I. **A, AN, AND**

1. **A** is used before a word beginning with a consonant or a consonant sound.
   
   Examples: a dog, a cat, a poem, a uniform

2. **AN** is used before a word beginning with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) or a silent “h.”
   
   Examples: an airplane, an hour, an eagle, an orange
   
   Write an hour because the “h” in hour is silent, but write a house because the “h” in house is not silent.

3. **AND** join words or ideas together.
   
   Examples: John and Ray play baseball on Sunday.
   
   I like apples and oranges.
   
   He is a good student, and he knows it.

**EXERCISE 1 - FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE CORRECT WORD: “a,” “an,” or “and.” CHECK YOUR ANSWERS ON THE LAST PAGE.**

1. Carole sings _____ great deal.

2. He read _____ book _____ day.

3. Young women crewed _____ Tall Ship in the Bicentennial race.

4. Art _____ Mike went to _____ baseball game.

5. My cousin lives in _____ igloo.


7. The animal disappeared into _____ hole in the ground.

8. _____ ant is _____ very strong insect.

9. My brother _____ I have _____ old.

10. The bottle has _____ interesting shape, _____ it will look nice as ____ vase.

11. _____ what’s going on here?

12. It’s ____ good day to walk for _____ hour _____ visit _____ friend.

13. He hopes _____ large car will give _____ smoother ride, but _____ large car gets poorer mileage.

14. She is bright _____ thoughtful, but her brother is _____ poor student _____ _____ inconsiderate person.
15. The apartment is _____ good buy, even though there is _____ crack in the kitchen wall.

IT’S YOUR TURN

DIRECTIONS: WRITE 3 SENTENCES USING AN, 3 USING A, AND 3 USING AND.

1. _______________________________________________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________________________________________
3. _______________________________________________________________________________________
4. _______________________________________________________________________________________
5. _______________________________________________________________________________________
6. _______________________________________________________________________________________
7. _______________________________________________________________________________________
8. _______________________________________________________________________________________
9. _______________________________________________________________________________________

II. ALREADY/ALL READY

1. Already means at this time or before.

   Examples: He had already left by the time we arrived.
              I already know how to drive, so I don’t need lessons.

2. All ready means everything is ready.

   Examples: The children are all ready to leave for camp.
              The dinner is not all ready yet.

EXERCISE 2 - FULL IN THE BLANKS WITH CORRECT WORD OR WORDS, ALREADY OR ALL READY.

1. He is _____ the best athlete in school; what more can you ask for?
2. Are you _____ for school?
3. The dinner was _____ for the guests.
4. Has he arrived yet?
5. Sorry, the doctor has _____ gone for the say.
6. He has _____ polished his shoes; now he has to comb his hair.

7. Have you _____ gotten your clothing for the trip?

8. I guess you’re not _____ yet.

9. He had _____ won the scholarship when his student loan came through.

10. I hope you will be _____ by 4:00 p.m.

IT’S YOUR TURN

DIRECTIONS: WRITE THREE SENTENCES USING ALREADY AND THREE SENTENCES USING ALL READY.

1. _________________________________________

2. _________________________________________

3. _________________________________________

4. _________________________________________

5. _________________________________________

6. _________________________________________

III. BUY/BY

1. Buy means to purchase.

   Examples: I want to buy a new hat.
   He buys a new car every year.

2. By means next to, near, according to, etc.

   Examples: I walked by my old apartment house.
   By the lake is a large old fashioned cottage.

EXERCISE 3 - FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE CORRECT WORD: BUY OR BY. CHECK YOUR ANSWERS ON THE LAST PAGE.

1. _____the time I reach the bus stop, the bus had pulled away.

2. I always remember to _____ milk after the store is closed.

3. I walked _____ the drugstore and remembered that I had to _____ aspirin.

4. I expect to be home _____ ten o’clock.

5. _____ my standards, the cake was very good.
6. They knew the child was sick _____ the harsh sound of his cry.

7. When I get hungry, I run to the store and _____ some candy.

8. New York and Chicago _____ subway cars from Detroit.

9. The bus route passes right _____ my apartment building.

10. Do you plan to _____ a car or lease one?

11. The family will _____ enough groceries for a week.

12. We could tell _____ his smile that he was telling a lie.

IT’S YOUR TURN

DIRECTIONS: WRITE 3 SENTENCES USING BUY AND 3 USING BY.

1. _______________________________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________________________

3. _______________________________________________________________________

4. _______________________________________________________________________

5. _______________________________________________________________________

6. _______________________________________________________________________

IV. IT’S/ITS

1. It’s is a contraction of it + is, or it + has. (If you cannot substitute it is or it has in the sentence, you cannot use it’s.

   Examples: It’s raining. = It is raining.
   It’s been a hard day. = It has been a hard day.

2. Its is a possessive; it shows ownership.

   Examples: The dog gnawed its bone.
   The baby played with its rattle.

EXERCISE 4 - FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE CORRECT WORD: IT’S OR ITS. CHECK YOUR ANSWER ON THE LAST PAGE.

1. _____ too difficult a problem for me.

