Comparison of Glossaries of Usage

While writing research papers, themes, and essays college students invariably face the problem of correct English usage. Often many students confuse grammar and usage. Grammar may be thought as the utensils of language and usage is the correct etiquette of these utensils. An example of a frequent usage problem is the question does lay or lie mean to rest in a horizontal position. When a question of usage arises, a student should consult a reliable glossary of usage in an English handbook.

The usual purpose of a glossary of usage is to assist students by providing a list of words and phrases that frequently cause difficulty in writing and then suggesting what usages are acceptable under certain conditions. Although the glossary of usage provides good, reliable information, the writer must decide if the particular usage is acceptable for the paper he is writing.

Although Ball State University recently adopted The Handbook of Current English, no one handbook provides the final word on correct English usage. The purpose of this thesis is to compare the information given in the glossary of usage in fifteen English handbooks. The glossary of usage of each handbook was copied and then popular words were selected and pasted on a separate of paper for comparison. This comparison reveals three aspects of glossaries of usage: some glossaries provide elaborate explanations and examples and other glossaries provide a few words of explanation; glossaries agree for the most part on some
usages; and most of the glossaries contain picky usages.

Some glossaries provide short to the point information, but others provide long explanations and examples. The correct usage of nowhere is an excellent example. The English Handbook offers three words of advice: "Dialectal. Use nowhere." The Writing Commitment offers quite a bit more information by several examples and a long explanation. Another example is the usage of OK. Again The Practical English Handbook offers short, direct advice: "Informal. Writing: A College Rhetoric offers another lengthy explanation and several examples.

Several of the glossaries agree on certain usages. One of the best examples is the correct usage of fine. Almost all the fifteen glossaries agree the fine should be used sparingly and as a word of approval. Nice is also a good example; the four glossaries that include nice, suggest that it is vague and a more exact word may be used.

Almost all the glossaries contain one or two picky usages. The Practical English Handbook suggest that the usage of center around is "Illogical: use center in (or on) or cluster around." The Harbrace College Handbook explains that folks is "Informal for parents relatives." Several of the glossaries offer unusual, picky usages.

When writing research papers, essays, and themes students often face the problems in deciding on correct usage. Although the glossary of usage suggests information, the writer must decide if the particular usage is acceptable for the paper he is writing.
This comparison reveals three aspects of usage. Some of the
glossaries provide long explanations and detailed examples, but
some handbooks such as The Practical English Handbook offers
short, to the point information. Although one may elaborate more
than another, one is not necessarily better than the other. The
writer must decide which usage is better for his particular
purpose. Although the writer must decide on the usage, some of
the glossaries agree on usage for certain words and phrases.
Some of the words and phrases found in glossaries reflect subtle
difference as well as being unique to one handbook. The
Practical English Handbook suggests that the usage for centers
around is "Illogical." Each of the handbooks contains picky
usages.
A, an. Use *a* before *h* sounded in a first syllable: *a hospital, a hamburger.* Use *an* before a silent *h*: *an honor, an heir, an hour.*

A, an. Use *a* as an article before consonant sounds; use *an* before vowel sounds.
- *a nickname*  
- *a house*  
- *(the *h* is sounded)*  
- *a historical novel*  
- *(though the British say *an)*  
- *(long *u* has the consonant sound of *y)*

A, an. Use *a* before a consonant sound, *an* before a vowel sound.
- *a history*  
- *a union*  
- *a one-dollar bill*  
- *a new dress*  
- *a C*  
- *an hour*  
- *an uncle*  
- *an only child*  
- *an NBA game*  
- *an F*

A, an. Use *a* before words that begin with consonants or words that have initial vowels that sound like consonants.

- *A primitive artifact*  
- *A one-horse carriage*

Use *an* before words that begin with vowels and words that begin with a silent *h*.

- *An aquatic solution*  
- *An honest person*

A, an. Use *a* before words beginning with consonant sounds, including those spelled with an initial, pronounced *h* and those spelled with vowels that are sounded as consonants: *a historian, a one-o'clock class, a university.* Use *an* before words that begin with vowel sounds, including those spelled with an initial, silent *h*: *an orgy, an L, an honor.*

When you use an abbreviation or acronym in writing (see 28b), the article that precedes it depends on how the abbreviation is to be read: *She was once an HEW undersecretary,* (HEW is to be read as three letters, not as a word or as *Health, Education and Welfare.*) *Many Americans opposed a SALT treaty,* (SALT is to be read as one word, *salt,* not as four separate letters.)

A, an. Use *a* before a consonant sound, *an* before a vowel sound.

- *a history*  
- *a university*  
- *a one o'clock meeting*  
- *a C*  
- *an hour*  
- *an undertow*  
- *an orphan*  
- *an F*

A, an. Use *a* before words beginning with a consonant sound: *a web,*  
- *a unit,* *a history of China.* Use *an* before words beginning with a vowel sound or silent *h*: *an elephant, an ox, an hour.*

A, an. *A* is used before words beginning with a consonant sound, even when the sound is spelled with a vowel (*a dog, a European, a unicorn, a habit,*). *An* is used before words beginning with a vowel sound or a silent *h* (*an apple, an Indian, an hour, an uproar*).
a, an. Use *a* before words beginning with consonants or pronounced with initial consonants: a usual day. Use *an* before vowels: an orange. Words with initial pronounced *h*'s can be preceded by either *a* or *an*, but *an* sounds affected to many readers and often causes an unnecessary change in pronunciation of the next word. Write a humble man, not *an* humble man. Unpronounced -h words take *an*: an hour. Watch out for an extra *a* or *an* where it isn't justified, as in *What kind of a hat is that?* In this sentence the *a* is wrong because *hat* refers to hats in general, not to the individual hat.

**a, an.** Use *a* before words that begin with a consonant sound: *a* pole, a unit (the sound is yew-nit), a history. Use *an* before words starting with a vowel sound or a silent *h*: an alley, an hour, an ellipse.

**a, an.** The choice of *a* or *an* depends on the initial sound of the following word rather than the initial letter. Use *a* before words beginning with a consonant sound, *an* before words beginning with a vowel sound: *a* boat, *a* used boat, *a* European country, *an* alligator, *an* F, *an* hour.
Accept, except. As a verb, accept means “to receive”; except means “to exclude.” Except as a preposition also means “but.”

Every legislator except Mr. Whelling refused to accept the bribe. We will except (exclude) this novel from the list of those to be read.

**accept, except**

Accept is a verb that means “to receive.” Except is a preposition or conjunction that means “other than.”

As a verb except means “to leave out.”

The auditors will accept all your claims except the last two.

Aliens who have lived in the United States for more than five years are excepted from the regulation.

**accept, except**

Accept is a verb meaning “receive.” Except is usually a preposition or conjunction meaning “but for” or “other than”; when it is used as a verb, it means “leave out.” I can accept all your suggestions except the last one. I’m sorry you excepted my last suggestion from your list.

accept, except. Accept, a verb, means “to receive, or to take”; I accept your apology. Except, a preposition, means “but”: Everything worked except the altimeter.

**accept, except.**

To accept is to receive. To except is to exclude. As a preposition except means “with the exclusion of.” (He accepted the list from the chairman. The list excepted George from the slate of candidates. He asked why it included all except George.)

**accept, except.**

The verb accept means “to receive with approval” or “to answer in the affirmative”; the verb except means “to omit or exclude.” The preposition except means, roughly, “but” or “other than”: “All the women except Mary came from Denver.”

