



COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS

Words that sound alike or look alike (moral/morale) often confuse students, especially those using spell checkers. This lengthy list of commonly confused words with simple definitions will help you decide which spelling fits your sentence.

accept	to receive
except	with the exclusion of
advice	recommendation (noun)
advise	to recommend (verb)
adverse	unfavorable
averse	opposed to
affect	to influence (verb); emotional response (noun)
effect	result (noun); to cause (verb)
aisle	space between rows
isle	island
allude	to make indirect reference to
elude	to avoid
allusion	indirect reference
illusion	false idea, misleading appearance
already	by this time
all ready	fully prepared
altar	sacred platform or place
alter	to change
altogether	thoroughly
all together	everyone/everything in one place
a lot	a quantity; many of something
allot	to divide or portion out
angel	supernatural being, good person
angle	shape made by joining 2 straight lines
are	plural form of "to be"
our	plural form of "my"
accent	pronunciation common to a region
ascent	the act of rising or climbing
assent	consent, agreement
assistance	help
assistants	helpers

bare	nude, unadorned
bear	to carry; an animal
beside	close to; next to
besides	except for; in addition
boar	a wild male pig
bore	to drill a hole through
board	piece of wood
bored	uninterested
born	brought into life
borne	past participle of "to bear" (carry)
breath	air taken in (noun)
breathe	to take in air (verb)
brake	device for stopping
break	destroy; make into pieces
buy	to purchase
by	next to; through the agency of
canvas	heavy cloth
canvass	to take a survey; a survey
capital	major city
capitol	government building
choose	to pick
chose	past tense of "to choose"
clothes	garments
cloths	pieces of fabric
coarse	rough
course	path; series of lectures
complement	something that completes
compliment	praise, flattery
conscience	sense of morality
conscious	awake, aware
corps	regulated group
corpse	dead body
council	governing body
counsel	advice; to give advice

dairy	place where milk products are processed
diary	personal journal
descent	downward movement
dissent	disagreement
dessert	final, sweet course in a meal
desert	to abandon; dry, sandy area
device	a plan; a tool or utensil
devise	to create
discreet	modest, prudent behavior
discrete	a separate thing, distinct
do	a verb indicating performance or execution of a task
dew	water droplets condensed from air
due	as a result of
dominant	commanding, controlling
dominate	to control
die	to lose life; one of a pair of dice
dye	to change or add color
dyeing	changing or adding color
dying	losing life
elicit	to draw out
illicit	illegal, forbidden
eminent	prominent
imminent	about to happen
envelop	to surround (verb)
envelope	container for a letter (noun)
everyday	routine, commonplace, ordinary (adj.)
every day	each day, succession (adj. + noun)
fair	light skinned; just, honest; a carnival
fare	money for transportation; food
farther	at a greater(measurable) distance
further	in greater(non-measurable) depth
formally	conventionally, with ceremony
formerly	previously
forth	forward
fourth	number four in a list

gorilla	animal in ape family
guerrilla	soldier specializing in surprise attacks
hear	to sense sound by ear
here	in this place
heard	past tense of "to hear"
herd	group of animals
hoard	a hidden fund or supply, a cache
horde	a large group or crowd, swarm
hole	opening
whole	complete; an entire thing
human	relating to the species <i>homo sapiens</i>
humane	compassionate
its	possessive form of "it"
it's	contraction for "it is"
knew	past tense of "know"
new	fresh, not yet old
know	to comprehend
no	negative
later	after a time
latter	second one of two things
lead	heavy metal substance; to guide
led	past tense of "to lead"
lessen	to decrease
lesson	something learned and/or taught
lightning	storm-related electricity
lightening	making lighter
loose	unbound, not tightly fastened
lose	to misplace
maybe	perhaps (adv.)
may be	might be (verb)
meat	animal flesh
meet	to encounter
mete	to measure; to distribute
metal	a hard organic substance
medal	a flat disk stamped with a design
mettle	courage, spirit, energy

miner	a worker in a mine
minor	underage person (noun); less important (adj.)
moral	distinguishing right from wrong; lesson of a fable or story
morale	attitude or outlook usually of a group
passed	past tense of "to pass"
past	at a previous time
patience	putting up with annoyances
patients	people under medical care
peace	absence of war
piece	part of a whole; musical arrangement
peak	point, pinnacle, maximum
peek	to peer through or look furtively
pique	fit of resentment, feeling of wounded vanity
pedal	the foot lever of a bicycle or car
petal	a flower segment
peddle	to sell
personal	intimate; owned by a person
personnel	employees
plain	simple, unadorned
plane	to shave wood; aircraft (noun)
precede	to come before
proceed	to continue
presence	attendance; being at hand
presents	gifts
principal	foremost (adj.); administrator of a school (noun)
principle	moral conviction, basic truth
quiet	silent, calm
quite	very
rain	water drops falling; to fall like rain
reign	to rule
rein	strap to control an animal (noun); to guide or control (verb)
raise	to lift up
raze	to tear down
rational	having reason or understanding
rationale	principles of opinion, beliefs

respectfully respectively	with respect in that order
reverend reverent	title given to clergy; deserving respect worshipful
right rite write	correct; opposite of left ritual or ceremony to put words on paper
road rode	path past tense of "to ride"
scene seen	place of an action; segment of a play viewed; past participle of "to see"
sense since	perception, understanding measurement of past time; because
sight site cite	scene, view, picture place, location to document or quote (verb)
stationary stationery	standing still writing paper
straight strait	unbending narrow or confining; a waterway
taught taut	past tense of "to teach" tight
than then	besides at that time; next
their there they're	possessive form of "they" in that place contraction for "they are"
through threw thorough	finished; into and out of past tense of "to throw" complete
to too two	toward also; very (used to show emphasis) number following one
track tract	course, road pamphlet; plot of ground
waist waste	midsection of the body discarded material; to squander

waive	forgo, renounce
wave	flutter, move back and forth
weak	not strong
week	seven days
weather	climatic condition
whether	if
wether	a neutered male sheep
where	in which place
were	past tense of "to be"
which	one of a group
witch	female sorcerer
whose	possessive for "of who"
who's	contraction for "who is"
your	possessive for "of you"
you're	contraction for "you are"
yore	time long past

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College Writing Center
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