

# Commonly Confused Words

**Lead/Led** - **Lead** is a metallic element; **lead** is also a verb meaning to direct or to cause to follow. **Led** is the past tense form of the verb to lead.

*With great ability to **lead**, he **led** them into battle where, moments before, **lead** had been flying.*

**Lie/Lay** - **Lie** is a verb that means to recline. Its main forms are lie, lay, [had] lain, and it does not usually take a direct object. **Lay** means to place or put. Its main forms are lay, laid, [had] laid, and it is usually followed by a direct object.

*I usually **lie** in bed for hours thinking about what topic to choose for my essay. Maybe I should **lay** a stack of books ["stack of books" is the direct object] next to my bed for inspiration.*

**Passed/Past** - **Passed** is the past tense of the verb to pass. **Past** can be a noun or an adjective signifying that something has happened previously.

*He frequently **passed** me when we raced. That is in the **past** ["past" is a noun]; I'm faster now, and I'm trying to forget my **past** failures ["past" is an adjective describing "failures"].*

**Site/Cite** - **Site** is a noun that means a particular place. **Cite** is a verb that means to quote or give credit.

*Make sure to **cite** that passage in your paper that talks about the **site** of the Battle of Hastings.*

**Than/Then** - **Than** is used in comparative statements. **Then** is a reference to time or a sequence of events.

*I would rather bike or run **than** swim today. Would you like to bike first and **then** go for a run?*

**There/Their/They're** - **There** is an adverb meaning in that place. **Their** is a pronoun indicating ownership by more than one person or thing. **They're** is a contraction of the words they and are.

*Too many kittens are running around in **there**, and **their** claws destroyed my furniture.*

*Now that the kittens are scratch-proof, **they're** no longer banished to the basement.*

**To/Too/Two** - **To** either indicates direction or comes before a verb to make an infinitive. **Too** means also or very. **Two** is a number.

*I am going **to** the store. I am going to go to the store **too**. So it seems that **two** of us are going to the store. Let's hope we don't spend **too** much money.*

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**Used to/Supposed to** - The final "d" is necessary when using these phrases. "Use to" and "suppose to" are incorrect.

*I **used to** ride my bike against traffic, but I found out that you are **supposed to** ride with traffic.*

**Weather/Whether** - **Weather** is a noun that describes the state of the atmosphere. **Whether** is a conjunction that introduces the first or both of alternative possibilities.

***Whether** we have good **weather** or rainy **weather**, we're going to race this weekend.*

**Where/Wear/Were** - **Where** indicates location. To **wear** is a verb meaning to be clothed in. **Were** is the plural past tense of the verb to be.

***Where** are your clothes? Usually we **wear** clothes. They **were** all missing their clothes.*

**Who/Whom** - **Who** and **whom** are both pronouns. **Who** is used as the subject of a sentence; it does the action. **Whom** is used as an object of a sentence; the action happens to it, and it usually comes after a preposition.

***Who** [subject of the sentence; does the action of writing] wrote the novel For **Whom** [comes after preposition "for"] the Bell Tolls? You sent that email to **whom** [comes after the preposition "to"]?*

**Who's/Whose** - **Who's** is a contraction of the words who and is. **Whose** is a possessive pronoun.

***Who's** going to care if we work on grammar? **Whose** grammar book is this?*

**Your/You're** - **Your** is a pronoun that indicates ownership by one person. **You're** is a contraction of you and are.

***Your** car is low on gas. **You're** responsible for paying for gas on this trip.*

**Further/Farther** - When these words function as adverbs or adjectives, they can be used pretty much interchangeably. *The girl ran **further/farther** [adverbs modifying "ran"] than the boy.*

**Further** is used as a sentence adverb to mean additionally. ***Further**, she was wearing painful shoes.* The verb **further** means to help something move forward. *She decided to **further** her running career by joining the cross-country team at school.*