**Accept/Except**

Accept is a verb meaning “to receive willingly.”

Please accept my apologies.

Except is a preposition meaning “but.”

Everyone except Carlos saw the film.

**except, accept**

Except, accept do not confuse. To except is to exclude or make an exception of. To accept is to approve of or receive.

These laws except juveniles. These schools accept and excepted their apologies.

Accept, except. Frequently mistaken for each other in writing. Accept is to receive willingly; to except is to exclude, to make an exception. As a preposition, except means “other than,” “but.”

**accept, except.**

Accept means “receive” or “approve of”; except means “exclude” or “with the exclusion of”:

Everyone has accepted the invitation except Sam.
Accidently. A misspelling usually caused by mispronunciation. Use accidentally.

accidentally, incidentally When using these adverbs, remember that -ly is added to the adjective forms accidental and incidental, not to the noun forms accident and incident.

NONSTANDARD Mr. Kent accidently overheard the report.
STANDARD Mr. Kent accidentally overheard the report.

accidentally. Commonly misspelled as accidently. In the correct spelling of this adverb, -ly is added to the adjective accidental.
Adapt, adopt. To adapt is to modify something to fit a new purpose. To adopt is to take it over as it is.

adapt, adopt Do not confuse. To adapt is to adjust or make suitable. To adopt is to select as one’s own or to choose to use or follow.

We adapted the guidelines to our needs. [made them fit]
The company adopted new guidelines. [chose to use]

adapt, adopt Adapt means to “change; alter to fit.” Adopt means to “take, acquire.” They have adapted the old terminals to the new circuitry. We have adopted a uniform system of documentation.

adapt, adopt To adapt something is to change it for a purpose: He adapted the Constitution to his own ends. To adopt something is to take control or possession of it: He adopted the Constitution as his code of ethics.
Advice, advise. Frequently confused. Advice is what you get when advisers advise you.

Advice, advise Use advice as a noun, advise as a verb.

advice, advise Pronounced and spelled differently, advice is a noun, advise a verb.

Patients should follow their doctors' advice.
Patients should do what their doctors advise.

advice, advise Advice is a noun meaning "opinion or information offered." Advise is a verb that means "to offer advice to."

The king sent a messenger to the oracle to ask for advice.
The broker advised her client to stay away from speculative stocks.

advice, advise Advice is a noun, and advise is a verb: take my advice; do as I advise you.

advice, advise Advice is a noun and means "a recommendation, or suggestion": Our advice is to buy the cheaper model. Advise is a verb and means "to give a recommendation or suggestion": They advise us to buy the cheaper model.

Advice/Advise
Advice is a noun; advise is a verb. The c in advice is pronounced like the c in certain: the s in advise is pronounced like the last s in surprise.

advice, advise Advice is a noun meaning "counsel" or "recommendation"; advise is a verb meaning "give advice" or "make a recommendation":

I advise you to follow your instructor's advice.
Affect, effect. Affect means “to produce an effect.” Avoid affect as a noun; just say feeling or emotion. Affective is a technical term for emotional or emotive, which are clearer.

Affect, effect. Affect is a verb meaning “to act upon” or “to influence.” Effect may be a verb or a noun. Effect as a verb means “to cause” or “to bring about”; effect as a noun means “a result,” “a consequence.”

The patent medicine did not affect (influence) the disease.
The operation did not effect (bring about) an improvement in the patient’s health.
The drug had a drastic effect (consequence) on the speed of the patient’s reactions.

affect, effect Do not confuse the verb affect with the noun effect. To affect is to rouse the emotions or to influence. change. An effect is a result, an outcome. (When used as a verb, effect means “bring about” or “accomplish”: “The medicine effected a complete cure.”)

His tears affected her deeply. The effect surprised me.
The drug affects one’s appetite. The drug has side effects.

affect, effect Affect is a verb meaning “to influence.”
Effect can be a verb or a noun. As a verb it means “to bring about,” and as a noun it means “result.”

A severe cutback in federal funds for student loans could affect his plans for graduate school.
The arbitrator tried to effect a settlement that would satisfy both the teachers and the school board.
The most notable effect of the German bombing of London was to strengthen the resolve of the British.

affect, effect Usually affect is a verb, meaning “to influence,” and effect is a noun, meaning “result”: The drug did not affect his driving; in fact, it seemed to have no effect at all. But effect occasionally is used as a verb meaning “to bring about”: Her efforts effected a change. And affect is used in psychology as a noun meaning “feeling or emotion”: One can infer much about affect from behavior.

affect, effect Affect means “to influence.” The temperature affects the chemicals. Affect also means “to pretend or take on airs.” She affects a wealthy lifestyle. As a noun, an affect (affect) is an emotional response. Effect means “to bring about directly, make happen.” We will effect the repairs on your motorcycle immediately. To put into effect is to make happen: Your orders will be put into effect without delay. As a noun an effect is a result or outcome. The effect of nitrous oxide on the metal was corrosive.

affect, effect As verbs, to affect is to influence, to effect is to bring about. Effect is more commonly used as a noun meaning “result.” (Recent tax reforms affect everyone. They are intended to effect a fairer distribution of taxes. The effects have yet to be felt.)

affect, effect (v., n.) As a v. to affect is to influence: This affected the whole subsequent course of events. To effect is to bring about: She effected a stunning reversal.

As a noun, affect is a psychological term referring to emotion or feeling. Effect as a noun means “result.”
affect, effect. The noun form is almost always effect (The effect of that usage was to alienate the purists). The wrong choices are usually made when writers use the verb. The verb effect means “to bring about,” “to accomplish” (The prisoner effected his escape by picking a lock). The verb affect means “to influence” (The weather affected her moods).

Affect/Effect
The verb affect means “to impress, to move, to change.”
The noun effect means “result.”
The verb effect means “to make, to accomplish.”
The noun affect, meaning a feeling or an emotion, is used in psychology.
   Inflation affects our sense of security.
   Inflation is one of the many effects of war.
   Inflation has effected many changes in how we spend money.
   To study affect, psychologists probe the unconscious.

affect, effect. Affect is a verb meaning “influence” or “assume the appearance of”; effect is a noun meaning “result”:
   The weather affecting our tempers.
   The frightened child affecting a defiant look.
   The effects of radiation aren’t completely known.

Affect is also a noun, a technical term used in psychology meaning “emotion.” Effect is a formal verb meaning “to bring about.”
Aggravate. Means to add gravity to something already bad enough. Avoid using it to mean “irritate.”

**Wrong**

He aggravated his mother.

**Right**

The rum aggravated his mother’s fever.

Aggravate Informal in the sense of “annoy,” or “irritate,” or “pester.” Formally, it means to “make worse or more severe.”

aggravate Informally aggravate means “to annoy or to irritate.” In general usage it means “to make worse” or “to intensify.”

Informal Undisciplined children aggravate babysitters.

General Lack of water aggravated the suffering.

**aggravate, irritate**

Aggravate means “to make worse or more serious.” Irritate means “to cause or induce displeasure.” In everyday speech you may blend these two words, but in your writing you should maintain their distinction.

In the nineteenth century, advocates of free trade felt that protective tariffs would aggravate hostilities among nations. Intestinal tapeworm infestation often occurs without symptoms, but occasionally there is abdominal irritation.

