

Commonly Confused Words

<u>WORD</u>	<u>EXPLANATION</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
a	Use <i>a</i> before a word that begins with a consonant.	Do you have a book I could borrow?
an	Use <i>an</i> before a word that begins with a vowel (or a silent h).	An ant is the main character in <i>A Bug's Life</i> . He arrived an hour ahead of schedule.
a lot	two words, many	I have a lot of homework to do.
allot	to distribute	I will allot three weeks for the assignment.
are	a verb	They are happy.
or	separates two choices	I'll eat rice or potatoes.
our	shows ownership	Our class meets Monday through Friday.
accept	to receive, to agree as true	I accept that the car repair will be expensive.
except	to take or leave out	Take all the books off the shelf except the dictionary.
affect	v., to influence	Ice on a sidewalk affects walking safety.
effect	n., result	The subtle effect of shading compliments the artwork.
by	next to, close to	I would like to sit by you during class.
bye	pause, side issue, variant of by	Our team has a bye this week.
buy	to purchase	I would like to buy your old books.
have	a verb	We should have left sooner.
of	a preposition	Ann is one of three sisters.
hear	to perceive sound	We can hear loud music.
here	means "this place"	Come here!
it's	a contraction for "it is"	It's my favorite novel.
its	shows ownership	The truck flipped over on its side.
knew	past tense of know	I knew you were there.
new	never used before, recent	Is that a new car you're driving?
know	to have information or reasoned belief	I know you will come through for me.
no	used to express refusal, denial	No , it is not raining.

<u>WORD</u>	<u>EXPLANATION</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
lie	to have lain down	I have a headache, so I'm going to lie down for awhile.
lay	to lay an object down	Lay the blanket in the bassinet.
lose	to be deprived of, not to win	Did the team lose the game?
loose	means "not securely attached"	My shoelace is loose .
passed	past tense of "to pass," to have moved	The tornado passed through the city quickly.
past	belonging to a former time or place	Who was the past president of YVCC?
quit	means "to stop" or "to leave"	Quit making that noise!
quite	means "actually" or "somewhat," very	I am quite content to sit here all day.
quiet	making no noise, silent	Please be quiet !
sweet	having a sugary taste, pleasing	This dessert is too sweet .
sweat	to perspire	I sweat a lot when I'm under pressure.
than	use in comparisons	Driving is faster than walking.
then	refers to time	I was much happier back then .
there	means "that place or position"	Meet me over there .
their	shows ownership	The Smiths raved about their new Mercedes.
they're	a contraction for "they are"	They're very friendly at the Writing Center.
to	a preposition	Javier is going to Seattle
too	means "also" or "excessive"	You gave me too much chocolate.
two	a number	Chris has two gerbils and one rat.
through	in one side and out the opposite	The car drove through the tunnel.
threw	past tense of throw	Regrettably, she threw away all her old English essays.
thorough	careful or complete	John was very thorough with his research paper.
though	however, nevertheless	He's really a sweetheart though he looks tough.
were	past tense of "are"	The leaves were falling and swirling.
we're	a contraction for "we are"	We're going to the Writing Center.
where	indicates place or position	Where in the world are you?
who	referring to a person or persons	I like the people who live next door.
whom	used as an object	Whom did Laura choose as her replacement?
you're	a contraction for "you are"	You're an excellent writer.
your	shows ownership	I believe this is your notebook.