



# Commonly Confused Words

Most commonly confused words are homonyms— words that are similar in sound, but different in their meaning and spelling. A dictionary is the best way to make sure you are using the correct word. Keep in mind that this list is not exhaustive; there are multiple meanings for some of these words.

**Accept (verb)** - to agree to receive or do

**Except (preposition)** - not including

**Affect (verb)** - to influence

**Effect (noun)** - result; to accomplish

**Allusion (noun)** - an indirect reference

**Illusion (noun)** - a false perception of reality

**All together (phrase)** - gathered; all in one place

**Altogether (adverb)** - completely; on the whole

**Bare (adjective)** - naked; to uncover

**Bear (verb)** - to carry; to put up with

**Born (verb)** - having started a life

**Borne (adjective)** - carried

**Brake (noun)** - a device for stopping a vehicle

**Break (verb)** - to separate into pieces; to pause

**Cereal (noun)** - a breakfast food made from grains

**Serial (adjective)** - happening in a series

**Complement (verb)** - an addition that completes; to complete

**Compliment (verb)** - praise; to praise

**Conscience (noun)** - sense of right and wrong

**Conscious (adjective)** - awake



**Council (noun)** - a group who manage or advise

**Counsel (verb)** - to advise

**Discreet (adjective)** - careful not to attract attention

**Discrete (adjective)** - separate and distinct

**Dual (adjective)** - having two parts

**Duel (noun)** - a fight or contest between two people

**Ensure (verb)** - to make sure that something happens

**Insure (verb)** - to provide compensation if a person dies or property is damaged

**Envelop (verb)** - to cover or surround

**Envelope (noun)** - a paper container for a letter

**Fawn (noun)** - a young deer; light brown

**Faun (noun)** - a mythical being; part man, part goat

**Foreword (noun)** - an introduction to a book

**Forward (adverb)** - onwards, ahead

**Lay (verb)** - to put an object down

**Lie (verb)** - to lie down (a person or animal)

**Loath (adjective)** - reluctant, unwilling

**Loathe (verb)** - to hate

**Loose (verb)** - to unfasten; to set free

**Lose (verb)** - to be deprived of; to be unable to find

**Passed (verb)** - past tense of “to pass”, to have moved

**Past (adjective/noun)** - belonging to a former time or place

**Pour (verb)** - to flow or cause to flow

**Pore (noun/verb)** - a tiny opening; to study something closely



**Prescribe (verb)**- to authorize use of medicine; to order authoritatively

**Proscribe (verb)** - to officially forbid something

**Principal (noun)** - most important; the head of a school

**Principle (noun)** - a fundamental rule or belief

**Stationary (adjective)** - not moving

**Stationery (noun)** - writing materials

**Than (conjunction/preposition)** - use with comparisons

**Then (adverb)** - at that time; next

**Their (determiner)** - possessive form of they

**There (adverb)** - indicates location

**They're (contraction)** - contraction for "they are"

**Who (pronoun)** - used as a subject or as a subject complement

**Whom (pronoun)** - used as an object

**Further Assistance:** For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library or call 815-836-5427.