

There is often confusion over the words **accept** and **except**. They sound similar, but their meanings are very different.

Accept

'To accept' is a **verb**. It has several meanings:

To hold something as true.

▣ The officer accepts your point and has decided to let you off with a caution. ✓

▣ I accept she may have been tired, but that's still no excuse. ✓

To receive something willingly.

▣ I accept this award on behalf of the whole cast. ✓

▣ Do you accept dogs in your hotel? ✓

▣ Please accept my resignation. I don't want to belong to any club that will accept me as a member. ✓ (Groucho Marx)

To answer 'yes' (especially to an invitation).

▣ The minister would love to accept the invitation to your ball, but she has a prior engagement. ✓

Except

The word 'except' is most commonly seen as a **preposition**. However, it can also be used as a **conjunction** and very occasionally as a **verb**.

Except as a preposition means 'apart from', 'not including' or 'excluding'.

▣ I can resist everything except temptation. ✓ (Oscar Wilde)

▣ I have nothing to declare except my genius. ✓ (Oscar Wilde)

▶ Marge, don't discourage the boy! Weaseling out of things is important to learn. It's what separates us from the animals...except the weasel. ✓(Homer Simpson)

▶ It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried. ✓(Winston Churchill)

Except as a conjunction means 'but' or 'if not the fact that'.

▶ I would go swimming, except I am scared of big fish. ✓

Except as a verb means 'to exclude'.

▶ You are excepted from the ruling. ✓

Difference between Affect and Effect

There is often confusion over the words 'effect' and 'affect'. In order to understand which to use, you must know the difference between a **noun** and a **verb**. This is because effect is a noun; whereas, affect is a verb. However, there are tricks to get around this.

Examples:

▣ What effect did foot-and-mouth disease have on your business? ✓

(effect - noun)

("What consequence did foot-and-mouth..." < sounds ok; effect is correct)

▣ Did foot-and-mouth disease affect your business? ✓

(affect - verb)

("Did foot-and-mouth disease transform your business?" < sounds ok; affect is correct)

▣ Do not allow this incident to effect your decision. ✗

("...to outcome/consequence/appearance your decision" < nonsense; effect is wrong.)

("...to transform your decision" < sounds ok; affect is correct.)

▣ That spiral effect is effecting my eyes. ✗

Some writers are confused by **you're** and **your**. A mistake involving these can spoil a great piece of work!

You're

You're is a **contraction** of **you are**. It has no other uses. This is a 100% rule. If you cannot expand it to **you are** in your sentence, then it is wrong.

Examples:

❑ I know you're leaving at 7 o'clock, but would you like another sherry? ✓
(Expands to **you are** - correct)

❑ Please ask Joan to post the parcel when you're in London.
(Expands to **you are** - correct)

❑ You said that you couldn't believe you're ears. ✗
(Does not expand to **you are** - should be **your**)

Your

The word **your** sits before another word (usually a **noun** or a **pronoun**) to show that it belongs to you (e.g., your car, your arm), is of you (e.g., your picture, your photograph) or is related to you (e.g., your uncle). **Your** is a **possessive adjective**. Other possessive adjectives are: my, your, his, her, its, our and their.

Examples:

❑ Our expert will answer your questions about pensions and savings. ✓
(questions belonging to you)

❑ Sarah doesn't look like your sister. ✓
(related to you)