Aggravate Aggravate should not be used in its colloquial meaning of “irritate” or “exasperate” (for example, We were aggravated by her constant arguing). Aggravate means “make worse”: The president was irritated by the Senate’s stubbornness, because he feared any delay might aggravate the unrest in the Middle East.

Aggravate Aggravate means “make worse.” In writing it should not be used in its colloquial meaning of “irritate” or “annoy.”

**aggravate**

Informal for tease or annoy. In its formal sense aggravate means “to make worse, to intensify negative conditions.”

**aggravate**

To aggravate is to intensify, to make worse (The hot sun aggravated his sunburn). Colloquially it is often used to mean “to annoy, provoke” (My teasing aggravated him). Aggravate, aggravating Some readers object to these words in the sense of annoy, annoying: I had an aggravating day today. Strictly speaking, you can only aggravate a condition that’s already disagreeable; the v. means to make worse. Don’t write You really aggravate me.

Aggravate For many years, aggravate has carried two meanings—“to make worse” and “to irritate or annoy.” Both meanings are acceptable in standard English, although many good writers consider the second too casual in careful writing. Certainly, irritate or annoy will express the second meaning well enough.

**aggravate, irritate**

In formal English, aggravate means “make worse” and irritate means “annoy”: aggravate the condition; an irritating habit. In general and informal usage, aggravate and irritate both mean “to annoy”: his voice aggravated me; the mosquitoes were irritating. But since using aggravate to mean “annoy” might irritate some readers, it is useful to maintain the formal distinction.
Agree to, agree with  Agree to a thing (plan, proposal); agree with a person.

He agreed to the insertion of the plank in the platform of the party. He agreed with the senator that the plank would not gain many votes.

Agree to, agree with  Agree to means "consent to," and agree with means "be in accord with": How can they agree to a treaty when they don't agree with each other about the terms?

Agree to, agree with  Agree to means "consent to" a plan or proposal. Agree with means "be in accord with" a person or group.

Agree to, agree with  Agree to means "to consent," and Agree with means "to concur." They agree to the test, and we agree with the need for the test.

Agree to, agree with  To agree to is to consent; to agree with means "to concur" (I agree with Gail's opinion, and will therefore agree to the contract).
Ain't  Nonstandard or illiterate.  

ain’t  A nonstandard contraction generally avoided in writing, 

unless used in dialogue or for humorous effect.

ain't  Nonstandard for "am not" or "aren't."  

ain’t  Nonstandard for "am not or aren't."  

ain’t  A contraction of "am not," extended to "is not," "are not," "has not," "have not." Though often used in speech, it is strongly disapproved by the majority of speakers and writers.

ain’t  Colloq. for "isn't" or "aren't."  

Ain’t  

This is an eighteenth-century contraction that has become a sign of illiteracy and ignorance; it should not be used in formal writing or speech.

ain’t. A colloquial contraction meaning “aren’t” or “isn’t.” Ain’t is not considered appropriate in most academic and professional writing, although it may appear in narrative or dialogue.
All ready, already. Two different meanings. All ready means that everything is ready; already means “by this time.”

All ready, already  All ready means “prepared, in a state of readiness”; already means “before some specified time” or “previously” and describes an action that is completed.
The riders were all ready to mount. (fully prepared)
Mr. Bowman had already bagged his limit of quail. (action completed at time of statement)

already, all ready  Already means “before or by the time specified.” All ready means “completely prepared.”

The theater was already full by seven o'clock.
The cast was all ready for the curtain call.

all ready, already  All ready means “wholly prepared.” Already means “by or before this or that time.”

- During the thirties President Roosevelt made the country feel that it was all ready for any challenge that might confront it.
  By the time Horatius decided to call for help, it was already too late.

already, all ready  Already means “before, previously.” We had already mailed the check when their bill arrived. All ready means “everything is ready”: The police are all ready for the riots this summer.

already, all ready  Already is an adverb meaning “previously” (We had already left) or “even now” (We are already late). In the phrase all ready, all modifies ready; the phrase means “completely prepared” (We were all ready by eight o'clock).

already/all ready  These two, although frequently interchanged, are not synonymous. Already is an adverb meaning “prior to a specified time”; all ready means “completely prepared.”

The signs of spring were already in evidence.
The expedition was all ready to set forth.
But not: The signs of spring were all ready in evidence.

or
The expedition was already to set forth.

all ready, already  All ready is an adjective phrase meaning that everything or everyone is prepared; already is an adverb meaning “previously”:

Finally the car was loaded and we were all ready to leave.
The train had already left when we got to the station.
All right, alright. *Alright* is not *all right*; you are confusing it with the spelling of *already.*

Alright Nonstandard for *all right.*  

*Alright* Not yet a generally accepted spelling of *all right.*  

*All right,* *alright*  Although there is a tendency in the direction of *alright,* current usage accepts only *all right.*

*All right* *All right* is always two words. *Alright* is a common misspelling.  

*All right* *All right* is always two words. *Alright* is a misspelling.  

*Alright* Misspelling of *all right.*  

*Alright, all right* All right remains the only established spelling. *Alright* is labeled nonstandard in both the *New World* and *Random House* dictionaries, although *Webster's* lists it without a usage label.  

*All right, alright* Only the first is S.E.  

*Alright* A nonstandard spelling; use *all right.*  

*Alright, alright, all right.* *All right* is the only correct way to write this expression (*He told his mother that he was all right*).  

*All right/Alright* The spelling *alright* is becoming more common, but most educated readers still think it is incorrect.  

I told him it was *all right* to miss class tomorrow.  

*All right.* The only correct spelling. *Alright* is not acceptable.
Allusion, illusion, disillusion. The first two are frequently confused, and disillusion is frequently misspelled disallusion. An allusion is a reference to something; an illusion is a mistaken conception. You disillusion someone by bringing him back to hard reality from his illusions.

Allusion, illusion  An allusion is a casual reference. An illusion is a false or misleading sight or impression.

Allusion, illusion  Do not confuse. An allusion is a casual or indirect reference. An illusion is a false idea or an unreal image.

The author's allusion to a heaven on earth amused me. The author's concept of a heaven on earth is an illusion.

Allusion, illusion  An allusion is a reference to something. An illusion is something that is not what it seems. In the Catcher in the Rye, the main character makes an allusion to The Return of the Native, a book by Thomas Hardy. The Viking landing proved that the canals of Mars are an illusion caused by atmospheric and topographical conditions.

Allusion, illusion  An allusion is a reference to something and an illusion is a deceptive appearance. Paul's constant allusions to Shakespeare created the illusion that he was an intellectual.

Allusion, illusion  An allusion is a reference to something. An illusion is a deceptive appearance. Dr. Conn fills his lectures with classical allusions. Despite the hard facts, she clings to her illusion of true love.

Allusion, illusion  An allusion is an indirect reference (see allude). Reagan's allusion to Carter was sarcastic. Illusion means "ghost, imaginary vision, false appearance." The magician created the illusion of a woman floating in air.

Allusion, illusion  An allusion is an indirect reference; an illusion is a false impression (he was making an allusion to magicians when he spoke of people who were apt at creating illusions).

Allusion, illusion, delusion  The first is a glancing reference: an allusion to Shakespeare. An illusion is a deceptive impression: that the illusion of reality in laser photography. A delusion is a mistaken belief, usually with pathological implications: the delusion of thinking he was Napoleon. Don't confuse elusive (evasive) with allusive (containing allusions) or illusory (deceptive).

