

Campus Academic Resource Program

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

This handout will:

- Identify the difference between homophones and their respective definitions
- Identify when to use specific words based on the linguistic situation
- Show how to correctly write and say common phrases and idioms
- Test gained knowledge to complete exercises

Commonly Misused Words

Although our language is both written and spoken, many of us learn to speak English by listening to others. Consequently, when we write, we use the wrong words because we utilize our knowledge based on what we have heard. This section will be divided into two parts: “Homophones” and “How to Use the Correct Word Based on the Sentence.” None of these words are spelled incorrectly but are presented to help you discern when to use each word.

❖ Homophones

Homophones are words that sound alike but have different definitions, connotations, and—like the following list—spelling. Homophones that have different definitions and connotations do not always have different spelling. One example is rose (flower) and rose (past tense of “to rise”). The following list contains some of the most popular homophones and their definitions to help you discern when to use each.

- Affect and Effect
 - *Affect* is a **verb** which means “to influence.” *Effect* is a **noun** which describes a result or accomplishment.
 - The rain and wind *affected* my drive home.
 - Stopped traffic was an *effect* of the ongoing storm.
 - However, *effect* can also be used as a **verb**. Whereas affect describes “influence,” effect can be considered as the actual act of achieving a final result.
 - The couple hoped therapy would *effect* a peaceful negotiation of daily household chores.
- Compliment and Complement
 - *Compliment* can be used as both a **noun** and **verb**; it describes when something nice is said to someone else. *Complement* is a **verb**, which means that you are adding to, or otherwise enhancing, an object.
 - The rest of his day was improved after receiving a *compliment* about his new suit. (**Noun**)
 - He was *complimented* earlier in the day about his suit. (**Verb**)
 - A green tie *complements* the suit.
- Discrete and Discreet
 - *Discrete* is an **adjective** meaning separate or individual. *Discreet* is also an **adjective**; it means to be cautious, wary, or careful.

Campus Academic Resource Program

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

- We needn't look at *discrete* information to know everyone who was involved in the protest.
- My friend is sleeping on my couch, so we need to be *discreet* when we get back to my house.
- Elicit and Illicit
 - *Elicit* is a **verb**; it is used when one is trying to evoke a response from another. *Illicit* is an **adjective**; it is used to describe something illegal or forbidden, commonly linked to drugs and drug use.
 - The hockey fans' persistent taunting did not *elicit* a response from the opposing team.
 - Our family is proud of Zachery; he's refrained from *illicit* drugs and activities for over five years.
- Insure and Ensure
 - *Insure* is a **verb**, used when referring to insurance and coverage. *Ensure* is also a **verb**, used when making sure of something.
 - In case of an accident on our trip, we should *insure* the car before we leave.
 - Proofread your essays multiple times to *ensure* they are free of grammatical errors.
- Who's and Whose; It's and Its
 - For more information, see Apostrophes handout at <http://www.carp.sfsu.edu>
- They're, Their, and There
 - *They're* is a **contraction**: it uses an apostrophe to connect "they" and "are." *Their* is a **pronoun** used to either refer to a plural subject or to replace gendered pronouns. *There* is an **adverb** referencing location.
 - *They're* always busy with school work.
 - I spoke to my sisters earlier today. *Their* train is running late, so they won't make it to dinner. (Plural)
 - *Their* job does not begin until later this week. (Non-Gendered)
 - He won't stop telling me about his trip to Paris even though he knows I've been *there* before.
- Proceed and Precede
 - *Proceed* is a **verb**; it is an indication to go forth or continue. *Precede* is also a **verb** but indicates one thing that comes before another. You can think of *proceed* as an instruction and *precede* as an indication.
 - Her presentation is done, you can *proceed* with yours.
 - His presentation is supposed to *precede* mine.
- Allusion and Illusion