2. The snake had a diamond-shaped pattern on _____ back.
3. _____ been a long time since I’ve seen you.

4. _____ not a hard test.

5. The lamp looks _____ best on that table.

6. If _____ too late, let’s not go home at all.

7. _____ never been my favorite sport.

8. The government is doing _____ best.

9. I hope _____ not too cold tomorrow.

10. If _____ O.K. with you, I am leaving now.

11. _____ good that you’re early.

12. I hope _____ ready on time for once.

13. I know a spark plug, but what is _____ purpose?

14. I don’t think that _____ a good idea.

IT’S YOUR TURN

DIRECTIONS: WRITE 3 SENTENCES USING IT’S AND 3 USING ITS.

1. _______________________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________________

3. _______________________________________________________________

4. _______________________________________________________________

5. _______________________________________________________________

6. _______________________________________________________________

V. LOSE/LOOSE

1. Lose means to misplace, to accidentally leave behind, to fail to win.

   Example: Did you lose your ticket?

2. Loose means ill-fitting, too large.
Example: That shirt is loose around the collar; it looks terrible.

EXERCISE 5 - FILL THE BLANKS WITH THE CORRECT WORD: LOSE OR LOOSE. CHECK YOUR ANSWERS ON THE LAST PAGE.

1. Do you think the football team will _____ the game tonight?

2. My new shirt is too _____ for me.

3. The dog got _____ about 12:00 yesterday.

4. I have 15 more pounds to _____.

5. Don’t _____ your head!

6. The dog’s collar was very _____.

7. Be careful no to _____ your car keys.

8. Mother will _____ her temper if you don’t clean your room.

9. The pilot was about to _____ his nerve.

10. The animals were turned _____ from their cages.

11. The light is _____ in the socket.

12. Drunk drivers will _____ their license.

13. It’s not how you win or ____; it’s how you play the game.

14. The necklace was very _____ around her neck.

IT’S YOUR TURN

DIRECTIONS: WRITE 3 SENTENCES USING LOSE AND 3 USING LOOSE.

1. ________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________

4. ________________________________________________________________

5. ________________________________________________________________

6. ________________________________________________________________
MORE WORDS OFTEN MISUSED

Study the following words that are often used incorrectly.

accept, except Accept is a verb. (Verbs show action.) Use except when it’s not a verb.

I accept your invitation.
Everyone except him.
advice, advise

*Advise* is a verb. Use *advice* when it’s not a verb. Pronounce these words correctly, remembering that the *s* sounds like *z*, and you won’t confuse them.

I *advise* you to go.
I don’t need any *advice*.

are, or, our

*Are* is a verb. *Or* is used between two possibilities, as tea *or* coffee. *Our* shows we possess something.

We *are* studying English.
Take it *or* leave it.
*Our* class meets at eight.

brake, break

*Brake* means “to slow or stop motion.” It’s also the name of the device that slows or stops motion. *Break* means “to shatter.”

You *brake* the speed of a car.
You slam on your *brakes*.
You *break* a dish or an engagement or a track record.

choose, chose

I will *choose* a partner right now.
I *chose* a partner yesterday.

clothes, cloths

Her *clothes* were attractive.
We used soft *cloths* to polish the car.

course, coarse

*Coarse* describes texture, as *coarse* cloth. *Course* is used for all other meanings.

Her suit was made of *coarse* material.
Of *course* enjoyed that *coarse*.

desert, dessert

*Dessert* is the sweet one, the one you like two helpings of. So give it two helpings of *s*. The other one, *desert*, is used for all other meanings.

We had apple pie for *dessert*.
Don’t *desert* me.
The camel moved slowly across the *desert*.

does, dose

*Does* is a verb. A *dose* is an amount of medicine.

He *does* his work well.
She *doesn’t* care about cars.
He took a *dose* of medicine.
forth, fourth  
Fourth with four in it is a number. Otherwise use forth. Note that while fourth has four in it, forty does not. Remember the word forty-fourth.

This is our fourth game.
That was our forty-fourth point.
She walked back and forth.

have, of  
Have is a verb. When you say could have, the have sounds like of, but it must not be written that way. Of is a preposition.

I should have finished my work sooner.
Then I could have gone home.
I often think of him.

knew, new  
Knew has to do with knowledge (both start with k) New means “not old.”

I knew that I wanted a new job.

know, no  
Know has to do with knowledge (both start with k). No means “not any.”

I know she has no money left.

lead, led  
The verb lead is pronounced lēēd.

I will lead the parade today.
I led the parade yesterday.

passed, past  
Passed is a verb. Use past when it’s not a verb.

He passed the house.
He walked past the house.
He is living in the past.
He was going on the past reputation.

peace, piece  
Remember “piece of pie.” The one meaning “a piece of something” always begins with pie. The other one, peace, is the opposite of war.

I gave him a piece of candy.
They signed the peace treaty.

quiet, quite  
Pronounce these two correctly, and you won’t misspell them. Quiet is pronounced quiˈ et.

Be quiet.
The book is quite interesting.

than, then  
Than compares two things. Then tells when (then and when sound a like a both have e in them).

