

Accept, Except *Accept* is a verb; it means “to receive.” *Except* as a verb means “to leave out”; as a preposition it means “excluding.”

We **accept** your invitation with pleasure.
If you **except** her freshman grades, she has a good scholastic average.
My grades are satisfactory in every subject **except** English.

Adapt, Adopt *Adapt* means “to change in order to fit or be more suitable to adjust.” *Adopt* means “to take something and make it one’s own.”

To survive, an animal must **adapt** to its environment.
Some adult novels have been **adapted** for young readers.
They **adopted** their physician’s suggestions and **adopted** a baby.

Affect, Effect *Affect* is usually a verb; it means “to influence (frequently the mind or feelings).” *Effect* as a verb means “to accomplish, to bring about.” *Effect* as a noun means “the result of some action.”

How did the defeat **affect** the team?
A number of improvements were **effected** [brought about] by the new student council.
Effects [results] of the strike were felt everywhere.

Amount, Number Use *amount* to refer to a singular word; use *number* to refer to a plural word.

A large **amount** of money (singular) was in the drawer.
A large **number** of coins (plural) were in the drawer.

And etc. Since *etc.* is an abbreviation of the Latin *et cetera*, which means “and other things,” you are using *and* twice when you write “and etc.” The *etc.* is sufficient.

STANDARD We carry a complete stock of newspapers, magazines, stationery, school supplies, tobacco, candy, etc.
[not *and etc.*]

Anywheres, Everywheres, Nowheres Use these words and others like them *without* the final *s*.

We looked **everywhere**, but the children were **nowhere** in sight; they could not be found **anywhere**.

At Do not use *at* after *where*.

NONSTANDARD Where were you staying at?
STANDARD Where were you staying?

PRACTICE