

# Words That Sound Alike

## **Accept, Except**

accept = verb meaning to receive or to agree: He accepted their praise graciously.

except = preposition meaning all but, other than: Everyone went to the game except Alyson.

## **Affect, Effect**

affect = verb meaning to influence: Will lack of sleep affect your game?

effect = noun meaning result or consequence: Will lack of sleep have an effect on your game?

effect = verb meaning to bring about, to accomplish: Our efforts have effected a major change in university policy.

## **Advise, Advice**

advise = verb that means to recommend, suggest, or counsel: I advise you to be cautious.

advice = noun that means an opinion or recommendation about what could or should be done: I'd like to ask for your advice on this matter.

## **Conscious, Conscience**

conscious = adjective meaning awake, perceiving: Despite a head injury, the patient remained conscious.

conscience = noun meaning the sense of obligation to be good: Chris wouldn't cheat because his conscience wouldn't let him.

## **Idea, Ideal**

idea = noun meaning a thought, belief, or conception held in the mind, or a general notion or conception formed by generalization: Jennifer had a brilliant idea -- she'd go to the Writing Lab for help with her papers!

ideal = noun meaning something or someone that embodies perfection, or an ultimate object or endeavor: Mickey was the ideal for tutors everywhere.

ideal = adjective meaning embodying an ultimate standard of excellence or perfection, or the best; Jennifer was an ideal student.

**Its, It's**

its = possessive adjective (possesive form of the pronoun it): The crab had an unusual growth on its shell.

it's = contraction for it is or it has (in a verb phrase): It's still raining; it's been raining for three days. (Pronouns have apostrophes only when two words are being shortened into one.)

**Lead, Led**

lead = noun referring to a dense metallic element: The X-ray technician wore a vest lined with lead.

led = past-tense and past-participle form of the verb to lead, meaning to guide or direct: The evidence led the jury to reach a unanimous decision.

**Than, Then**

Than

used in comparison statements: He is richer than I.

used in statements of preference: I would rather dance than eat.

used to suggest quantities beyond a specified amount: Read more than the first paragraph.

Then

a time other than now: He was younger then. She will start her new job then.

next in time, space, or order: First we must study; then we can play.

suggesting a logical conclusion: If you've studied hard, then the exam should be no problem.

**Their, There, They're**

Their = possessive pronoun: They got their books.

There = that place: My house is over there. (This is a place word, and so it contains the word here.)

They're = contraction for they are: They're making dinner. (Pronouns have apostrophes only when two words are being shortened into one.)

**To, Too, Two**

To = preposition, or first part of the infinitive form of a verb: They went to the lake to swim.

Too = very, also: I was too tired to continue. I was hungry, too.

Two = the number 2: Two students scored below passing on the exam.

Two, twelve, and between are all words related to the number 2, and all contain the letters tw.

Too can mean also or can be an intensifier, and you might say that it contains an extra o ("one too many")

### **We're, Where, Were**

We're = contraction for we are: We're glad to help. (Pronouns have apostrophes only when two words are being shortened into one.)

Where = location: Where are you going? (This is a place word, and so it contains the word here.)

Were = a past tense form of the verb be: They were walking side by side.

### **Your, You're**

Your = possessive pronoun: Your shoes are untied.

You're = contraction for you are: You're walking around with your shoes untied. (Pronouns have apostrophes only when two words are being shortened into one.)