past**

The train has already **passed** us.

**Passed** is past tense for the verb “pass,” meaning to “go by.”

Steam engines are now a thing of the **past**.

**Past** refers to a period of time before the present.

**principle/principal**

**Principles** are guidelines that we follow.

**Principles** are things.

The **principal** is your pal.

**Principals** are people.

**quiet/quite**

We need to be **quiet** while the children are napping.

**Quiet** refers to a lack of noise.

It is **quite** important to follow this practice.

**Quite** is like “very.”

**roll/role**

When you let go of the rock, it will **roll** down the hill.

**Roll** is a verb meaning to continue in a circular motion. It can also be a noun as in “cinnamon roll.”

Elizabeth got the lead **role** in the play.

Your **role** is the position that you fill.

**then/than**

Julie goes roller skating now and **then**.

**Then** refers to time. **Then** often follows the conditional “if.”

She likes skiing better **than** skating.

**Than** refers to comparison, as in “more than.”

**their/there/they're**

We are all going to travel in **their** car.

**Their** is a possessive, plural pronoun.

We will arrive **there** at noon tomorrow.

**There** is a place.

**They're** going to join us when we arrive.

**They're** is a contraction of "they are."

**threw/through**

Robert **threw** the ball to home base.

**Threw** is past tense for the verb "throw."

The ball went flying **through** the air.

**Through** is a preposition describing location.

**to/two/too**

The students are going **to** the bowling alley tonight.

**To** is a preposition. **To** is also part of the infinitive form of a verb as in "to walk."

There will be **two** activities to choose from.

**Two** is a number.

Pizza will be served, **too**.

**Too** is like also.

**were/where/wear**

The fireworks **were** spectacular.

**Were** is the past tense of "are."

**Where** are you going after the show?

**Where** describes location.

What are you planning to **wear** tomorrow?

**Wear** is a verb meaning to have on the body.

**who's/whose**

**Who's** going to drive the van?

**Who's** is a contraction of "who is."

I don't know **whose** sweater that is.

**Whose** is the possessive of "who."

**your/you're**

I hope **your** spelling improves after looking over some commonly confused words.

**Your** is the possessive for "you."

**You're** bound to learn to spell better with practice.

**You're** is a contraction of "you are."