Allusion. This word is best discussed with a closely related word, reference. A reference is a direct remark about something: "She referred to his failure to pay for lunch as a sign that he was cheap." An allusion is indirect or oblique: "She said that he was a regular Shylock." Allusions are understood only if their original is known; in this instance, if you know that Shylock is a Shakespearean character who is close with his money.
Allusion/illusion  Allusion and illusion are often pronounced alike, which leads to confusion of the two words. Allusion refers to a casual reference to something; it should be followed by to. Illusion refers to a false or fanciful impression and should be followed by of.

Women resent allusions to feminine frailty.
Napoleon retained his illusion of power even after his banishment.

Allusion, illusion. Think of allusion as meaning “indirect reference” (He made an allusion to her parents). Think of illusion as meaning “a deceptive impression” (He continued to entertain this illusion about her ancestry).

Allusion/Illusion
Illusion means an indirect reference to something; illusion means a fantasy that may be confused with reality.
He wrote to her of an “empty house,” an allusion to their abandoned love affair.
They nourished the illusion that they could learn to write well without working hard.

Allusion, illusion. An allusion is a brief, indirect reference to a person, event, literary work, or the like. An illusion is a misleading appearance.
She made an allusion to Yeats’ “Second Coming.”
The little boy’s smile created an illusion of innocence.
almost, most Almost is an adverb meaning "nearly." Most indicates superlative degree and should not be used as a shortened form of almost.

Almost all of the astronomers of the sixteenth century believed in astrology.

Failure in the connections that held the beams to the ceiling was the most likely cause of the collapse of the walkway.

Incorrect The battle raged most every day for three weeks.

Correct The battle raged almost every day for three weeks.

almost, most Almost is an adverb meaning "very nearly"; most is an adjective meaning "the greater part of." In formal writing, most should not be used as a substitute for almost: We see each other almost (not most) every day.

almost/most as adverbs In Casual English, there is very little resistance to the use of most in situations that would traditionally require almost. However written English does impose some restrictions.

Casual: Most everyone arrived late.
General: Almost everyone arrived late.

Inappropriate in written English: He is most the kindest person I know.

almost, most Almost is an adverb meaning "very nearly"; most is an adjective meaning "the greater part of."

He almost wrecked the car.
Most drivers try to be careful.

Although in speech most is sometimes used to mean almost, the two words are not interchangeable.
Alot. You mean a lot, not allot. Comp Styl H.

Alot Nonstandard for a lot. See Lot of, lots of. Proc Eng h.

a lot Sometimes misspelled as alot. Har C H.

A lot is always two words. Alot is a common misspelling.

a lot A lot is always written as two words. Alot is a common mist
misspelling.

alot Misspelling of a lot. Brief Eng h.

a lot, alot The correct spelling is a lot. Lin for w.

alot A mistaken form of the two words a lot, which in turn are usually colloq.: see lot.

alot. An incorrect form for a lot. Strat Rhet.

A lot of/lots of A lot of means the same as "many." It is frequently used with mass nouns or nouns having only a plural form. Lots of is a common variant in Casual spoken and written English.

General: A lot of sugar is grown in Cuba. (precedes a mass noun)
General: A lot of cattle become diseased every year. (cattle has only a plural form)
Casual: Lots of sugar is grown in Cuba.
Casual: Lots of cattle become diseased every year.
All together, altogether  All together describes a group as acting or ex-
isting collectively; altogether means "wholly, entirely."
The sprinters managed to start all together.
I do not altogether approve the decision.

together, all together  Altogether means "wholly, thor-
oughly." All together means "in a group."
That law is altogether unnecessary.
They were all together in the lobby.

all together, altogether  All together means "in unison," or "gathered in
one place." Altogether means "entirely." It's not altogether true that our
family never spends vacations all together.

all together, altogether  All together means "in a group," "gathered in
one place," or "in unison." Altogether means "wholly" or "completely."
They made the jungle trek all together rather than in small groups. I did
not altogether approve of the plan.

altogether, all together Altogether means "completely, entirely."
All together means "everyone is here, everything is assembled."
The scientists worked all together on the project until the work was
altogether finished.

altogether, all together Altogether means entirely: She is altogether con-
vinced. All together means everyone as-
sembled: They were all together at the
reunion.

altogether, all together. Altogether is the adverb form in
the sense of "completely" (She was not altogether hap-
py with the present) All together is the adjective form in the
sense of "collectively" (The students were all together in
their loyalty to the team).

all together/Altogether
All together expresses unity or common location; altogether means "com-
pletely," often in a tone of ironic understatement.
At the Imitators-of-Elvis national competition, it was altogether start-
tling to see a swarm of untalented, loud young men with their rhine-
stones, their dyed and greased hair, and their pretensions, gathered all
gether on a single stage.

all together, altogether. All together is an adjective phrase mean-
ing "in a group"; altogether is an adverb meaning "wholly."
The sale items were all together on one table.
That's altogether another matter.
Between, among. *Between* ("by twain") has *two* in mind; *among* has several. *Between*, a preposition, takes an object; *between us, between you and me* ("Between you and I" is sheer embarrassment; see me, p. 491.) But words sometimes fail us. "*Between you and me and the gatepost*" cannot conform to the rule and become "*among you and me and the gatepost*." *Between* connotes an intimate sharing among all concerned, each to each. *Between* also indicates geographical placing: "It is midway between Chicago, Detroit, and Toledo." "The grenade fell between Jones and me and the gatepost;" but "The grenade fell among the fruit stands." *Keep between* for two and *among* for three or more—unless sense forces a compromise. "*Between every building was a plot of petunias*" conveys the idea, however nonsensical "*between a building*" is. "*Between all the buildings were plots of petunias*" would be better, though still a compromise.

**Among, between**

*Among* is used with three or more persons or things; *between* is used with only two.

It will be hard to choose *between* the two candidates.

It will be hard to choose *among* so many candidates.

*Among, between* Prepositions with plural objects (including collective nouns). As a rule, use *among* with objects denoting three or more (a group), and use *between* with those denoting only two (or twos).

**among, between**

*Among* is used to refer to groups of more than two things. *Between* refers to just two things. The distinction between these terms seems to be fading, and it is becoming increasingly acceptable when speaking to use *between* for three or more things when *among* would sound awkward. In formal writing situations, however, you must maintain the distinction.

The three parties agreed among themselves to settle the question out of court.

By the time of his death in 323 B.C., Alexander’s empire encompassed all the territory between Macedon in the west and India in the east.

**among, between** In general, *among* is used for relationships involving more than two people or things. *Between* is used for relationships involving only two or for comparing one thing to a group to which it belongs. *The four of them agreed among themselves that the choice was between New York and Los Angeles*. Increasingly, though, *between* is used for relationships involving three or more comparable people or things: Let’s keep this just between the three of us, shall we?

**among, between**

*Among* is used to refer to three or more people or things. *Between* is used with two people or things. *Half the treasure was divided between the captain and the ship’s owner; the other half, among the crew.* Sometimes *between* is used with more than two if the relationship concerns individual members of the group with each other. *The treaty between the five countries guarantees access to deep water ports.*

**among, between** *Between* suggests two, *among* suggests more than two: *The argument was between the dean and the provost. The money was divided among the members of the team. The choice was between England and Germany.*

**among, between** *Among* implies more than two persons or things; *between* implies only two. To express a reciprocal relationship, or the relationship of one thing to several other things, however, *between* is commonly used for more than two (She divided the toys among the three children. Jerry could choose between pie and cake for dessert. An agreement was reached between the four companies. The surveyors drove a stake at a point between three trees.)
Among, between  

Among is appropriate when there are at least three separable items: among his friends, among all who were there.

