

# Commonly Confused Words

Asbury University  
Center for Academic Excellence

**Accept** – to receive, agree to

**Except** – exclude

**Advise** – (verb) to counsel

**Advice** – (noun) an opinion

**Already** – previously

**All ready** – completely prepared

**Altogether** – wholly, completely, in all

**All together** – everyone in one place

**Always** – every time

**All ways** – every way

**Affect** – (an action) to influence

**Effect** – (usually a noun) a result

**Among** – three or more

**Between** – only two

**Beside** – next to something

**Besides** – in addition to something

**Capital** – refers to the chief or highest reason, idea, place, or city; money; or a crime

**Capitol** – the building in which a legislature meets.

**Defiantly** – resisting or challenging

**Definitely** – complete agreement

**Desert** – a barren geographical region

**Dessert** – a sweet and sugary treat

**Fewer** – for countable things (*fewer* days)

**Less** – an uncountable amount (*less* time)

**Hear** – (verb) to perceive a sound

**Here** – in this present location

**Lay** – to put down something

**Lie** – placing oneself in a horizontal position

**Lead** – present tense of verb meaning “to conduct, to show the way” (rhymes with *need*).

**Led** – past tense or past participle of same verb (rhymes with *bed*)

**Lead** – noun; a metal (also rhymes with *bed*)

**Lose** – (verb) opposite of win

**Loose** – (adjective) released, unbound; (verb) to release, let go

**Passed** – (verb) to move beyond an object

**Past** – (noun) a former time, or

**Past** – (preposition) by or beyond, to walk *past*

**Patience** – long suffering, the ability to endure for long periods

**Patients** – (noun) individuals to be treated for illness

**Piece** – a section of a whole

**Peace** – a feeling of serenity

**Principle** – a rule

**Principal** – schoolmaster

**Right** – correct answer or direction

**Rite** – a ceremony, such as an initiation rite

**Than** – in comparison

**Then** – (adv.) used in a sequencer

**To** – (preposition) *she came to class*

**Too** – (adverb) meaning “also”

**Two** – the number 2

**Whether** – if it happens that; in case

**Weather** – atmospheric conditions

**Written** – refers to word spelling and style:

*The words were written in very different fonts.*  
Also refers to past tense but must be preceded by *has* or *had*: *He has written a letter of consent.*

**Wrote** – past tense of write: *He wrote a letter in January.*