

USEFUL USAGE

Lie and Lay

Lie = "to rest" or "to recline"

lie	lying	lay	have lain
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Lay = "to put" or "to place" something

lay	laying	laid	have laid
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- I sometimes lay on the floor.
- Yesterday, Bob laid the bricks on the patio.
- I have laid your clean towels on the bed.
- The bills are lying on the table.

Sit and Set

Sit = "to rest in an upright, seated position"

sit	sitting	sat	have sat
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Set = "to put or place"

set	setting	set	have set
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- I set the chair on the lawn.
- Please set the table.
- The car sat there all week.
- We had been sitting still for almost an hour.

Rise and Raise

Rise = "to go in an upward direction"

rise	rising	rose	have risen
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Raise = "to move something in an upward direction"

raise	raising	raised	have raised
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- Someone will raise that question.
- The price index rose quickly.
- The publishers raised the price of the paper.
- Please rise and face the class.

There, Their, They're

There = place: The ball rolled over **there**.

Their = possessive pronoun and always describes a noun: **Their** house is huge!

They're = contraction of *they are*: I think **they're** coming over tonight.

- Their dog has fleas.
- They're arriving from New York.
- I put the collar right there.

It's, Its

Its = possessive pronoun and always describes a noun: The cat licked **its** paw.

It's=contraction of it is: **It's** so cold outside.

- It's up to you.
- I saw the car but wasn't sure about its color.

Your, You're

Your = possessive pronoun and always describes a noun: I saw **your** dog in my yard.

You're = a contraction of *you are*: If **you're** going to be late, please call.

- I am reading your newspaper.
- I think you're very tired tonight.

To, Two, Too

To = place: I am going **to** the barn.

Two = number: There are **two** birds on the branch.

Too = also: I want to go **too**.

- I saw two motorcycles on the way to school.
- She cursed too, but she didn't have to go to detention.

Affect, Effect

Generally speaking,

Affect = verb: The rain **affected** the flowers' ability to bloom.

Effect = noun: The rain had a positive **effect** on the flowers.

- Rising oil prices will have an effect on nearly everyone.
- Rising oil prices affect nearly everyone.
- It's hard to know what effect the snowstorm will have on their basketball game.

Except, Accept

Except=excluding

Accept = verb-to approve of or receive willingly:

- I will not accept your money.
- I will go anywhere except to the mall.

Like/As for comparisons

Like is used with any kind of noun

As (*conjunction*) comes before a subject + verb

- My brother is like me.
- Don't change anything. I like it as it is.

Ending with Prepositions

In writing, you should avoid ending a sentence with a preposition if it is unnecessary.

Incorrect: Where is my wallet **at**?
 Where is he going **to**?

Correct: Where is my wallet?
 Where is he going?

Never say "could of," "would of," or "should of." It must always be "could have," "would have," and "should have."

- I should have gone home sooner. I could have avoided getting grounded!

Beside/Besides AND Of

Beside= "close to" or "by the side of."

Besides= in addition to

- Come, sit beside me.
- Besides me, Scott and Stacy will be there.

Fewer/Less

Use **fewer** with objects that can be counted one-by-one.

Use **less** with qualities or quantities that cannot be individually counted.

- I take less sugar in my tea.)
- She has fewer books than I.
- He worked fewer hours than I did.
- I drank less water than she did.

Good/Well

Good = Adjective

Well = Adverb

- He is such a good dog.
- She sang so well at the concert.

Then/Than

Then is used either as a time marker or with a sequence of events.

Than is used in comparative statements. It is not related to time.

- Look at the test first, and then you can ask questions.
- He is taller than I am.

Way/Ways

Way is used for distance, not ways.

- We had an awfully long **way** to go.

Which, That, Who

Who refers to people. **That** and **which** refer to groups or things.

That introduces essential (can't be removed without changing meaning) clauses

Which introduces nonessential (can be removed without changing meaning) clauses

- Ahmed is the skydiver who broke his back last week.
- The editorial claiming racial differences in intelligence, which appeared in the Sunday newspaper, upset me.
- I want to see the dog that rescued the girl from the fire.