

# Common Mistakes in English



**“...But she’s sure to get a lot of laughs out of your spelling.”**

# Grammatical Errors that Make You Look Dumb



# Your vs. You're

- “Your” is a possessive pronoun, as in “your car” or “your blog.”
- “You’re” is a contraction for “you are,

# Then vs. Than

- Then: a description of time
- Than: a comparison

# It's vs. Its



- “It’s” is a contraction of “it is” or “it has.”
- “Its” is a possessive pronoun, as in “this food has lost its taste.”

## How to check:

Repeat your sentence out loud using “it is” instead. If that sounds good, “its” is likely the correct choice.

# There vs. Their

- “There” is used many ways, including as a reference to a place (“let’s go there”) or as a pronoun (“there is no hope”).
- “Their” is a plural possessive pronoun, as in “their bags” or “their opinions.”

## How to check:

Do the “that’s ours!” test.

Are you talking about more than one person and something that they possess? If so, “their” will get you there.

# Affect vs. Effect

- “Affect” is a verb, as in “Your ability to communicate clearly will affect your income immensely.”
- “Effect” is a noun, as in “The effect of a parent’s low income on a child’s future is well documented.”

## How to check:

By thinking in terms of “the effect,” you can usually sort out which is which, because you can’t stick a “the” in front of a verb.

# Spelling Errors

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"No, Kevin — there isn't any  
margin of error on spelling tests."



# Spelling Errors shown in public (pubic)



Are you sure you want to eat this?



**MISPELLING**

It Still Matters. A Lot.

[DemotivateUs.com](http://DemotivateUs.com)

# The way to education???



Another way of telling you **to** get lost



# Spelling mistakes

- **alot** - mistakenly written as **a lot**
- **all right** - mistakenly written as **alright**
  - Alright is the less formal version of all right
- **Definitely** - mistakenly written as **definately**
- **Dessert** (as in the sweet stuff) - mistakenly written as **desert** (geographical term)
- **Forty** - mistakenly written as **fourty**

# Spelling mistakes

- a lot - mistakenly written as **alot** or **allot**
- all right - mistakenly written as **alright**
- Definitely - mistakenly written as **definately**
- Dessert (as in the sweet stuff) - mistakenly written as **desert** (geographical term)
- Forty - mistakenly written as **fourty**

# Spelling mistakes

- **Lose** (“unable to find”) - mistakenly written as **loose**
- **Receive** - mistakenly written as **recieve**  
(‘i’ before ‘e’ except after ‘c’)
- **Restaurant** - mistakenly written as **restuarant**, **restraunt**, and countless other ways
- **Separate** - mistakenly written as **seperate**
- **Truly** - mistakenly written as **truely**
- **Weird** - mistakenly written as **wierd**

# Additional Grammar Mistakes



# Avoid using sexist wording

- **Wrong:** When the subject reported being finished, the experimenter asked him to complete a second questionnaire.
- **Right:** When the subject reported being finished, the experimenter administered a second questionnaire.

# Bring vs. Take

- **Wrong:** When we go to the party on Saturday, let's bring a bottle of wine.“
- **Right:** When we go to the party, let's take a bottle of wine.

## How to decide:

- When you are viewing the movement of something from the point of arrival, use “**bring**”
- When you are viewing the movement of something from the point of departure, use “**take**”

# Fewer vs. Less

- **Wrong:** A sign at the checkout of a supermarket: “Ten items or less”..
- **Right:** Ten items or fewer.

## How to decide:

- When you can count the items, you need to use the number word “fewer”
- If you can’t count the substance, then you should use “less”

# Have vs. Of

- **Wrong:** I never would of thought that he'd behave like that.
- **Right:** I never would have/would've thought that he'd behave like that.

# Double Negative

- **Wrong:** I'm not speaking to nobody in this class.
- **Right:** I'm not speaking to anybody in this class

# Went vs. Gone

- **Wrong:** I should have went to school yesterday.
- **Right:** I should have gone to school yesterday.

**How to decide:**

Format is: should + have + past participle

# Other words which are often confused

- **Except, expect, and accept**
  - Except – preposition: with the exclusion of; excluding
  - Expect – verb: to look forward to; regard as likely to happen; anticipate the occurrence
  - Accept – verb: to take or receive (something offered); receive with approval or favor
- **Advise and advice**
  - Advise – verb: to give counsel to; offer an opinion or suggestion
  - Advice – noun: an opinion or recommendation offered as a guide to action,
- **Lonely and alone**
  - Lonely – adjective: causing a depressing feeling of being alone; lonesome
  - Alone – adjective: separate, apart, or isolated from others
- **Already and all ready**
  - Already – adverb: by this or that time; previously; prior to or at some specified or implied time
  - All ready - ready in every particular; wholly equipped or prepared
- **Ambivalent and indifferent**
  - Ambivalent – noun: uncertainty or fluctuation, especially when caused by inability to make a choice
  - Indifferent – adjective: without interest or concern; not caring; apathetic

# ...Other words which are often confused

- **All together and altogether**
  - All together – adverb: wholly; entirely; completely; quite
  - Altogether – adverb: all at the same time, all at once
- **Some and any**
  - Some – adjective: of a certain unspecified number, amount
  - Any – adjective: whatever or whichever it may be
- **A part and apart**
  - A part – noun: a portion or division of a whole that is separate or distinct
  - Apart – adverb: separately in place, time, motion,
- **Beside and besides**
  - Beside – preposition: by or at the side of; near
  - besides – adverb: moreover; furthermore; also



# ...Other words which are often confused

- **Lend and borrow**
  - Lend – verb: to grant the use of
  - Borrow – verb: to take or obtain with the promise to return the same or an equivalent
- **Control and check**
  - Control – verb: to exercise restraint or direction over; dominate; command
  - Check – verb, noun: to investigate or verify as to correctness

