

## **Amount vs. Number / Fewer vs. Less / Further vs. Farther / Lend vs. Borrow**

**Amount Vs. Number:** “Amount” is used for mass nouns, and “number” is used for count nouns. A mass noun is something that can’t be counted in specific measurement units or is measured in bulk. A count noun is something that is easily counted through some unit of measurement. For example, money is considered a mass number when dealing with an aggregate amount. Time and liquids are said as count nouns only when a specific measurement unit is used.

\*Circle the word that correctly completes the sentence

The (amount/number) of critical steps is outlined in the chapter describing the process.

The (amount/number) of vegetation in the woods is astounding.

**Fewer Vs. Less:** Use fewer when referring to people or things in the plural (e.g. People these days are buying fewer newspapers). Use less when referring to something that can’t be counted or doesn’t have a plural form (e.g. It’s a better job, but they pay less money).

I mistakenly thought people would send (fewer/less) emails over the weekend.

After the neighbors decided to throw a pizza on our roof, I had (fewer/less) respect for them.

**Further Vs. Farther:** Further refers to an intangible or figurative distance or extent. If referring to a physical distance, use farther. It’s easy to remember that farther contains the word “far” in it, implying physical distance.

I want to (further/farther) my career by taking classes to get my Masters degree.

Addie drove a mile (further/father) than she needed to before she realized she was lost.

**Lend Vs. Borrow:** When someone lends something to someone, the lender allows, gives, or grants permission to someone to use something on the condition he/she returns it. When a person borrows something, the borrower obtains, gets, or takes something with the expectation that the thing borrowed is returned to the lender. The lender is the giver, and the borrower is the taker.

When Sarah and I grab lunch together, she often (lends/borrows) me money when I forget my purse at home.

Kenny wants to (lend/borrow) money from me.

# When to Use Who / Whom

**Purpose:** Many students become confused regarding when to use “who” or “whom” in a sentence. This handout will explain the rules for deciding which one to use.

**Rule 1:** “Who” and “whoever” are **subjects** // “whom” and “whomever” are **objects**

Because the pronouns **who** and **whoever** are subjects, they can be replaced with other subject pronouns such as **he, she, or they** in order to test if they are used correctly in a sentence. Because the pronouns **whom** and **whomever** are objects, they can be replaced with other object pronouns such as **him, her, and them** to test if they are used correctly in a sentence.

Example: (**Who, whom**) is going to the store?

To test for the correct word, replace **who** with another subject pronoun: **he**  
**He** is going to the store.

Example: **You want (who, whom) to go to the store?**

Replace **whom** with another object pronoun: **him**  
You want **him** to go to the store?

**Rule 2:** Sometimes the order of the words in a sentence needs to be switched around in order to test for “who” or “whom”

Examples: **I am planning to invite those people (who, whom) the company has honored.**

Test for **who**: The company has honored **they**.

Test for **whom**: The company has honored **them**.

**Whom** is the correct answer

**2) (Whoever, whomever) arrives first will win a prize**

Test for **whoever**: **She** arrives first

Test for **whomever**: **Her** arrives

**Whoever** is the correct answer

**3) The guests may bring (whoever, whomever) they wish.**

Test for **whoever**: The guests may bring **they**.

Test for **whomever**: The guests may bring **them**.

**Whomever** is the correct answer

## Misused Words

*Further vs. Farther*

You need to go further/farther than Platform 9 if you want to board the train to Hogwarts.

*Fewer vs. Less*

There are fewer/less Harry Potter books than movies.

*Number vs. Amount*

Only Hermione knows the number/amount of books in the Hogwarts library.

*Who vs. Whom*

Who/whom did Harry meet on his eleventh birthday?

*Since vs. Because*

Harry looks for the snitch since/because he is the Gryffidor Quidditch team's seeker.

*Bring vs. Take*

The students will bring/take their belongings when they leave Hogwarts for the summer.

*Affect vs. Effect*

Snape thought that James Potter had a negative affect/effect on Lily.

*Nauseous vs. Nauseated*

After taking the polyjuice potion, Harry felt nauseated/nauseous.

## Subject-Pronoun and Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject-Pronoun disagreement:

*The wizard asked the student to look up the answer in their spell book.*

Subject-Verb disagreement:

*Hermione, as well as all the other Gryffindor students, were excited when the Quidditch team beat Slytherin.*

## Miscellaneous Tips

Using second person—you should not use “you” in formal papers unless you are speaking directly to the reader or telling the reader what to do.

*It's important that you read the Harry Potter books in order before you watch the movies.*

**OR**

*Diehard fans think that reading the Harry Potter books in order before watching any of the movies is more enjoyable.*

Could of/Would of/Should of—replace “of” with “have.”

