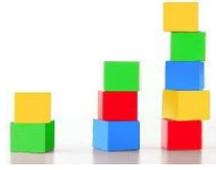


Communicating in a Credible and Effective Way **Reference Sheet – Problem Phrases**



- **Supposed to**
 - Do not omit the “d.”
 - “Suppose to” is incorrect.
- **Used to**
 - Same as above.
 - Do not write, “use to.”
- **Toward**
 - There is no “s” at the end of the word.
- **Anyway**
 - Also has no ending “s.”
 - “Anyways” is nonstandard.
- **Couldn't care less**
 - Be sure to make it negative.
 - Not “I could care less.”
- **All walks of life**
 - Not “woks” of life.
 - This phrase does not apply to cooking.
- **For all intents and purposes**
 - Not “intensive purposes.”
- **Ensure/insure**
 - Ensure to reassure; insure is the act of placing insurance.
- **Run/ran**
 - “The report was run.” (NOT “The report was ran.”)
- **Regard/regards**
 - “In regard to”
 - “Regards” as a closing

Accept/Except:

Accept is a verb meaning to receive. Except is usually a preposition meaning excluding. *"I will accept all the packages except that one."*

Except is also a verb meaning to exclude. *"Please except that item from the list."*

Affect/effect

Affect is usually a verb meaning to influence. Effect is usually a noun meaning result. *"The drug did not affect the disease, and it had several adverse side effects."*

Effect can also be a verb meaning to bring about. *"Only the president can effect such a dramatic change."*

All right/alright

Although alright is widely used, it is considered nonstandard English. As the American Heritage Dictionary notes, it's not "all right to use alright."

All together/altogether

All together is applied to people or things that are being treated as a group. *"We put the pots and pans all together on the shelf."*

Altogether is used to mean entirely. *"I am altogether pleased to be receiving this award."*

Alternately/alternatively

Alternately is an adverb that means in turn; one after the other. *"We alternately spun the wheel in the game."*

Alternatively is an adverb that means on the other hand; one or the other. *"You can choose a large bookcase or, alternatively, you can buy two small ones."*

Beside/besides

Beside is a preposition that means next to: *"Stand here beside me."*

Besides is an adverb that means also: *"Besides, I need to tell you about the new products my company offers."*

Bimonthly/semimonthly

Bimonthly is an adjective that means every two months: *"I brought the cake for the bimonthly office party."* Bimonthly is also a noun that means a publication issued every two months: *"The company publishes several popular bimonthlies."* Semimonthly is an adjective that means happening twice a month: *"We have semimonthly meetings on the 1st and the 15th."*

Capital/capitol

The city or town that is the seat of government is called the capital; the building in which the legislative assembly meets is the capitol. The term capital can also refer to an accumulation of wealth or to a capital letter.

Cite/site

Cite is a verb that means to quote as an authority or example: *"I cited several eminent scholars in my study of water resources."* It also means to recognize formally: *"The public official was cited for service to the city."* It can also mean to summon before a court of law: *"Last year the company was cited for pollution violations."*

Site is a noun meaning location: *"They chose a new site for the factory just outside town."*

Complement/compliment

Complement is a noun or verb that means something that completes or makes up a whole: *"The red sweater is a perfect complement to the outfit."*

Compliment is a noun or verb that means an expression of praise or admiration: *"I received compliments about my new outfit."*

Comprise/compose

According to the traditional rule, the whole comprises the parts, and the parts compose the whole. Thus, the board comprises five members, whereas five members compose (or make up) the board. It is also correct to say that the board is composed (not comprised) of five members.

Concurrent/consecutive

Concurrent is an adjective that means simultaneous or happening at the same time as something else: *"The concurrent strikes of several unions crippled the economy."*

Consecutive means successive or following one after the other: *"The union called three consecutive strikes in one year."*

Connote/denote

Connote is a verb that means to imply or suggest: *"The word 'espionage' connotes mystery and intrigue."*

Denote is a verb that means to indicate or refer to specifically: *"The symbol for 'pi' denotes the number 3.14159."*

Convince/persuade

Strictly speaking, one convinces a person that something is true but persuades a person to do something. *"Pointing out that I was overworked, my friends persuaded [not convinced] me to take a vacation. Now that I'm relaxing on the beach with my book, I am convinced [not persuaded] that they were right."*

Following this rule, convince should not be used with an infinitive.

Council/councilor/counsel/counselor

A councilor is a member of a council, which is an assembly called together for discussion or deliberation. A counselor is one who gives counsel, which is advice or guidance. More specifically, a counselor can be an attorney or a supervisor at camp.