I’d rather have this than that.
Then he started home.
Their, there, they’re  **Their** is a possessive.  **There** points our something and is spelled like **here**. Remember “here and there.”  **They’re** always means “they are.”

Their house is painted pink.  
**There** is where I left it.  
**There** were clouds in the sky.  
**They’re** planning to come.

threw, through  **Threw** means “to throw something” in past time.  If you don’t mean “to throw something,” use **through**.

I walked through the door.  
He threw the ball.  I threw away my chance.  
He threw the ball through the window.

to, too, two  **Two** is a number.  Too means “more than enough” or “also.”  Use **to** for all other meanings.

I have two brothers.  
The lesson was too difficult and too long.  (more than enough)  
I found it difficult too.  (also)  
It was too much for two people to eat.

weather, whether  **Weather** refers to atmospheric conditions.  **Whether** means “if.”

Whether I’ll go depends on the weather.

were, where  **Were** is a verb.  **Where** had **here** in it, and both **where** and **here** refer to a place.

Were you the winner?  
Where is he?  Here he is.  
Where are you?  Here I am.

who’s, whose  **Who’s** always means “who is” or “who has.”  **Whose** is a possessive.

Who’s there?  
Who’s been using my tennis racket?  
Whose book is this?

woman, women  Remember that the word is just **man** or **men** with **wo** in front of it.

wo man ..... woman ..... one woman  
wo men ..... women ..... two women

you’re, your  **You’re** always means “you are.”  **Your** is a possessive.

You’re always welcome.  
**Your** toast is ready.
EXERCISE 6

Directions: Circle the correct word in the following sentences. Check your answers on the last page before proceeding to the progress check.

1. He’s (to too) lazy to study, and his conscience (doesn’t doesn’t) even bother him.
2. (Their There They’re) probably (all ready already) at the theater.
3. Her hair style I (to too two) formal for me.
4. I didn’t (loose lose) the card; I (threw though) it away.
5. That’s (were where) I met the people who (were where) so helpful.
6. I’m (quiet quite) sure this book will appeal to (you’re your) interests.
7. I don’t know (weather whether) that’s a moral solution.
8. (Their There They’re) record indicates that (their there they’re) dependable.
9. (It’s Its) more fun to have a wedding reception at home (than then) at a hotel.
10. I think I (passed past) the main entrance.
11. I think I drove (passed past) the main entrance.
12. She was always (their there) for me to turn to.
13. That (woman women) is going to (lead led) the demonstration for (woman’s women’s) rights.
14. (Who’s Whose) responsible for (you’re your) success?
15. (Peace Piece) and (quiet quite) were all she asked for.
16. They may (loose lose) their (peace piece) of land if they don’t watch out.
17. I don’t (know no) (weather whether) he’s older (than then) Jamie or not.
18. (Are Our) candidate may (loose lose) because of the poor turnout.
19. She’s exactly the (woman women) I’m looking for.
20. I should (have of) registered for this (coarse course) earlier.
21. I hope it will have (a an) effect on my writing.
22. That’s the (forth fourth) compliment I’ve received on my work.
23. I (advice advise) you to (accept except) their offer, (are or) you may lose the job.
24. We (knew new) she had given us (a an) honest answer.
25. Those (coarse course) polishing (clothes cloths) may scratch the finish of your car

PROGRESS CHECK FOR OFTEN CONFUSED WORDS

Directions: Circle the correct word in the following sentences. Check your answers with the instructor.

1. She was (all ready already) to go (accept except) for buying her ticket.
2. I (knew new) I should refuse the (desert dessert).
3. She took his (advise advice) and applied the (break brake) to avoid the collision.
4. (It’s Its) time the cat had (it’s its) kittens.
5. We’re planning (a an) European tour for (are our) (forth fourth) anniversary.
6. Of (coarse course) the lunch should (have of) been ready.
7. A (dose does) of that medicine would (have of) finished me.
8. He (choose chose) to cross the (desert dessert) by camel rather than by car.
9. I (knew new) I shouldn’t (brake break) the speed limit.
10. It’s not wise to cross the (desert dessert) in the daytime.
11. Everyone (choose chose) to go home (accept except) me.
12. The bear walked back and (forth fourth) in (it’s its) cage.
13. (Coarse Course) grains and fiber (are our) good for (are our) health.
14. Samuel Johnson wrote that the chains of habit are (to too) weak to be felt till they are (to too) strong (to too) be broken.
15. I don’t (know no) (weather whether) he can overcome all those difficulties.

IT’S YOUR TURN

Directions: Write five sentences using the words you have the most difficulty with.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________
5. __________________________________________________________
## ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

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Exercise 5
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5. lose
6. loose
7. lose
8. lose
9. lose
10. loose
11. loose
12. lose
13. lose
14. loose
Exercise 6
1. too doesn’t
2. They’re already
3. too
4. lose threw
5. where were
6. quite your
7. whether
8. Their they’re
9. It’s than
10. passed
11. past
12. there
13. woman lead women’s
14. Who’s your
15. Peace quiet
16. lose piece
17. know whether than
18. Our lose
19. woman
20. have course
21. an
22. fourth
23. advise
24. knew an
25. coarse cloths