*Harry could of died in the graveyard after meeting He Who Must Not Be Named in the Triwizard Tournament.*

Ambiguous and Dangling Modifiers—always make sure a sentence clearly lays out what is being described.

*Being in such rough condition meant Hermione had a hard time deciding where to start editing Ron’s paper.*

Who or what was in rough shape?

*After a long day of classes, Hermione’s attention span was in such rough condition that she had a hard time helping Ron with his paper.*

### **Final Thoughts**

1. Remember that it is okay to check with fellow tutors if you are having trouble.
2. There is a copy of Hacker in the magic cabinet for further reference.
3. Grammar is not the first thing you should be looking for unless it is explicitly asked of you—and even then, if there are bigger issues to attend to, attend to those.

# 30 Stumpers

## 1. TWO, TO, TOO

These words are confused surprisingly often.

- The word *two* is the spelling for the number 2.
- *To* — is used to indicate direction (The arrow is your clue): We travel to Rome, to school, to the store, to our friend's house.
- *To* is also used with a form of a verb. (A verb is generally understood as a word describing an act—like *to go*, *to see*, *to do*, *to have*—or a state of being, like *to be*, *to exist*, *to belong*.)
- *Too* means excessively or overly: He is too old for that girl. The room is too cold for comfort. She is too young to get married.
- *Too* means *also*: My friend came too. He wants to see the movie too. She can write too.

## EXERCISES

Fill in the blanks with the correct word.

1. My father thought I had spent \_\_\_\_\_ much money on the \_\_\_\_\_ suits.
2. Our tour traveled \_\_\_\_\_ Rome \_\_\_\_\_ see the Pope.
3. The song title was "They're Either \_\_\_\_\_ Old or \_\_\_\_\_ Young."
4. \_\_\_\_\_ err is human, \_\_\_\_\_ forgive is divine.
5. Paul will play tennis \_\_\_\_\_.
6. In my heart I knew only \_\_\_\_\_ well that it was \_\_\_\_\_ soon \_\_\_\_\_ get married.

## 2. THERE, THEIR, THEY'RE

- *There* indicates a place: He used to go there often. Take the application over there. I was sent there to take a test.
- *There* is also used as a sort of "filler" (especially at the beginning of sentences) with no special meaning: There is a job for everyone. (The sentence really means "a job exists for everyone"—the word *there* has no particular meaning here.) There are those who do not believe in working. There may come a time when you will regret this.
- *Their* has only one meaning: it indicates ownership or possession, just like *his* or *her*, *my* or *your*: He lost his job. She lost her job. They lost their jobs. Here are some more examples: (1) Their (*possession*) house was up there (*location*) on the hill. (2) There (*filler*) are those who would sell their (*possession*) birthrights. (3) There (*filler*) will come a day when they will regret their (*possession*) actions.

- *They're* is a contraction (two words put together with an apostrophe used to indicate letters left out) for *they are*. Contractions like *they're* are not usually used in formal writing, but they are an important part of spoken communication: "They're late again!"

**Hint:** If you want to write *they're*, be sure you can put *they are* in its place, as above: "*They are* late again!"

## EXERCISES

Write the correct word in the blanks.

1. Because \_\_\_\_\_ cowards, the soldiers abandoned \_\_\_\_\_ weapons over \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ not going camping this weekend.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is no excuse for \_\_\_\_\_ bad behavior.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ report was rejected by the administration.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ not aware of \_\_\_\_\_ responsibilities.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ was a leak in \_\_\_\_\_ boat.

## 3. PERSONAL, PERSONNEL

- *Personal* relates to one's self or "person": He had personal reasons for resigning from the job. It is a matter of personal pride with me.

**Hint:** *Personal* will always have another word which it describes directly after it, or nearby: (1) It was a personal problem. (*Personal* describes *problem*.) (2) His reasons were personal. (*Personal* describes *reasons*.)

- *Personnel* is a different word entirely. Note the different spelling: two *n*'s and an ending in *el*. The general meaning is "employees, staff, or those engaged to do a job." We speak of the military personnel in World War II or the personnel director of the company (one who hires individuals to staff a business).

## EXERCISES

Fill in the blanks with the correct words:

1. He required \_\_\_\_\_ attention because of his wealth.
2. Because of the strike, the officials attempted to hire new \_\_\_\_\_ to fill the vacancies.
3. He applied for the position as \_\_\_\_\_ director.
4. The letter from my boyfriend was \_\_\_\_\_.

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## 4. PRINCIPAL, PRINCIPLE

- *Principle* means rule (both end with *le*), belief, ideals: It is a matter of principle.

- *Principal*: Every other use of the word has the *al* spelling, regardless of what it means. Here it means *chief*: My principal objection is his frequent absence on the job.

