WORDS OFTEN CONFUSED

accept, except

Accept is a verb meaning “to receive.”

I accept your suggestion.

Except means “excluding” or “but.”

All were there except you.

affect, effect

Affect is a verb meaning “to influence.”

Failing the test will affect my grade.

Effect means “result” and is usually a noun.

His warning had no effect on the players.

already, all ready

Already means “previously” whereas all ready means “fully prepared.”

I’m already late.

I’m all ready to go.

all right

All right is always two words; it is never spelled “alright.”

have, of

Have is a verb. When you say could have (would have, should have), the have may sound like of, but it must not be written that way.

it’s, its

It’s is a contraction meaning “it is” or “it has.”

It’s been a good party, but now it’s time to go.

Its is possessive and never takes an apostrophe.

The team reached its goal.

lay, lie

Lay (lay, laid, laid, laying) means “to put or place.”

The children laid their books on the table.

Lie (lie, lay, lain, lying) means “to get into a horizontal position on a surface.”

Lying on the beach without sun screen is unwise.

than, then

Than compares two things.

I enjoy ice skating more than skiing.

Then refers to time or a sequence of events.

We finished studying; then we watched TV.
their, there, they’re

Their is possessive.

*Their house is for sale.*

There indicates place or points out something.

*I put the book over there.*

They’re is a contraction meaning “they are.”

*They’re finished with dinner.*

two, too, to

Two is a number.

*I have two brothers.*

Too means “very” or “extremely” as well as “also.”

*The lesson was too long, and I found it boring, too.*

Use to for all other meanings.

*He likes to swim when he goes to the beach.*

try to, [not try and]

Try to is correct; try and is not correct.

*Try to learn these words.*

used to, [not use to]

Used to is correct; use to is not correct.

*The football team used to play better.*

who’s, whose

Who’s is a contraction meaning “who is” or “who has.”

*Who’s there? Who’s been eating my pizza?*

Whose is possessive and never takes an apostrophe.

*Whose book is this?*

woman, women

Woman is singular. Women is plural.

*That woman is my mother, but those women are my aunts.*

you’re, your

You’re is a contraction meaning “you are.”

*You’re doing well in this class.*

Your is possessive and never takes an apostrophe.

*Your answer is correct.*