Between can be used for any plural number of items, though some purists think it should be reserved for two items (also see between). The real difference is that among is vaguer and more collective than between, which draws attention to each of the items:

- They hoped to find one good person among the fifty applicants.
- The mediator saw a basis for agreement between management and the union.

Among, between. Generally, between is used when two things are involved ("They were caught between the two thieves."); and among with three or more things ("They fell among thieves.").

Informal usage, however, allows expressions like "The difference between the three baseballs is not great," and "He stood midway between the three policemen."

Note that since between is a preposition, its object always takes the object form: "between you and me" (not "you and I").

Among/between  Among is used with three or more items, never two; between in current usage is generally acceptable with any number of items.

General: The booty was divided among the twelve pirates.
Casual, General: Carolina and Maria divided the candy bar between themselves. (two people)
Casual, General: The director was unable to pick between the three people who tried out for the part. (three people)

However, some writers prefer the traditional distinction of retaining between for only two items; among for more than two. Also, many writers prefer among when a collective action or decision is involved:

General: The four men agreed among themselves on a course of action. (collective)

between. The conservative position is that between should be used only when two persons or things are involved (The made a choice between the Democrat and the Republican).

Among, between. Among usually refers to more than two; between refers to two only. However, between is sometimes used in informal English for more than two. Between is always used when the reference is to individual items, even though an "item" might consist of more than one unit:

We had to choose between coffee and cake [as one item] and punch and cookies.

Do not use or between the items: between him and her.
Site, sight, cite. Often confused. Site is a piece of land to put a building on, or holding a building. You do not see the sites; you see the sights. To cite is to quote or mention an authority, or other evidence.

Cite, site. Cite is a verb, most often used in the sense of "quote" or "refer to"; site is a noun meaning "location," or a verb meaning "place in a certain location":

Dictionaries often cite the way a word has been used by different writers. We've found the perfect site for a picnic.

Cite means "to refer to": The footnote cited Shakespeare. Site means "place": The hill overlooking the town will become the site of a new factory.

cite, sight, site. Cite means "to quote or mention as an example." Sight means "spectacle or view," and site means "location or place." Because these words sound exactly alike, they can be confusing.

Ordinarily the Supreme Court allows one-half-hour to an hour for lawyers to cite cases that will support their arguments. Several days before their first sight of land, Columbus's crew attempted a mutiny. The engineers surveyed the site before they began the plans for the new office complex.
**Compare with/Compare to**

When you wish to stress either the similarities or the dissimilarities between two things, use *compare to*; when you wish to stress both similarities and differences, use *compare with.*

She compared his singing to the croaking of a wounded frog.

**compare to, compare with.** Compare to is most often used when you want to show how two things are similar (particularly in a figurative sense), as in Shakespeare's "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

Compare with is the best way to introduce a literal comparison involving both similarities and differences: "I intend to compare the freshman course in speech with the composition course in English."

**compare, contrast** Compare means either make a comparison or liken. To compare something with something else is to make a comparison between them; the comparison may show either a resemblance or a difference. To compare something to something else is to assert a likeness between them. (See also pp. 321–323.)

To contrast is to emphasize differences:

He contrasted the gentle Athenians with the warlike Spartans. As a v., contrast should always be followed by with.

**Compare, contrast** Do not use interchangeably. Compare means to look for or reveal likenesses; contrast treats differences.

**compare to, compare with** Formal English prefers compare to for the meaning "regard as similar" and compare with for the meaning "examine to discover similarities or differences."

The speaker compared the earth to a lopsided baseball. Putting one under the other, the expert compared the forged signature with the authentic one.

**compare, contrast** Compare means "to show similarities and differences." It is not necessary to say "compare and contrast," since contrast is already implied in compare. Contrast means "to show differences only." After we had compared the two models, their advantages and disadvantages were clear to us. The comparison revealed that their contrasts were only minor.
compare, contrast  Contrast means to show differences. Compare means to show both similarities and differences. (See pages 78–86 and 125 for comparison-and-contrast structure in essays and paragraphs.)

Ernest Jones wrote a book in which he compared Hamlet and Oedipus. (He discussed their similarities and differences.)

The company's earnings this year contrast sharply with its earnings last year. (The earnings are different.)

c ompare to, compare with  Formal usage designates compare to when you want to stress similarities, and compare with when you want to analyze similarities and differences. Many instructors do not insist on this distinction, but you should be aware of it for formal writing situations.

In one of Shakespeare's sonnets, the speaker compares his beloved to a summer's day.

This study compares Nat Turner's revolt with other slave revolts that occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Compare to, compare with. To compare to is to show similarities (and differences) between different kinds; to compare with is to show differences (and similarities) between like kinds.

Composition has been compared to architecture.
He compares favorably with Mickey Spillane.
Compare Shakespeare with Ben Jonson.
compare to, compare with  Compare to means "regard as similar." Compare with means "examine for similarities or differences." The boy compared his father's bald head to an egg. The investigator compared the facts of the Riveman case with the facts of the Billings incident.
Complement/Compliment

A complement is something added to something else to complete it. He insists that sauerkraut is a perfect complement to hot dogs. A compliment is an approving remark. She received many compliments because she made a memorable speech. Complimentary is an adjective referring to something freely given, as approval or a favor. All veterans received complimentary tickets. His remarks were complimentary.

compliment, complement. As a verb, complement means “to complete or finish something.” As a noun, it means “something that completes or rounds out another thing.”

They are a perfect pair; their personalities complement each other. The complement of 60 degrees is 30 degrees.

Compliment, as a verb, means “to say something good,” usually about a person. As a noun, it refers to the act of congratulating.

I compliment you on your good performance. I gave her a compliment.

complementary, complimentary. Do not confuse. Complementary means “completing” or “supplying needs.” Complimentary means “expressing praise” or “given free.”

His talents and hers are complementary. Admiring the performance, he made several complimentary remarks.

complement, compliment. To complement something is to add to, complete, or reinforce it. Her yellow blouse complemented her sun tan. To compliment something is to make a flattering remark about it. He complimented her sun tan. Complimentary also can mean “free”: a complimentary sample of our new product; complimentary tickets.

complement, compliment. Complement means “to complete or add to.” Compliment means “to give praise.”

A double-blind study would complement their preliminary work on this anti-cancer drug. Before accepting the 1949 Nobel Prize for literature, William Faulkner complimented the people of Sweden for their courtesy and kindness.

Complement, compliment. Frequently confused. Complement is a completion; compliment is a flattery: “When the regiment reached its full complement of recruits, the general gave it a flowery compliment.”
complement, compliment. *Complement* is a noun or verb referring to completion or fitting together; *compliment* is a noun or verb suggesting praise:

She saw a hat that would be the perfect complement for her suit. It also complemented her bag.

Nancy complimented Theodore on his prize. He accepted the compliment graciously.

compliment, complement To *compliment* is to comment favorably upon: *Compliment them on their new schnauzer.* To *complement* is to balance or complete: *They played soothing music to complement the muted colors of the walls.*
**Continuous, continual** *Continuous* means "without interruption": *The earth's rotation is continuous.* *Continual* means "happening frequently, but not without interruption": *No one can work with these continual annoyances.*

**Continual, continuous.** Although the distinction has largely disappeared, *continual* refers to an action that occurs repeatedly over a period of time, *continuous* to an action that is in uninterrupted flow:

The continual ringing of the phone began to annoy Joe. Many old people live with a continuous fear of being robbed.