Campus Academic Resource Program

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

- *Allusion* is a **noun** used when you mention something that references something else. *Allusions* most commonly reference literature and art. *Illusion* is also a **noun**; it references a trick or deception.
 - The novels on the syllabus all have similar *allusions* to James Baldwin's work.
 - Even though they fought constantly, they maintained the *illusion* of a healthy relationship.
- Capitol and Capital
 - *Capitol* is a **noun**, specifically a place where legislation is made. *Capital* is also a **noun** and can be used to refer to: the first letter in a sentence, economic means, and relation to a state.
 - The school's field trip will be to the state's *capitol* to learn about how bills become laws.
 - Proper nouns need to have a *capital* first letter.
 - You're not supposed to *capitalize* bell hooks' name. (In this instance, capital is used as a **verb** to indicate the action of changing the first letter from lower-case to upper-case)
 - We hope the defense wins the case; the prosecution isn't going to gain any *capital* from the defendant. (Economic means)
 - Nevada's state *capital* is Carson City. (Relation to a state)
- Phase and Faze
 - Since *phase* is a commonly used word, it is often used even though *faze* is the appropriate word to use. *Phase* is a **noun** and is used to indicate a period of time. *Faze*, on the other hand, is a **verb** which describes feelings of discomfort or disturbance.
 - My love for Taylor Swift was just a *phase*; I'm so over her.
 - Well, your negative comments about T Swift aren't going to *faze* me. (This is the most common instance in which *phase* is usually replaced for *faze*. But in the context of this sentence and others similar, it is evident that a verb indicating disturbance makes the most sense.)
- Conscious and Conscience
 - *Conscious* is an **adjective** describing lucidness and the being awake and aware. *Conscience* is a **noun** and can be considered akin to morals or the inclination to be a good person.
 - The lecture was so boring; it was hard for me to remain *conscious*.
 - Her mother raised her with a good *conscience*; she was the only one of her friends not arrested for stealing.
- Past and Passed
 - A general way to consider the difference between these two words is in terms of temporal and spatial distance. *Past* can be used as both a **noun** and an **adjective**. In its noun form, it indicates a time before the present. In its adjective form, it

Campus Academic Resource Program

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

indicates something completed or no longer existent. *Passed* is the past tense of the **verb** “to pass.” Therefore, *past* refers to temporal distance, whereas *passed* refers to spatial distance.

- His views are never going to be accepted if he keeps thinking in the *past*. (**Noun**)
- Tuition is higher than ever compared to years *past*. (**Adjective**)
- I *passed* by that new store on my way to work this morning.

❖ How to Use the Correct Word Based on the Sentence

This section is similar to the previous one because these words are not spelled incorrectly, but often used incorrectly. The following examples do not sound alike, but are commonly used interchangeably. This section will distinguish the difference between these words and when to use each.

• Adverse and Averse

- *Adverse* and *averse* are both **adjectives** but used to describe different sentiments. *Adverse* describes something harmful or unfavorable. *Averse* describes an opposition or dislike to something. Even though these words may seem similar, they have different meanings. *Adverse* can be used to describe any noun while *Averse* can be used to describe an individual.

- The child’s viewing of the horror movie had an *adverse* effect on his dreams. (The noun in this sentence is the “effect”)
- When my friend was young, he saw a violent horror movie. He’s now *averse* to anything with aliens. (The “individual” in this sentence is the friend)

• Lie and Lay

- *Lie* and *lay* are both **verbs**, but their different definitions depend on who performs the action. *Lie* indicates relaxation or resting, an action performed by a person or noun. *Lay*, however, indicates placing an object down somewhere.

- She had a long day; she wanted to *lie* down for a bit.
- Since our guest closet is full, you can *lay* your personal belongings on the couch.

• I.E. and E.G.

- For more information of these terms, see Latin Terms and Abbreviations at: <http://www.carp.sfsu.edu>

• Farther and Further

- This is a tricky set of words since both refer to distance. *Farther* implies physical distance. *Further* refers to advancement, or figurative distance.

- I don’t want to be dropped off at the bank; I live much *farther* than that!
- You’re always asking me for a ride, I don’t think this friendship should continue any *further*.

