Be Wary Words

Mr. Baker's English II

American Literature

2012 - 2013

**Week 1**

*The difference between "lay" and "lie":*

**Lie** means rest, recline, or be situated. The past tense form is *lay.*

**Lay** is to put, place, or set. The past tense form is *laid*; the past participle form is *lain.*

*Verbal Advantage, pg. 20-22*

**Week 2**

*The difference between "less" and "fewer":*

**Less** modifies quantities, abstractions, and things that are considered single or whole (e.g. less food, less time, less money).

**Fewer** modifies things that can be itemized, enumerated, broken down into smaller elements or parts (e.g. fewer thoughts, fewer words, fewer mistakes).

*Verbal Advantage, pg. 92-94*

**Week 3**

*The difference between "between" and "among":*

**Between** is used with two things.

**Among** is used with three or more.

Note: *Between you and I* is incorrect; *between you and me* is correct.

*Word Smart, pg. 336*

**Week 4**

*Using/punctuating the word "however" correctly:*

If you use "however" in the following way: "Jared hit the ball however Lara caught it" you must break up the sentence with some strong form of punctuation [semi-colon or period] like this: "Jared hit the ball; however, Lara caught it."

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**Week 5**

*The usage of affect and effect:*

**Affect** is almost always a verb meaning to influence. In psychology, it is a noun meaning emotion or desire.

*I would not let my personal problems affect the quality of my work.*

*His affect was sullen.*

**Effect**, usually a noun, means result. Occasionally, effect is a verb meaning to bring about or to cause.

*The effect of the earthquake on Beijing was disastrous.*

*She effected policies that benefited the entire organization.*

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**Week 8**

*The distinction between “farther” and “further”*

**Farther** refers to actual, literal distance (the kind measured in inches and miles).

**Further** refers to figurative distance.

Use farther if distance can be measured; use further if it cannot.

*Word Smart, p. 335*

**Week 9**

*Singular vs. plural verb common misuse*

The following words take plural verbs:

**both**

**criteria**

**media**

**phenomena**

The following words take singular verbs:

**criterion**

**each**

**either**

**every, everybody, everyone, etc.**

**medium**

**neither**

**none, no one, nobody, etc.**

**phenomenon**

*Word Smart, p. 340*

**Week 10**

*The word unique*

Unique is overused and no longer unique. It is so often used as an elegant variation for *unusual* and *uncommon* that is no longer unusual or uncommon, and hardly elegant. A thing cannot be more or less unique than another thing; it is simply unique. Some better substitutes to consider: *unrivaled*, *matchless*, *peerless*, *unparalleled*, *incomparable*, *singular*, and *inimitable*.

*Verbal Advantage, p. 188-191*

**Week 11**

Get, got, and gotten are forms of the verb get and are acceptable in standard English, but whenever possible, it is best to find a more specific word.

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**Week 12**

*Miscellaneous*

**However**: ensure you are using it as a conjunction and ensure it is not disguising a comma-splice error [also **therefore** and **nevertheless**]

**Not only**: think parallelism

**One**: ensure the sentence does not shift incorrectly to “you”

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**Week 13**

*Miscellaneous*

**continual** v. **continuous**: *Continuous* implies an uninterrupted state or activity; *continual* means occurring over and over at short intervals.

**childish** v. **childlike**: *Childish* means immature, silly, foolish; it implies the negative aspects of childhood. *Childlike* means simply like a child, characteristic of a child; it suggests the favorable aspects of childhood.

**immigrate** v. **emigrate**: *Immigrate* means to go into a new country; migrate in. *Emigrate* means to leave or go out of one's country; migrate out. Immigrate is typically followed with the preposition 'to' whereas emigrate is followed with the preposition 'from.'

**eminent** v. **imminent**: *Imminent* means about to happen, impending. *Eminent* implies loftiness, superiority, or distinction.

*Verbal Advantage, p. 248-9*

**Week 14**

*Miscellaneous*

**either... or...** First consider parallelism, then agreement between subject and verb.

**neither... nor...** Remember that # is established by the “B” word

**amount** v. **number:** Amount is used with quantities that cannot be counted, that are measured in the aggregate, like sugar. Number is used with items that can be counted.

**loose** v. **lose**: Generally, loose is an adj. meaning not fastened or restrained. Lose is a verb meaning “to be unable to find”

*Mr. Baker*

**Week 15**

*The misuse of language*

**abusage** Improper or incorrect use of language.

(2) abuse [obsolete]

**vogue words**  Fashionable words or phrases that tend to lose their effectiveness through overuse.

*Note: to earn credit you must write a few sentences explaining vogue words and give three examples*

*p. 297-300*

**Week 16**

*The misuse of disinterested*

**disinterested** Does not mean uninterested; it does mean unbiased, objective

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**Week 17**

*Eponymous*

**eponym** Derived from Greek word meaning “named after.”

Means to use a word named after a word. Also eponymous (adj).

*p. 344-47*

**Week 18** (also **Week 23**)

*Phonetic confusion*

**“Use to” as in “I use to go to the movies” is incorrect; must be “used to”**

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**Week 19**

*An incorrect usage of "because"*

**When because is used after "reason"**

**“the reason is because. . . “ is nonstandard**

**“the reason is that” is standard**

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**Week 20**

*A note on the word "true"*

Be very careful in using the word “true.” If you use it, be sure you can defend your use of it. Beware of “true meaning,” “true identity” etc. Usually students use the word simply as an intensifier.

*"'Meaning’ doesn’t have any meaning, so I’ll put ‘true’ in front of it and that will help."*

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**Week 21**

*Bring and take*

Bring and take cannot be used in the same way. “Bring” is used when the movement is towards the speaker and “take” when the movement is away from the speaker.

*"On your way to town take this package to the post office and please bring me a receipt."*

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**Week 22**

*Who vs. whom*

**Who** is the subject form; the object is **whom**.

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