**Continual, continuous.** There is a real distinction between these two adjectives. Think of *continual* as referring to something that occurs repeatedly (i.e. with interruptions). For instance, a noise that occurred every three or four minutes would be a "continual noise"; a noise that persisted without interruption for an hour would be a "continuous noise." *Continual* is stop-and-go; *continuous* is an uninterrupted flow.

**Continual, continuous.** You can improve your writing by *continual* practice, but the effort cannot be *continuous*. The first means "frequently repeated"; the second, "without interruption."

It requires continual practice. There was a continuous line of clouds.

**Continual, continuous** *Continual* means "often repeated." *Continuous* means "unceasing" or "without a break." *My afternoons are continually interrupted by telephone calls. The waves lap continuously at the shore.*

**Continual, continuous** These words are frequently confused. *Continual* means "recurring at intervals." *Continuous* refers to an action that occurs without interruption.

A pulsar is a star that emits a continual stream of electromagnetic radiation. (It emits radiation at regular intervals.)

A small battery allows the watch to run continuously for five years. (It runs without stopping.)

**Continual, continuous** *Continual* means "constantly recurring": *Most movies on television are continually interrupted by commercials. Continuous means "unceasing": Cable television often presents movies continually without commercials.*

**Continual, continuous** *Continual* means "frequently repeated" (He was distracted by continual telephone calls). *Continuous means "without interruption": (We heard the continuous sound of the waves).
**Continual, continuous**  *Continual* refers to a prolonged and rapid succession; *continuous* refers to an uninterrupted succession.

Continual means recurring at intervals. Continuous means uninterrupted.
criteria, criterion. Criteria is the plural form of criterion:

We established several criteria for the position. The most important criterion was excellence.

criterion/criteria. Criterion is the singular form:

A single criterion has been established.

Although criteria is frequently used as a singular form in spoken English, it should be treated only as a plural in written, General English. Criterions is also listed in recent dictionaries as an acceptable plural.

General: Several criteria/criterions have been established.

Casual: A criteria for an A paper is the use of accepted grammatical structures.

data, media, criteria. These plural words are sometimes used as singular words. In formal writing they are treated as plurals: These data are insufficient. The media have been notified. The criteria were selected. The singular form of media is medium (television, a communication medium . . .), and the singular of criteria is criterion (one criterion of success . . .).
data. Although *data* is used in general and informal usage for both the singular and plural, *datum* is used as the singular in formal writing.

**data** Data, the Latin plural of *datum*, is now used interchangeably as a singular or plural form:

**General**: The *data* are conclusive. / The *data* is conclusive.

However, *datum* as a singular and *data* as a plural are preferred in scientific and technical writing. Whichever you choose, keep your data consistent.

data The plural of *datum* (meaning "fact"): Out of all the *data* generated by these experiments, not one *datum* supports our hypothesis. Usually, a more common term like *fact*, *result*, or *figure* is preferred to *datum*. Though *data* is very often used as a singular noun, it is still treated as plural in much formal speech and writing: The *data* fail (not *fails*) to support the hypothesis.

data *Data* is the plural of the Latin *datum*, meaning "fact." In everyday speech and writing *data* is used for both singular and plural. Scientific and technical writers, however, preserve the distinction, using the construction "the *data* are," and for technical writing, so should you.

The *data* discussed in this section are summarized in the graph in Appendix A.

To be safe, you should check which is required by your instructor. You can avoid the problem by using *facts* or *results* instead of *data*.

data Opinion is divided over the number of *data*. You would do well to keep *data* plu.: *these data*, not *this data*. The sing., rarely seen, is *datum*; *fact* or *figure* would sound more natural.

**Data**. A plural, like *curricula*, *strata*, *phenomena*:

The *data* are inconclusive.

data. As used in most situations, *data* is a pompous word for *information*, *evidence*, *facts*, *figures*, or *statistics*. It is, in addition, one of those Latin words that usage has treated unkindly. Originally, *datum* was the singular; *data*, the plural. (Now *datum* is seldom used, except in certain technical specialties.) In modern English *data* can be both singular and plural, but usually does not sound right as either.
**different from, different than.** Different from is preferred in modern English: "My belief is different from hers." But when the expression is followed by a clause or "condensed clause," different than works well enough: "Don't do this job differently than you used to." This is neater than "Don't do this job differently from the way you used to."

**Different from/Different than**
The idiom is different from. Careful writers avoid different than. The east coast of Florida is different from the west coast.

**different than** Formal writing requires differ from and different from: The Eastern dialect differs from the Western. Southern speech is different from Northern. But than is widely used in less formal writing.

**different from** In the United States the preferred preposition after different is from. But the less formal different than is accepted by many writers if the expression is followed by a clause.

The Stoic philosophy is different from the Epicurean. The outcome was different from what I expected. The outcome was different than I had expected.

**different from, different than** Some experts regard different than as an error in every instance. When in doubt, therefore, lean toward different from. But most people wouldn't object to different than when it results in a saving of words: The outcome was different than I expected. The safe alternative would be from what I expected.

**different from, different than** Different from is idiomatic and widely accepted. Different than is acceptable when it precedes a clause. An elephant is different from a mastodon. Paris was different than I had expected.

**different from, different than** Different than is used extensively in American speech. Stylists, who point out that different than indicates a comparison where none is intended, prefer different from. In academic writing, use different from.

His test scores were not much different from (not than) mine.

**different from, different than** Different from is preferred: His purpose is different from mine. But different than is widely accepted when a clause follows, particularly when a construction using from would be wordy: I'm a different person now than I used to be is preferable to I'm a different person now from the person I used to be.
Different from, different than. Avoid different than, which confuses the idea of differing. Things differ from each other. Only in comparing several differences does than make clear sense: “All three of his copies differ from the original, but his last one is more different than the others.” But here than is controlled by more, not by different.

WRONG
It is different than I expected.
This is different than all the others.

RIGHT
It is different from what I expected.
This is different from all the others.

different from, different than. From is idiomatic when a preposition is required; than introduces a clause. See 40e.

different from/different than Although these two forms are frequently interchanged in spoken English for all occasions, the following usage is recommended for most levels of written English; use different from when a noun phrase follows: different than before a complete clause.

General: The European cultural heritage is different from the American Indian’s heritage. (from is a preposition followed by a noun phrase)
General: Today’s Indian culture is different than it was prior to the European invasion. (than is a conjunction followed by a complete SP clause)
Casual: The European cultural heritage is different than the American Indian’s heritage.

different from, different than. In British usage, different than is more likely to be used than different from when a clause follows the expression (e.g. This treatment is different than we expected). In conservative American usage, different from is preferred to different than, whether the expression is followed with a noun phrase (The British usage is different from the American usage) or with a noun clause (This treatment is different from what we expected).

different from. This is the general idiom, but different than can be used to avoid an awkward sentence:

Life in a small town is different from life in a large city.
Living on a farm means a different life-style than living in a city does.
Living on a farm means a life-style different from the life-style in a city.
Differ from/Differ with

Differ from expresses a lack of similarity; differ with expresses disagreement.

