

Choosing the Appropriate Words

- ~~✍~~ **accept, except**--*Accept* is a verb meaning "to receive." *Except* is usually a preposition meaning "excluding." *The postal service will **accept** most packages for mailing **except** that one.*
- ~~✍~~ **advice, advise**--*Advice* is a noun, *advise* is a verb: *I agree with Jodi's **advice**. The counselor may **advise** you to take another computer class.*
- ~~✍~~ **affect, effect**--*Affect* is usually a verb meaning "to influence." *Effect* is usually a noun meaning "result." *Cats tend to **affect** her asthma. One such **effect** is an irritable throat.*
- ~~✍~~ **all ready, already**--*All ready* means "completely prepared." *Already* means "previously." *Our family had **already** packed for our trip because they were **all ready** to go.*
- ~~✍~~ **all right**--*All right* is written as two words. *Alright* is nonstandard. *Taco Bell for dinner is **all right** with me.*
- ~~✍~~ **a lot**-- *A lot* is two words not one. *We have had to do **a lot** of writing for this class.*
- ~~✍~~ **bad, badly**--*Bad* is an adjective, *badly* an adverb. *Susan had a **bad** feeling that her dog would behave **badly** while she was gone.*
- ~~✍~~ **cannot**--*This is one word--not two.*
- ~~✍~~ **can, may**--*Can* is traditionally used to show "ability" and *may* for "permission." ***Can** you play basketball? **May** I show you how to dribble?*
- ~~✍~~ **could of, should of, would of**--These are all nonstandard forms. Instead use: *could have, should have, would have.* *The girls **should have** been home over an hour ago.*
- ~~✍~~ **everyone, every one**--*Everyone* is an indefinite pronoun. *Every one*, the pronoun *one* preceded by the adjective *every* means "each individual or thing in a particular group." *Almost **everyone** in our English class loves to write, so **every one** of the papers received a passing grade.*
- ~~✍~~ **hardly**--Avoid expressions such as *can't hardly* and *not hardly* which are considered double negatives. *I **can't hardly** wait for Christmas to come.*

✍ **its, it's**--*Its* is a possessive pronoun; *it's* is a contraction for *it is*. *The dog lost **its** collar, and now **it's** going to have to get another one.*

✍ **lie, lay**--*Lie* is an intransitive verb meaning "to recline or rest on a surface." Its principle parts are *lie, lay, lain*. *Lay* is a transitive verb meaning "to put or place." Its principle parts are *lay, laid, laid*. *Shirley felt nauseated, so she left to **lie** down. Please **lay** your books down right now.*

✍ **reason...is because**--Use *that* instead of *because*. *The reason I'm late is **that** (not because) I slipped down the stairs at home.*

✍ **than, then**--*Than* is a conjunction used in comparisons; *then* is an adverb denoting time. *Joseph drove us to the restaurant, and **then** we ordered a huge dinner. The barbecue ribs were more **than** I can eat.*

✍ **there, their, they're**--*There* is an adverb specifying place; it is also an expletive. ***There** are two pieces of pie left. The paper is right **there** in front of your face. **Their** is a possessive pronoun. My parents ate at **their** favorite restaurant. **They're** is a contraction for "they are." **They're** going out again tomorrow.*

✍ **to, too, two**--*To* is a preposition; *too* is an adverb; *two* is a number. *The **two** of them haven't been able **to** talk to the instructor because he is **too** busy.*

✍ **use to**--Write *used to* instead. *Kim **used to** play the trumpet.*

✍ **weather, whether**--The noun *weather* refers to the state of the atmosphere. *Whether* is a conjunction referring to a choice between alternatives. *Mr. Owens told us that the **weather** is supposed to change drastically this afternoon. I don't know **whether** it will, however.*

✍ **who, whom**--*Who* is used for subjects and subject complements; *whom* is used for objects.

✍ **you**--In formal writing, avoid *you* in an indefinite sentence meaning "anyone." *Any baseball fan (not YOU) could tell that McGwire's ball was out of the ball park.*

✍ **your, you're**--*Your* is a possessive pronoun; *you're* is a contraction of "you are." *Is that **your** new car? **You're** lucky your dad bought it for you.*