Campus Academic Resource Program

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

- Fewer and Less
 - Both of these words are used to indicate similar notions. However, *fewer* is used when you **can** count an actual number (only used with **plural nouns**). *Less* is used when you **cannot** count an actual number (only used with **singular nouns**).
 - The band played *fewer* songs than last night's show. (Songs is **plural**)
 - The band played one *less* song than last night's show. (Song is **singular**)
 - Even though both sentences use "band," which is singular (although it indicates multiple people), *fewer* and *less* refer to the number of songs mentioned in each sentence.
- All right and Alright
 - When writing academically, it is best to stay away from *Alright*. There is a lot of controversy surrounding this spelling. When referring to agreeance or urging someone to continue, use *all right* (always two words). *Alright*, in informal writing, is used to respond to something similarly as "Okay."
 - Pink curtains are *all right* with me!
 - We have cable again, everything is *all right* with the world.
 - When I asked him how he was doing, he just said "*Alright*."
- Bad and Badly
 - Sometimes these words can be confused when used in different contexts. *Bad* is an **adjective**, therefore it is used to describe and qualify a noun. *Badly* is an **adverb**, therefore it is used to describe and qualify a verb.
 - I've been *bad* lately; I've eaten a burrito for dinner every day this week. (**Adjective** used to qualify "I", a noun)
 - I knew the musicians were bad, but I didn't realize how *badly* they'd play live. (Bad is used as a noun, qualifying "musicians." *Badly* is used as an **adverb**, used to qualify the verb "to play")
- Good and Well
 - These words are sometimes used interchangeably, but knowing their grammatical differentiation is beneficial to discern when to use each. *Good* is an **adjective**, used to qualify or describe a noun. *Well* is an **adverb**, used to qualify or describe a verb.
 - How are you today? I'm doing *well*, thank you. (This exchange is common in our lives, and this is the correct way to respond. *Well* acts as an **adverb** and modifies the verb "to do")
 - How are you today? I'm *well*, thank you. (Even if we take out the verb "to do," *well* still acts as an adverb, modifying the verb "to be")
 - I don't know how to tell her this, but she is not a *good* driver. (*Good*, acting as an **adjective**, modifies the noun "driver")
- Much and Many

Campus Academic Resource Program

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

- Like the previous example of *fewer* and *less*, *much* and *many* can be distinguished based on the existence of a countable object. Both can be used in many grammatical ways. However, it is easiest to distinguish them as: *much* is used when quantity **cannot** be counted and *many* is used when the quantity **can** be counted.
 - The series finale was *much* worse than I expected. (There is no way to physically count this sentiment of the finale falling below expectations. Therefore, we use *much*)
 - How *much* is this vase? (*Much* is used in this sentence since the cost, or the quantity of cost, is unknown)
 - How *many* times do I have to tell you to clean your room? (Although this is an expression many of us have probably heard during our childhoods, *many* is used because the parent can most likely count how many times s/he has told the child to clean his/her room. It is used to infer that there is a countable quantity preceding this statement)
- Apart and A part
 - Using these words interchangeably is very common. However, the distinction lies in the separation of the article (*a*) and the noun (*part*). *Apart* is an **adverb**. It is used to qualify or describe a verb. Another way to consider this word is in relation to figurative distance, like we have done in previous examples. *A part* literally reads as one part of a whole. It is not used to discuss figurative distance. Rather, it is used to describe one thing as a component of something else.
 - Even though I spent hours knitting a new sweater, it took the dog a few seconds to tear it *apart*. (*Apart* is used as an **adverb**, qualifying the verb “to tear”)
 - He acts differently when you two are *apart*. (*Apart* is still used as an **adverb** in this sentence, it qualifies the verb “to act,” or describes how he acts. This sentence utilizes the notion of figurative distance described above, in the sense that he is away/distanced from “you”)
 - I’m happiest when I’m *a part* of a community. (This sentence’s speaker states that she is happiest when she is part of/a component of a community—or a whole. This sentence demonstrates the proper way to use *a part*, when describing a factor of a whole)
- Than and Then
 - These words are also commonly used interchangeably. *Than* can be used as both a **conjunction** and a **preposition**. As a conjunction, it can be used to compare and/or to replace words like “otherwise” or introduce difference. As a preposition, it is also used to compare. *Then* is an **adverb**, used to describe a series of events.
 - It’s so sunny outside. I would rather walk *than* drive. (**Conjunction**)