Discreet/discrete

Discreet is an adjective that means prudent, circumspect, or modest: *"Her discreet handling of the touchy situation put him at ease."*

Discrete is an adjective that means separate or individually distinct: *"Each company in the conglomerate operates as a discrete entity."*

Disinterested/uninterested

Disinterested is an adjective that means unbiased or impartial: *"We appealed to the disinterested mediator to facilitate the negotiations."*

Uninterested is an adjective that means not interested or indifferent: *"They seemed uninterested in our offer."*

Elicit/illicit

Elicit is a verb that means to draw out. Illicit is an adjective meaning unlawful. *"No matter how hard I tried to elicit a few scandalous stories from her, she kept all knowledge of illicit goings-on discreetly to herself."*

Emigrant/immigrant

Emigrant is a noun that means one who leaves one's native country to settle in another: *"The emigrants spent four weeks aboard ship before landing in Los Angeles."*

Immigrant is a noun that means one who enters and settles in a new country: *"Most of the immigrants easily found jobs."*

One emigrates from a place; one immigrates to another.

Farther/further

Farther is an adjective and adverb that means to or at a more distant point: *"We drove 50 miles today; tomorrow, we will travel 100 miles farther."*

Further is an adjective and adverb that means to or at a greater extent or degree: *"We won't be able to suggest a solution until we are further along in our evaluation of the problem."* It can also mean in addition or moreover: *"They stated further that they would not change the policy."*

Few/less

Few is an adjective that means small in number. It is used with countable objects: *"This department has few employees."*

Less is an adjective that means small in amount or degree. It is used with objects of indivisible mass: *"Which jar holds less water?"*

Foreword/forward

Foreword is a noun that means an introductory note or preface: *"In my foreword I explained my reasons for writing the book."*

Forward is an adjective or adverb that means toward the front: *"I sat in the forward section of the bus."* *"Please step forward when your name is called."*

Forward is also a verb that means to send on: *"Forward the letter to the customer's new address."*

Historic/historical

In general usage, historic refers to what is important in history, while historical applies more broadly to whatever existed in the past whether it was important or not: *"a historic summit meeting between the prime ministers;"* *"historical buildings torn down in the redevelopment."*

i.e./e.g.

The abbreviation e.g. means for example (from Latin *exempli gratia*): *“Her talents were legion and varied (e.g., deep sea diving, speed reading, bridge, and tango dancing).”*

The abbreviation i.e. means that is or in other words (from Latin *id est*): *“The joy of my existence (i.e., my stamp collection) imbues my life with meaning.”*

It's/its

It's is a contraction for it is, whereas its is the possessive form of it: *“It's a shame that we cannot talk about its size.”*

Laid/lain/lay

Laid is the past tense and the past participle of the verb lay and not the past tense of lie. Lay is the past tense of the verb lie and lain is the past participle: *“He laid his books down and lay down on the couch, where he has lain for an hour.”*

Lend/loan

Although some people feel loan should only be used as a noun, lend and loan are both acceptable as verbs in standard English: *“Can you lend (loan) me a dollar?”* However, only lend should be used in figurative senses: *“Will you lend me a hand?”*

Passed/past

Passed is the past tense and past participle of pass. Past refers to time gone by; it is also a preposition meaning beyond. *“In the past decade, I passed over countless opportunities; I was determined not to let them get past me again.”*

Precede/proceed

The verb precede means to come before. Proceed means to move forward. *“He preceded me into the room; once I caught up with him I proceeded to tell him off.”*

Principal/principle

Principal is a noun that means a person who holds a high position or plays an important role: *“The school principal has 20 years of teaching experience.”*

Principal is also an adjective that means chief or leading: *“The necessity of moving to another city was the principal reason I turned down the job offer.”*

Principle is a noun that means a rule or standard: *“They refused to compromise their principles.”*

Stationary/stationery

Stationary is an adjective that means fixed or unmoving: *“They maneuvered around the stationary barrier in the road.”*

Stationery is a noun that means writing materials: *“We printed the letters on company stationery.”*

Than/then

Than is a conjunction used in comparisons: *“That pizza is more than I can eat.”*

Then is an adverb denoting time: *“Tom laughed, and then we recognized him.”*

To/too/two

To is a preposition; too is an adverb; two is a number. *“Too many of your shots slice to the left, but the last two were right on the mark.”*

Their/there/they're

Their is the possessive form of they; there refers to place; and they're is the contraction of they are. *“They're going there because their mother insisted they become proficient in Serbo-Croatian.”*

Who's/whose

Who's is the contraction of who is. Whose is the possessive form of who. *“Who's going to figure out whose job it is to clean the stables?”*

Your/you're

Your is the possessive form of you; you're is the contraction you are. *“If you're planning on swimming, then be sure to bring your life vest and flippers.”*