- *Principal* also means amount of money in a bank, investment or trust: The principal is \$10,000; we use only the interest.

- *Principal* also means the head of a school: The principal of the school is Mr. Jones.

**Hint:** For every use other than *rule*, spell the word with an *al* ending.

## EXERCISES

Circle the correct word in each sentence.

1. He did not wish to disturb the (principle, principal) of the trust fund.
2. The (principal, principle) export of Brazil is coffee.
3. The (principle, principal) of my high school was considered a tyrant by many of the students.
4. It is my (principal, principle) never to cheat on an examination.

## 5. IT'S, ITS

- *It's* is a contraction, meaning *it is*. The apostrophe takes the place of the missing letter *i* in *is*. It is just like *let's* (let us), *here's* (here is), *there's* (there is).

**Hint:** If you can substitute *it is* for *it's*, you need the apostrophe.

- *Its* without the apostrophe is a possessive. It means *belonging to it*. If you can substitute *of it* for the word, you need to use this form. *Its* surface was rough (the surface of it). The dollar has lost its value (the value of it). A diamond never loses its brilliance (of it).

## EXERCISES

Write the correct words in the blanks.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ impossible!
2. The dog hurt \_\_\_\_\_ paw.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ sinking!
4. The team won \_\_\_\_\_ race.

## 6. KNOW, NO

- To *know* means to comprehend or understand. It also means "to be acquainted with" as "I know her very well."

- *No* means a negative as in the simple expression, "No, I won't." He could see no way to explain it. He had no answer to that question.

## EXERCISES

The following sentences will test whether you \_\_\_\_\_ the difference! Fill in the blanks with *know* or *no*.

1. Did you \_\_\_\_\_ that she had \_\_\_\_\_ sense of balance?
2. Does anyone \_\_\_\_\_ the true meaning of life?
3. Do you \_\_\_\_\_ who won the contest?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ information concerning the murder was released.

## 7. AFFECT, EFFECT

- *Affect* is always a verb and only a verb. It indicates action and means to *influence*. If you are ever in doubt as to whether a word is a verb or not, remember these two tests: (1) Place the word *to* before it (to go, to be, to live). (2) Try to change the word to past tense (Today I sleep; yesterday I slept.) *Affect* meets both tests of a verb: Your vote will affect the election.

- With an *ed* ending, *affected* means *unnatural*: She has a very affected way of speaking.

- *Effect* may be a verb or a noun, and here is where the trouble lies. As a verb, it has an entirely different meaning from *affect*. *Effect* means to bring about or to cause to happen: The partners effected an agreement. Congress effected a change in the law.

- But *effect* may also be a noun; the closest meaning is *result* or *impact*: What is the effect of this ruling? It is the law of cause and effect.

- *Effect*, used as a plural (effects) has still another meaning: *possessions*. He left all his effects to his son.

**Hint:** If you can say *the* in front of the word, you must choose *effect*.

## EXERCISES

Circle the correct word in each sentence.

1. The mayor has (affected, effected) many changes during his administration.
2. What is the (affect, effect) of alcohol on the brain?
3. All of his grandfather's (affects, effects) were left to him in the will.
4. She had a most (effected, affected) manner.
5. When a good employer (affects, effects) his workers in a positive way, he receives good (affects, effects).

## 8. PASSED, PAST

- *Passed* is a form of the verb *to pass* that means *went by* or *succeeded in*: He passed this way yesterday (this means

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went by). He passed all his tests for the Post Office job (this means *succeeded in*.)

• **Past** has two uses:

(1) It means a time now gone: She made errors in the past. Our account is past due. The past tense indicates events that already occurred.

(2) It indicates direction and means *in front of* or *before*: She ran past his house (means *in front of*).

## EXERCISES

Fill in the blanks with *passed* or *past*.

1. Maria \_\_\_\_\_ all the hurdles.
2. Please list your \_\_\_\_\_ experiences on the application.
3. Late for school again, Bill \_\_\_\_\_ the stop sign.
4. Bill raced \_\_\_\_\_ the stop sign.
5. All the \_\_\_\_\_ meetings accomplished nothing!
6. Many old people live in the \_\_\_\_\_.

## 9. LOOSE, LOSE

• **Loose** means roomy, not tight, as a loose dress; a loose rule. The shoe is too loose. If you remember to pronounce it correctly you will have less difficulty. *Loose* is pronounced with a soft, hissed "s" at the end (it rhymes with *moose*).

• **Lose** means to mislay, be unable to find, or be defeated: Don't lose the address. I believe he will lose the election, lose the fight, lose the contest. *Lose* is pronounced as though it had a "z" at the end (*looz*) (it rhymes with *shoes*).