Campus Academic Resource Program

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

- Of course you want to walk; you exercise more *than* any of us.
(**Preposition**)
- Okay, we can drive to the parking lot near campus *then* walk. (**Adverb** describing what will happen next, after they park the car)
- Set and Sit
 - Like the previous example of *lie* and *lay*, these verbs are differentiated based on what is affected by *setting* and *sitting*. *Set* is a **transitive** verb; it indicates that someone is putting something down. *Sit* is an **intransitive** verb; it indicates that a noun is being seated. The main difference between **transitive** and **intransitive** verbs is reference to an object, whether direct or indirect. **Transitive** verbs refer to an object, usually direct objects. **Intransitive** verbs do not refer to an object.
 - I'm used to *setting* my mail down by the door; it took a while for me to *set* it down on the kitchen table. ("By the door" and "kitchen table" are direct objects in this sentence; they are receiving the action of where to put the mail)
 - Your dog doesn't *sit* when I ask him to (There is no object receiving the action of sitting in this sentence, therefore it is **intransitive**)
- Who, Which, and That
 - Once the proper use of these words is broken down, it will be easy to distinguish when to use each one. Simply stated, *who* always refers to a person or people.
 - Did you see the girl *who* was wearing a dinosaur suit today?
 - Distinguishing between *which* and *that*, however, is a bit more complicated. We have to define other terms before we can differentiate the two. The main difference between *which* and *that* is recognizing the difference between **restrictive** and **nonrestrictive relative clauses**.
 - **Restrictive Relative Clauses** contain crucial information about the preceding noun. If this clause is deleted, the meaning of the sentence changes.
 - **Nonrestrictive Relative Clauses** contain extra information that if deleted, does not alter the meaning of the sentence. These clauses can be identified by a preceding comma, whereas restrictive relative clauses do not have a preceding comma.
 - So, *that* usually introduces a **restrictive relative clause**. *Which* usually introduces a **nonrestrictive relative clause**. Use your judgment to determine whether or not you are discussing crucial or essential information.
 - She gave him the plate *that* was broken.
 - This is a **restrictive relative clause** because "was broken" is crucial to the context of the sentence. Consider the alternative:
 - She gave him the plate.

Campus Academic Resource Program

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

- This sentence is ambiguous and confusing for the reader because we are unsure about the plate and why it is mentioned in the sentence.
- His new phone has so many different functions, many of *which* were confusing for him at first.
 - This is a **nonrestrictive relative clause** because everything following *which* is not completely necessary for the sentence and does not change the context if taken out. Consider the alternative:
 - His new phone has so many different functions.
 - This sentence is neither ambiguous nor confusing for the reader, we still receive the same message about the phone and its functions.
- Idea and ideal
 - *Idea* is a **noun**; it refers to an original thought or a general notion. *Ideal* can be used a couple of different ways. As a **noun**, *ideal* refers to someone or something that exudes aptness or a definitive attainment. As an **adjective**, *ideal* describes someone or something who/that contains the best standard of superiority.
 - You're still stuck on the *idea* that men are superior. (General notion)
 - Walt Disney is the *ideal* for businesspeople everywhere. (**Noun**)
 - He is both brilliant and humble, the *ideal* professor. (**Adjective**)
- Advise and Advice
 - Both of these words refer to a similar concept. *Advise* is a **verb**, it indicates the action of recommending or suggesting. *Advice* is a **noun**, it refers to that recommendation or suggestion.
 - I would *advise* you to start studying now, but I know you won't start until the week before the final.
 - I should've taken your *advice*, I completely failed the final.
- The -ible and -able Rule
 - This rule can be useful when you are not sure how to change a word from a **verb** or **noun** to an **adjective**.
 - If the root of the word is **not** a complete word, you use *-ible* at the end.
 - If the root of the word **is** a complete word, you use *-able* at the end.
 - If the root of the word is a complete word and ends with "e," drop the "e" and use *-able*.
 - Audible (Aud + ible)
 - Horrible (Horr + ible)
 - Comfortable (Comfort + able)
 - Fashionable (Fashion + able)
 - Advisable (Advise -e + able)

Campus Academic Resource Program

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

Commonly Misspelled Words

The following examples are words that, unlike the previous examples, are commonly misspelled. This section will provide examples of how words are misspelled and the correct way to spell them.

