Spellcheck Outlaws

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Affect
- This word is always a verb:
  - The noisy student lounge affects her concentration.

Effect
- This word is usually a noun:
  - The wretched effect of the noisy students on her concentration frustrates her.

Tip: affect = action

Exceptions

- **Effect** is sometimes (though rarely) a verb.
  - I did not imagine the noise alone would effect such a change on her study patterns.

- In the jargon of psychology only, **affect** is a noun synonym for **feeling**.

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Compliment
- This word means to praise:
  - He complimented my new green mohawk.

Complement
- This word means to complete:
  - The wine perfectly complemented the entrée.

Tip: complement = complete

Each word has two es.

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Everyday
- This word means routine:
  - My grandmother wore her everyday housedress while she cleaned.

Every day
- These words mean each day:
  - I attend class every day.

Tip: Each day and every day have two words. If you can substitute each day, use every day.
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Its
- This pronoun shows possession.
- The dog has been in the woods. Its coat is filled with burrs.

It's
- This word is a contraction for it is or it has.
- It's never too late to begin all over.

Tip: Always test your use of this term by reading its or it's as it is. If it is makes sense, use the contraction it's.

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Past
- This word is never a verb.
- In a past life, I could spell like a pro!

Passed
- This word is always a verb (the past tense of to pass).
- In the distant past, I often passed this way.

Tip: Each form of the verb to pass has two s's.

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Lay
- This word means to place.
- Please lay your books on the table.

Lie
- This word means to recline.
- I feel ill and must lie down.

Tip: Associate the vowel sounds of each word with its synonym.
- lay = place
- lie = recline

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Then
- This word refers to time.
- If we go now, then we'll get to the film on time!

Than
- This word compares one thing to another.
- Would you rather have tea than coffee?

Tip: Then is related to when.

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Comprise
- This word means to consist of.
- The whole comprises its parts.
- The new handbook comprises only five sections.

Compose
- This word means to make up.
- The parts compose the whole.
- Only five sections compose the new handbook.

Here's a tip ...

- Comprise should never be followed by of.

Not:
The plan is comprised of two sections.

But:
The plan is composed of two sections. The plan comprises two sections.
A few more quick tips ...

- **Accept** or **Except**?
  - Except means *excluding*.
- **Know** or **No**?
  - All words for negatives begin with *a* (*no, nor, not, etc.*).
- **There, Their, or They’re**?
  - *There* and *here* both indicate location.
  - *They’re* is a contraction for *they are*.
- **To** or **Too**?
  - *Too* means *in addition*. It adds an *a*.

One final tip ...

- For more tips on word use, visit [ww2.nscc.edu/adkerson_m](http://ww2.nscc.edu/adkerson_m).
- Click "Word Usage."