

- A Short List of Things You Ought to Know About English -
Your knowing these will prevent 90% of the most common errors in writing

First, our spelling error of the year award goes to the word "definitely"

This word often appears as "definitely," or, if the speller has a spellchecker, "defiantly." But we all know how to spell "finite," the main word in "definite." Look at it there. Right smackdab in the center of the word. Now add the prefix "de" to have correctly spelled "definite." (For some reason, "definite" isn't misspelled as often as "definitely"). Now add the suffix "ly" and you have DEFINITELY. Got it? Circle the correct one: (definitely . . . defiantly . . . definitely). Use it in a sentence. Pronounce it. Write it down. Trace the letters with your fingers.

Now you know it! Do it again ... the next word is "opportunity."

Common "usage" look and/or sound-alikes

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| • advice (has "ice" in it) | advise (has a "z" sound) | |
| • are (verb: we are going) | our (belongs to us) | hour (60 mins) |
| • bear (the animal or the verb to carry or give birth to) | bare (empty or nude) | |
| • break (lucky or unlucky break, break your heart) | brake (with your foot, your car) | |
| • choose (sounds like "chewz") | chose (past tense - has "hose" in it, sounds like 'hoze') | |
| • cite (verb: to quote or to document) | site (this is the place) | sight (see it now?) |
| • college (You are here) | collage (combines media in art) | |
| • effect (it's a noun .. special effects) | affect (it's a verb - how did it affect you?) | |
| • except (leave it out .. all except that one) | accept (receive it ... I can accept that) | |
| • it's (it is or it has - it's a contraction) | its (belongs to it. Like "his," has no apostrophe) | |
| • lead (noun – a metal compound) | lead (verb - I will lead you) . | led (past tense of lead - he led me astray) |
| • lose (sounds like "lew's".. z sounding s) | loose (as a goose .. loose enough for two o's in it) | |
| • meet (me at the coffee shop) | meat (beef maybe?) | mete (allot or give out .. ie. punishment) |
| • message (Your mama wants you, Ralphie) | massage (Don't rub me the wrong way) | |
| • peak (mountain top) ... | peek (in the window).... | pique (snag, hook, irritate) all pronounced "peek" |
| • principal (the main thing - has 'a' in the "pal") | principle (the rule – ends with 'le') | |
| • steak (beef, maybe?) | stake (in the ground or in the vampire's heart) | |
| • then (deals with "when") | than (compares ... like "better this than that") | |
| • there (place marker) | their (belongs to them) | they're (contraction of "they are") |
| • too (too many, too much, and also means 'also') | to (to dance, to the hills) | two (2) |
| • weather (sun/rain/snow) | whether (if this or that) | wether (castrated goat) |
| • where (wh, as in "what") | were (we were going) | we're (contraction of 'we are' - we're going) |
| • your (belongs to you) | you're (contraction of "you are) | yore (former - "in days of yore") |