The ancient Greeks differed less from the Persians than we often think. Aristotle differed with Plato on some important issues in philosophy.

differ from, differ with  To differ from is to be unlike: The twins differ from each other only in their hairstyles. To differ with is to disagree with: I have to differ with you on that point.

differ from, differ with  Differ from means “be unlike.” Differ with means “disagree.”

differ from, differ with  To differ from someone is to be different from him: to differ with him is to express disagreement.

differ from, differ with  Differ from means “to stand apart because of unlikeness.” Differ with means “to disagree.”

differ from, differ with  To differ from means “to be unlike.” To differ with means “to disagree.”
Discreet, discrete. Frequently confused. *Discreet* means someone careful and judicious; *discrete* means something separate and distinct: "He was discreet in examining each discrete part of the evidence."

Discreet, discrete  Discreet means “careful or prudent.” Discrete means “separate or individually distinct.”

Because Madame Bovary was not discreet with her lover, her reputation suffered. Current research has demonstrated that atoms can be broken into hundreds of discrete particles.

discreet, discrete  The first means prudent or judiciously reticent, the second separate. She was discreet about revealing the three discrete meanings of the hieroglyph.

discreet, discrete. *Discreet* is an adjective meaning respectful, cautious, and judicious; *discrete* is an adjective distinguishing something as individual or separate:

She was discreet in discussing her husband’s baldness. The crash was due to three discrete failures in the hydraulic system.

discreet, discrete  Discreet (noun form discretion) means “tactful”: What’s a discreet way of telling Maud to be quiet? Discrete (noun form discreteness) means “separate and distinct”: Within a computer’s memory are millions of discrete bits of information.
Disinterested. Does not mean "uninterested" nor "indifferent." Disinterested means impartial, without private interests in the issue.

**WRONG**
You seem disinterested in the case.
He was disinterested in it.

**RIGHT**
You seem uninterested in the case.
The judge was disinterested and perfectly fair.
He was indifferent to it.

Disinterested/Uninterested
To be disinterested means to be impartial. A disinterested party in a dispute has no selfish reason to favor one side over another.

We expect members of a jury to be disinterested.

To be uninterested means to have no concern about something, to pay no attention, to be bored.

Most people nowadays are uninterested in philosophy.

disinterested, uninterested. Disinterested means "impartial"; uninterested means "lacking interest." To be disinterested is to be consciously neutral about an issue; to be uninterested is to be bored or lack interest in it. Disinterested sounds stronger and fresher. Perhaps that is why many of us have a sneaking affection for the word, and use it when we shouldn't.

disinterested, uninterested Disinterested means "objective or capable of making an impartial judgment." Uninterested means "indifferent or unconcerned."

The narrator of Ernest Hemingway's "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" is a disinterested observer of the action.
Finding no treasure after leading an expedition from Florida to Oklahoma, Hernando de Soto was uninterested in going further.

disinterested, uninterested Disinterested means "impartial." Uninterested means "bored" or "indifferent."

disinterested, uninterested Often used interchangeably. Some authorities, however, do not accept disinterested ("impartial") as a substitute for uninterested ("indifferent").

disinterested, uninterested Many writers use both to mean not interested, but in doing so they lose the unique meaning of disinterested as impartial: What we need here is a disinterested observer.

disinterested, uninterested Disinterested means "impartial": We chose Pete, as a disinterested third party, to decide who was right. Uninterested means "bored" or "lacking interest": Unfortunately, Pete was completely uninterested in the question.
disinterested, uninterested. Even though both words are commonly used to mean uninterested, a distinction should be maintained. Use disinterested to mean "impartial": Disinterested judges are better than uninterested ones.

disinterested, uninterested. Disinterested means "impartial, unbiased": The duty of the judge is to serve as a disinterested observer. Uninterested means "having no interest": They were uninterested in old horror films.

disinterested, uninterested. Now frequently used interchangeably to mean "having no interest." The distinction between the two, however, is real and valuable. Uninterested means "without interest"; disinterested means "impartial" (Good judges are disinterested but not uninterested).

Interested, uninterested. Careful writers still make a distinction between these two words. For them, disinterested means "unbiased," "impartial," "objective" (The mother could not make a disinterested judgment about her son). Uninterested, for them, means "bored," "indifferent to" (The students were obviously uninterested in the lecture).
Don't/Doesn't

Don't can only be a contraction for do not. Doesn't is the contraction for does not.

You don't know what you're talking about.
He doesn't either.
Some American speakers say he don't and she don't. But such usage is non-standard and should be avoided.

don't A contraction of do not rather than of does not.

NONSTANDARD He don't smoke. (He do not smoke.)
STANDARD He doesn't smoke. (He does not smoke.)
STANDARD They don't smoke. (They do not smoke.)

don't Don't is the contraction for do not, not for does not: I don't care, you don't care, but he doesn't (not don't) care.

don't Don't is a contraction of do not and should not be used for does not, whose contraction is doesn't. Although the performance doesn't begin for an hour, I still don't think Bernice will be ready.

don't Colloq. when used with the third person sing.: x He don't care; x Don't she ever take a bath? Use doesn't.

Don't Contraction of do not; not to be used for doesn't, the contraction of does not.

done, don't. All varieties of standard English call for did in the past tense in all persons: I, you, he, she, it did. The past participle in all persons is have or had done. Don't is the contraction for do not; doesn't is the contraction for does not; I, you don't; he, she, it doesn't.

don't A contraction for do not, but not for does not (She doesn't [not don't] want a new dress).
Due to. Never begin a sentence with "Due to circumstances beyond his control, he . . .". Due is an adjective and must always relate to a noun or pronoun: "The catastrophe due to circumstances beyond his control was unavoidable," or "The catastrophe was due to circumstances beyond his control" (predicate adjective). But you are still better off with because of, through, by, or owing to. Due to is usually a symptom of wordiness, especially when it leads to due to the fact that.

Due to/Because

Due to is an overworked, wordy, and often confusing expression when it is used to show cause.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WRONG</th>
<th>RIGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He resigned due to sickness.</td>
<td>He resigned because of sickness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He succeeded due to hard work.</td>
<td>He succeeded through hard work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He lost his shirt due to leaving it in the locker room.</td>
<td>He lost his shirt by leaving it in the locker room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Far East will continue to worry the West, due to a general social upheaval.</td>
<td>The Far East will continue to worry the West, owing to a general social upheaval.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to/Because

Due to is an overworked, wordy, and often confusing expression when it is used to show cause.

| WORDY: Due to the fact that I was hungry, I ate too much. |
| BETTER: Because I was hungry, I ate too much. |

Most writers accept the causative use of due to in short phrases.

His failure was due to laziness.

Such constructions can be vague and confusing. Whose laziness? His or someone else's? The sentence does not tell us. We may assume that it is his laziness. But what about a sentence like this one: Their divorce was due to infidelity. Whose infidelity, his or hers? Or were both partners unfaithful? Such sentences that are changed to include an agent are almost always clearer and more vigorous.

He failed because he was lazy.

His unfaithfulness to her caused their divorce.

A good rule of thumb is to use due to only in expressions of time in infinitive constructions.

The plane is due to arrive at five o'clock.

due to. Authorities have long objected to this expression when used in this fashion: "Due to hard work, she succeeded." The reason usually given is that due is adjectival; so one should write: "Her success was due to hard work." If you do not find this explanation convincing, consider other options, such as, "She succeeded because she worked hard," or "Owing to hard work, she succeeded."

due to. Many people object to the use of due to as a preposition that means "because of" or "owing to." The class was canceled because of [not due to] low enrollment. Due to is acceptable when used as a subject complement. In this position it usually follows a form of be. His unpredictable behavior is due to alcohol.

due to the fact that. A cumbersome and redundant expression - replace with because.
each and every. The expression is redundant. Use each or every alone.