- Irregardless
 - *Irregardless* is not a word. It stems from *regardless*, which is a word. *Regardless* means “without regard,” and adding IR- to the beginning makes this word a double negative.
- Towards and Anyways
 - These words are correct without “s” added at the end.
 - Even though traffic had been stopped for an hour, I eventually moved *toward* my destination.
 - I didn’t like that class *anyway*.
- Conversating
 - Like *irregardless*, *conversating* is not a word. Instead of using *conversating*, use *conversing*.
 - We were *conversing* when a herd of cats came running toward us!
- Suppose to and Use to
 - The above forms are incorrect because they are missing a “d” at the end. If you are speaking about something you should do, the correct form reads: *supposed to*. If you are talking about something you have done in the past, the correct form reads: *used to*.
 - I was *supposed* to call him for his birthday, but I forgot.
 - I *used* to swim every day.
- Kinda and Sorta
 - Although often used in colloquial language, these are not the correct forms for academic language. Their correct forms—kind of and sort of—refer to a distinction of something that is part of a whole.
 - I kinda liked that movie, even though I don’t like the actors. (Incorrect)
 - Meta-fiction is a *kind of* novel, right? (Correct)
 - I sorta thought that would be your answer. (Incorrect)
 - We don’t approve of that *sort of* behavior here. (Correct)
- Should of
 - This saying is commonly voiced as it is written above, especially with our colloquial saying, “Shoulda, woulda, coulda.” It seems only natural that we would then assume that the word “Should” would be conjugated into “Should of” when we consider something that we did not do. However, the **past participle** of the **verb** “shall” conjugates to “*should have*.” Think about when you contract this verb tense, “*should’ve*.”

Campus Academic Resource Program

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

Commonly Misused Phrases

The following examples are phrases used fairly often in our lives. As previously stated, we mostly learn from hearing others, so it is easy to mishear the way these phrases are spoken. This section will first provide the incorrect way to say this phrase, followed by the correct way to say it and why. It should be noted that it is not recommended to use idioms or colloquialisms in academic writing.

- Deep seeded
 - The correct way to say this phrase is “*Deep-seated.*” This expression describes something that is deeply ingrained. It may seem like “seeded” works as well, since both can be construed to indicate an inherent point of view or opinion.
- For all intensive purposes
 - This expression is mispronounced mainly because of mishearing. When you say this expression, you are indicating that something is official, and qualifying “purposes” with “intensive” doesn’t make sense. Therefore, the expression is correctly stated as, “*For all intents and purposes.*”
- Peaked my interest
 - A “peak” is the highest point, as in a mountain peak. However, this expression indicates that something evoked your interest, in which case the verb “pique” is correct. “Pique” indicates provocation or stimulation. Therefore, something “*piques*” your interest.
- Case and point
 - This idiom is used to indicate something all encompassing. However, the correct way to express this sentiment is to say, “*Case in point.*”
- One in the same
 - As written above, this sentence doesn’t necessarily make sense. If you are trying to state that two things are so similar that they may as well be the same, you should say, “*One and the same.*”
- Mute point
 - When you want to tell someone that the conclusion she/he is trying to reach is not important, you use this expression. As it is written above, it can be construed to make some sense: your point falls on deaf ears and has no relevance. However, the homophone, “Moot,” indicates that which is not relevant, or is arguable and doubtful. Therefore, when you write this expression, you say “*Moot point.*”
- Pour over
 - Let us say you are studying for a final, or doing research to write an extensive paper. We usually say “I’m going to pour over the material.” This is another case of hearing an expression said instead of seeing it written. The homophone for “pour” is the **verb** “*pore,*” or to reflect or concentrate on something. The next time you are cramming for an exam, tell your friends you spent hours “*Poring over the material.*”