## EXERCISES

*Lose* and *Loose*: Some Examples

Circle the correct word in each sentence.

1. a (loose, lose) button
2. to (loose, lose) a bet
3. the dog broke (loose, lose)
4. to (loose, lose) your wallet

## 10. ADVISE, ADVICE

• **Advise** is a verb (an action word). It is pronounced to rhyme with *tries* and means to counsel, to recommend, to give advice: Let me advise you of your rights. He advised us not to attend the meeting.

• **Advice** (pronounced to rhyme with *spice*) means a recommendation or an opinion: The lawyer gave me good advice.

**Hint:** If you use "the" in front of the word, you must choose advice.

## EXERCISES

Write the correct word in the blank spaces.

1. My teacher \_\_\_\_\_ me to hire a tutor immediately.
2. She went to a marriage counselor for \_\_\_\_\_.
3. My attorney will want to \_\_\_\_\_ me.
4. Although my father \_\_\_\_\_ me concerning what college to attend, I didn't take his \_\_\_\_\_.

# 31 More Stumpers

## 1. WORDS THAT STUMP YOU

- **accept** means to receive, as accept a gift, or to agree to, as accept the terms of the contract.
- **except** means to exclude: Jack was excepted from the discussion.
- **except** means but: Everyone except Mary agreed.
- **already** means before, or previously: Bob had already left the house when the storm broke.
- **all ready** means completely prepared: The meal was all ready for the guests at 1 p.m.
- **altogether** means wholly, completely: It was altogether out of the question.
- **all together** means in a group: The family was all together at the Thanksgiving table.

## EXERCISES

Circle the correct word in the parentheses so that each sentence makes sense.

1. Everyone (accept, except) me went.
2. They were (all ready, already) to fight.
3. That is (altogether, all together) wrong.
4. I will (accept, except) the decision.
5. Clara was (accepted, excepted) from the meeting.
6. Doug (already, all ready) took the course.

## 2. MORE CONFUSING WORDS

- **coarse** means rough or crude: His behavior is coarse.
- **course** means something that follows a specific direction, like a course of study: The course of events led to the outbreak of war.
- **hanged** refers to executions: The prisoner was hanged at dawn.
- **hung** refers to objects: The damaged picture hung on the far wall of the living room. She was so thin that her clothes hung loosely from her gaunt frame.
- **beside** means next to or on the side of: Russ sat beside me at the dinner.
- **besides** means in addition to: Besides the small grip, he carried one large suitcase.
- **besides** means except, other than: He has nothing to say besides, "Yup." Besides Mom, I have no relatives.

## EXERCISES

Write the correct words from the parentheses in the blank spaces.

1. (beside, besides) Sit \_\_\_\_\_ me.
2. (course, coarse) Choose a \_\_\_\_\_ of action.
3. (hanged, hung) He \_\_\_\_\_ himself.

4. (course, coarse) Feel this \_\_\_\_\_ woolen material.

5. (beside, besides) Jack has nothing \_\_\_\_\_ his dog.

6. (hanged, hung) She \_\_\_\_\_ the best poster.

## 3. MORE STUMPERS

- **farther** is used for geographic distances: He could swim farther than anyone we know. New York is farther east than Syracuse.
- **further** is used to indicate time, quantity, or degree: Ralph is further along in his project than Tim. The judge said he would tolerate no further interruptions.
- **healthy** means having health; this word is used to refer to a person or other living thing: A healthy kitten makes a delightful pet.
- **healthful** means health-giving. Do not use this to refer to people but to foods, treatments, medicines, etc.: We are not certain whether large doses of vitamins are really healthful.
- **later** refers to time (it rhymes with *cater*): It's later than you think.
- **latter** is the last named of two (it rhymes with *clatter*): John and Bob are brothers; the latter is a sophomore at Rockland Community College.
- **then** is used to indicate a time sequence: First she hurt her left leg; then she broke her arm.
- **than** is used to indicate comparison: Janet is taller than her sister.

## EXERCISES

A. Circle the correct word in parentheses.

1. Sally threw down her pen; (then, than) she stormed out.
  2. Jack and Jill went up the hill. The (later, latter) fell.
  3. Oranges are more (healthy, healthful) than candy.
  4. There were no (farther, further) arguments.
  5. He has more time (then, than) I do.
  6. How much (further, farther) east must we go?
- B. Again, circle the correct word in parentheses.
1. (Beside, Besides) Tom, no one wanted cake.
  2. The snackbar was (all ready, already) for the busload of kids.
  3. I was (all together, altogether) opposed to the plan he presented.
  4. Medical students have a rigorous (coarse, course) of study.
  5. The prisoners were escorted (all together, altogether) into the yard.
  6. It was (all ready, already) too late.