Each and every Wordy for each or every. Write each one of us or every one of us, not each and every one of us.

Each and every Redundant. Use one or the other, not both.

each and every Unnecessarily wordy.

Each and every Use one or the other but not both:
Every cow came in at feeding time.
Each bale has to be put in the barn loft.

each and every Redundant.

each and every Redundant.
e.g. Abbreviation for exempli gratia (Latin), it means "for example." Use with a comma or colon after. If at all possible, however, use the English phrase.

Do not confuse e.g. with i.e., the abbreviation of the Latin phrase meaning "that is."

E.g. "For example" (exempli gratia). Not in italics. Preceded by a comma, followed by comma or colon. "They lost through errors, e.g., Wilson's fumble, Mitchell's miscall." See Abbreviations.

e.g., i.e. Often confused. E.g. means for example; it can only be used when you're not citing all the items you have in mind. I.e. means that is; it can only be used when you're giving the equivalent of the preceding term. Except in footnotes and parenthetical references, use the written-out equivalents for example and that is. Don't write I am utterly faithful to my loved one, i.e., Marsha, who has many charms, e.g., her nose.

Once you've written e.g., don't add etc., as in They saw many cities, e.g., Davenport, Biloxi, Portland, etc. The idea of unlisted further examples is already present in e.g.

e.g. An abbreviation for the Latin "exempli gratia," meaning "for example."

It is always preceded by a comma and followed by a comma or colon.

Several states, e.g., Utah and Florida, have reinstated the death penalty.
Either means “one of two things.”

Either Charles Darwin or Alfred Wallace could get credit for formulating a theory of evolution.

Some stylists say that either can be used to indicate three or more things, but this is not widely accepted. The best way of dealing with three or more things is to use “any” or “any one” instead of “either.”

Awkward: There are four ways of finishing an exterior wall; either will withstand the weather.

Revised: There are four ways of finishing an exterior wall; any one will withstand the weather.

either . . . or. Singular subjects joined by either . . . or or neither . . . nor are generally considered singular, and take a singular verb:

Either the bicycle or the moped is the transportation of the future.

If both subjects are plural, the verb is plural:

Either bicycles or mopeds are the transportation of the future.

Either, neither. One of two, taking a singular verb: Either is a good candidate, but neither speaks well. Either . . . or (neither . . . nor) are paralleling conjunctions. See Parallelism.

Either . . . or/Neither . . . nor
Both are always singular, and as subjects, they take singular verbs.

Neither Kant nor Hegel enjoys much popularity today.

When things get calm, either he or she starts a fight.

Either has an intensive use that neither does not, and when it is used as an intensive, either is always negative.

She told him she wouldn’t go either.
Eminent, imminent. *Eminent* means "distinguished." *Imminent* means "about to happen, threatening."

Charlotte is an eminent scientist. Bankruptcy seemed imminent.


Eminent, imminent. *Eminent* is an adjective meaning "noteworthy" or "famous": an eminent ambassador. *Imminent* is an adjective meaning "about to happen": The storm is imminent.

Eminent, imminent, immanent. Often confused. *Eminent* is something that stands out; *imminent* is something about to happen. *Immanent*, much less common, is a philosophical term for something spiritual "remaining within, indwelling." You usually mean *eminent*.


The eminent Victorians were often melancholy and disturbed. *Imminent* means "about to happen" or "about to come."

In August 1939, war was imminent. *Immanent* refers to something invisible spread everywhere through the visible world.

Medieval Christians believed that God's power was immanent through the universe.

Eminent, imminent. *Eminent* means "prominent": He had become eminent through decades of service. *Imminent* means about to happen: The outbreak of war was imminent.

Eminent, imminent, immanent. These three words are difficult to keep straight. *Eminent* means "distinguished." *Imminent* means "impending" or "soon to happen." *Immanent* means "existing within" or "inherent."

Margaret Sanger was an eminent nurse who took up the cause of birth control in the United States. Before Mount St. Helens erupted in 1980, scientists warned those living near it of imminent danger. Quakers believe that God's spirit is immanent in all human beings.
enthuse. While enthuse is fairly common in speech, it is generally better to use another form in writing: be enthusiastic about or show enthusiasm.

Enthused Use enthusiastic in formal writing.

enthuse Colloquial for show enthusiasm or make enthusiastic.

Enthused is a colloquial form of enthusiastic and should not be used. President John F. Kennedy was enthusiastic (not enthused) about the United States space program.

enthusied Used colloquially as an adjective meaning “showing enthusiasm.” The preferred adjective is enthusiastic: The coach was enthusiastic (not enthused) about the team’s victory.

enthusied Enthused is a colloquial form of enthusiastic and should not be used.

enthusied Colloquial for “showing enthusiasm.” The preferred adjective is enthusiastic.

enthuse, enthused Enthuse is informal as a verb meaning “to show enthusiasm.” Enthused is informal as a synonym for enthusiastic.

INFORMAL We were all enthused about the new club.

GENERAL We were all enthusiastic about the new club.

Enthuse. Don’t use it; it coos and gushes:

WRONG She enthused over her new dress. He was enthused.

RIGHT She gushed on and on about her new dress. He was enthusiastic.

enthuse. This verb is nonstandard and, therefore, not recommended. Instead of “She was enthused about going to college,” write

She was very happy about . . . .
She was enthusiastic about . . . .
She was pleased with . . . .

Enthused/Enthusiastic

Most writers and editors prefer the word enthusiastic.

The Secretary of the Interior was enthusiastic [not enthused] about the plans to build a high-rise condominium in Yosemite National Park.
enthuse, enthused, enthusing Informal derivatives from enthusiasm, these words are not recognized in formal writing.
etc. The abbreviation for *et cetera,* "and so forth." Do not use *and etc.*

etc. Etc. Do not use *and etc.* Etc. means "and so forth."
**everyday, every day**  
*Everyday* is an adj. meaning *normal, habitual: an everyday practice.* Don’t use *everyday* where the two words *every day* are called for: *They did it every day.*

Every day, everyday  
*Every* is used as an adverb; *everyday,* as an adjective.
He comes to look at the same picture in the gallery *every day.*
His trip to the gallery is an *everyday occurrence.*

everyday, everyday  
*Every day* is a noun modified by *every; everyday* is an adjective meaning “used daily” or “common”: *Every day she had to cope with everyday problems.*

**everyday, every day**  
*Everyday* means “ordinary” or “commonplace.” *Every day* means “occurring daily.”
In the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln used everyday words to create a model of clarity and conciseness.
In the Canterbury Tales Chaucer depicts a group of pilgrims who tell stories every day as they ride from London to Canterbury.

Everyday, every day.  
You wear your *everyday* clothes *every day.*
Expect
Avoid the use of expect as a synonym for suppose or presume. I suppose [not expect] that he lost money on the horses.

expect Colloquial when used to mean “suppose” or “believe.” I suppose [not expect] the Reynolds clan is still squabbling about the settlement of the will.

expect Mildly colloq. in the sense of suppose, believe: I expect I won’t be able to get there.

expect Colloquial when used to mean “suppose” or “believe” (I suppose [not expect] I should do the dishes now).

expect Informal for suppose or believe: I suppose [not expect] you will need new filters for that pump.