Campus Academic Resource Program

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

- To give someone free reign
 - This is another idiom that seems to be correct in its written form above. It indicates that someone else has certain extensive freedom, or the power to reign over others as she/he sees fit. However, be sure that the next time you write this idiom, you use the correct **noun**. Although “reign” describes ruling power, “rein” also indicates exercise of power as well as a strap used to control a horse. This expression stems from a time when horses were the only means of transportation. When the horse and rider encountered difficult terrain, the rider gave the horse “*free rein,*” so the horse could naturally pilot the land.
- Another thing coming
 - Perhaps of all the examples given, this one is most commonly used incorrectly. Like some of the corrected examples, however, the way it is written above makes sense the way it is. If someone says something you disagree with, you respond, “You have another thing coming!” The correct form of this expression makes the most sense if it is used in its entire context: “*If that’s what you think, you’ve got another think coming!*”
- Making due
 - This expression is used when we have to work best with what we have. With this in mind, it does not seem that the way the expression is written above makes much sense. This is because “due” indicates a deadline and doesn’t correspond to being sufficient with what is present. Therefore, the expression is comprehensible as “*Making do.*”

Campus Academic Resource Program
Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

Exercise 1: Circle the correct word to complete the sentence.

1. I refuse to let your negative attitude affect/effect me.
2. We need discrete/discreet information to find out if the food poisoning affected everyone who ate here during dinner.
3. This book is hard to read because there are so many literary allusions/illusions.
4. We don't participate in elicit/illicit activities in this house.
5. Yeah, I didn't sleep a lot last night, but I have a test today so I can't let that phase/faze me.
6. My window of opportunity has past/passed.
7. I'm never coming to Coachella again, there are so many/much people here!
8. I bet I can run farther/further than you.
9. They bought a new chair for the kitchen, that/which was red to match the rug.
10. He said we need time apart/a part.
11. I know you don't want to read this letter right now, I'll set/sit it down over here.
12. She has a guilty conscious/conscience.
13. Why do you have fewer/less tests than me?
14. I received so many compliments/complements today on my new dress.
15. I'll only know if I did well/good when she tells me "good/well job."

Exercise 2: Change the words into adjectives using the -able and -ible rule.

These following nouns and verbs are complete words. Decide whether they need to stay in their complete form or be altered.

1. Comfort
2. Horror
3. Use
4. Pleasure
5. Terror
6. Knowledge
7. Access
8. Measure
9. Notice
10. Collapse
11. Rely
12. Dispose
13. Drive
14. Regret
15. Form

Campus Academic Resource Program
Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

Answer sheet 1: Select the correct word to complete the sentence.

1. I refuse to let your negative attitude *affect* me.
* Affect is the correct word to choose in this sentence because it implies influence. Another way to write this sentence is: I refuse to let your negative attitude influence me.
2. We need *discrete* information to find out if the food poisoning affected everyone who ate here during dinner.
* Even though this sentence is describing something the restaurant may want to keep discrete, the information itself is discrete. They want to find out if everyone got food poisoning, so they need to look at individual, or discrete, information.
3. This book is hard to read because there are so many literary *allusions*.
* The word “literary” should be a hint in this sentence. Since an allusion is reference to something else, the sentence implies that the book contains many references to other literature.
4. We don’t participate in *illicit* activities in this house.
* Illicit activities are illegal or forbidden activities. The activities are not striving to prompt a response, so elicit is not correct.
5. Yeah, I didn’t sleep a lot last night, but I have a test today so I can’t let that *faze* me.
* The narrator has a test on the same day that she did not sleep enough the night before. Therefore, she cannot let her tiredness disturb her performance on the test.
6. My window of opportunity has *passed*.
* The word “has” is an indicator for which choice to use. The form “has passed” is perfect indicative, and the word “past” does not operate as a verb.
7. I’m never coming to Coachella again, there are so *many* people here!
* Although the sentence implies that there are too many people to count, they could actually be counted. In other words, bodies can be counted, even if it would take a long time. Therefore, “many” is correct.
8. I bet I can run *farther* than you.
* The concept of running implies physical distance. Therefore, “farther” is the correct choice.
9. They bought a new chair for the kitchen, *which* was red to match the rug.
* One indication of which choice to make is the presence of the comma. The second part of the sentence, “which was red to match the rug,” is not crucial information. It doesn’t change the context of the chair and the fact that it was bought for the kitchen. This is a nonrestrictive relative clause, therefore, we use “which.”
10. He said we need time *apart*.
* The context of this sentence implies distance. If you and another need to be away from each other, for whatever period of time, you would use “apart.”
11. I know you don’t want to read this letter right now, I’ll *set* it down over here.
* Remember the distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs. Since this sentence has an object (“over here”), it is transitive. Therefore, we use “set.”

