

Avoiding Commonly Misused and Misspelled Words

1. In which passage(s) below are **imply** and **infer** used correctly?
 - A. Susie didn't mean to infer that her mother's cooking was terrible when she gagged over her rutabaga surprise casserole, but her mother implied that meaning from Susie's reaction.
 - B. "Are you inferring that I'm ugly?" Susie screamed when her mother gave her a coupon for plastic surgery. "No, I'm not implying that," her mother replied.
 - C. "Don't infer the wrong message from my gift," Susie's mother explained. "I'm not implying any such thing. You're the one who asked for a nose job."

2. In which passage(s) below are **allusion** and **illusion** used correctly?
 - A. The literary novel makes many allusions to the Bible, in which we learn that it is merely an allusion that money buys happiness, seemingly an illusion of many people today.
 - B. The perfect physiques and figures we see in the media are often only illusions, the images having been retouched digitally. While interviewing a famous movie starlet, the reporter commented, "Wow, you look so different in person," making an allusion to her photo in People magazine.
 - C. Reading Shakespeare can be difficult because there are so many illusions to Elizabethan England, but it is only an allusion that, therefore, nothing can be gained by reading his plays.

3. In which passage(s) below are **complement** and **compliment** used correctly?
 - A. "Susie, your nose looks beautiful," her mother complimented Susie after her surgery. "Now, it complements the rest of your features and doesn't dominate your entire face."
 - B. "Thanks, Mom," Susie replied dryly. "I know you were trying to complement me. But your compliment just made me feel more self-conscious."
 - C. The surgeon receives many compliments for his work, which complements his already huge ego.

4. In which passage(s) below are **affect** and **effect** used correctly?
 - A. The affect of Susie's surgery was to increase her popularity, now that she no longer looked like Pinocchio. The surgeon was happy to have effected such a change in Susie's life.
 - B. "This change in your looks has negatively affected your personality," Susie's mom complained, "and I don't like the effect on you."
 - C. The effect of all the attention to Susie's new look was to make her proud and haughty, and this was not how Susie's mom wanted the surgery to effect her daughter.

5. In which passage(s) below are **accept** and **except** used correctly?

- A. Perhaps we would be happier if we could learn to except ourselves just as we are, except that we should work on improving our character. Everyone accept plastic surgeons might be happier, that is.
- B. We might be better able to accept the way we look if all around us we didn't see images of "perfection." It seems that every magazine except news magazines doctors its photos.
- C. Couples must learn to except each other's flaws, according to relationship experts. For example, the therapist's wife is a counterfeiter, and he accepts this foible in her.

6. In which passage(s) below are **lie** and **lay** used correctly?

- A. "*Twilight* was so good that I couldn't lay it down," Susie said. "I was laying down for hours reading the book and never once felt sleepy."
- B. But because she was up all night reading, later Susie needed to lay down and take a nap. Unfortunately, she was in math class when she decided to lie her head on her desk and sleep.
- C. Susie's math book, which was lying on her desk, fell to the floor with a loud bang, causing her teacher to lay her stack of worksheets on her desk and assist Susie in waking up.

7. In which passage(s) below are **few / fewer** and **less** used correctly?

- A. Fewer students are taking a foreign language in school, while less language classes are being offered in school.
- B. We have less choice in deciding which internet provider to use because there are fewer independent providers of service.
- C. While Burger King has less customers than In-and-Out, the popular drive-thru has less on its menu to choose from and less options than Burger King.

8. In which passage(s) below are **accept** and **except** and **passed** and **past** used correctly?

- A. Although the due date is passed, my application was still accepted by the college.
- B. When I past my friend's house to find parking, I saw that I was late, and everyone was already there except me.
- C. The opportunity given to me had passed, but there are some things we just have to accept in life, and we can't blame anyone except ourselves.