Campus Academic Resource Program
Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

12. She has a guilty *conscience*.
* Since “guilty” is the adjective in this sentence, we know that we cannot choose “conscious,” which is also an adjective describing your state of being. Instead, we choose the noun, “conscience” to show what is guilty.
13. Why do you have *fewer* tests than me?
* Not only can we count the amount of tests each person has, but the word “tests” is plural. Therefore, we use “fewer” instead of “less.”
14. I received so many *compliments* today on my new dress.
* The verb “received” indicates that it should be followed by a noun. Moreover, there are no other aspects to this sentence to indicate that something is being added to enhance the situation, so no verb should be chosen.
15. I'll only know if I did *well* when she tells me “*good* job.”
*The first part of the sentence portrays a verb, “to do.” To modify this verb, we need to use an adverb, so “well” is the correct choice. In the second part of the sentence, “job,” a noun, needs to be modified, so an adjective is the correct choice.

Answer Sheet 2: Change the words into adjectives using the –able and –ible rule.

1. Comfortable (Comfort + able)
2. Horrible (Horror –or + ible)
3. Useable (Use + able)
4. Pleasurable (Pleasure – e + able)
5. Terrible (Terror – or + ible)
6. Knowledgeable (Knowledge – e + able)
7. Accessible (Access + ible)
8. Measurable (Measure – e + able)
9. Noticeable (Notice + able)
10. Collapsible (Collapse – e + ible)
11. Reliable (Rely – y + iable)
12. Disposable (Dispose – e + able)
13. Drivable (Drive – e + able)
14. Regrettable (Regret +t + able)
15. Formable (Form + able)

Campus Academic Resource Program
Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

Works Cited

- “30 Incorrectly Used Words That Can Make You Look Horrible.” *Time*. Time, n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.
- “Another Think Coming.” *Grammarist*. Grammarist, n.d. Web. 22 Apr. 2015.
- “Common Mistakes and Confusing Words in English.” *Learn English*. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 Apr. 2015.
- “Commonly Misused Words and Phrases.” *WSU Online*, n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.
- Desmarais, Christina. “20 Embarrassing Phrases Even Smart People Misuse.” *Inc.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.
- “Effect.” *Merriam-Webster*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 22 Apr. 2015.
- “E.g.” *Merriam-Webster*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 22 Apr. 2015.
- Hansen, Sarah. “21 Expressions You’re Probably Saying Wrong.” *Lifehack*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.
- “Homophone.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 13 Apr. 2015. Web. 22 Apr. 2015.
- Jackson, Dominique. “25 Common Phrases That You’re Saying Wrong.” *Lifehack*. Lifehack, n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.
- Lang, Nico. “44 Everyday Phrases You Might Not Know You’ve Been Saying Incorrectly.” *Thought Catalog*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.
- “Misused Expressions. Strunk, William, Jr. 1918. Elements of Style.” *Bartleby*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.
- “Passed vs. Past.” *Grammarist*. Grammarist, n.d. Web. 22 Apr. 2015.
- Shah, Yagana. “12 Commonly Misused Words and Phrases.” *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 12 Jan. 2014. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.
- “Spelling: Common Words that Sound Alike.” *Purdue OWL*. Purdue Owl, 9 Dec. 2014. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.
- “Than.” *Dictionary.com*. Dictionary.com, n.d. Web. 22 Apr. 2015.
- “‘That’ or ‘Which?’” *Oxford Dictionaries (US)*. Oxford Dictionaries, n.d. Web. 22 Apr. 2015.
- “Transitive and Intransitive Verbs.” *Cliffnotes*. Cliffnotes, n.d. Web. 22 Apr. 2015.
- “Words Ending in –able or –ible.” *Oxford Dictionaries*. Oxford Dictionaries, n.d. Web. 28 Apr. 2015.