**Confusing Words**

**All ready/already**

All ready means everyone is ready. - We're all ready for summer vacation.

Already means before. - David had already complete that class.

**Affect/Effect**

Affect is usually a verb: Chester’s humming affected Posey’s ability to concentrate.

Effect is usually a noun: Chester was sorry for the effect his humming had.

**Among/Between**

Among expresses a collective or loose relationship of several items: Chester found a letter hidden among the papers on the desk.

Between expresses the relationship of one thing to another thing or to many other things: Posey spent all day carrying messages between Chester and the other students.

**Assure/Ensure/Insure**

Assure means to tell someone that something will definitely happen or is definitely true: Posey assured Chester that no one would cheat at Bingo.

Ensure means to guarantee or make sure of something: Posey took steps to ensure that no one cheated at Bingo.

Insure means to take out an insurance policy: Posey was glad the Bingo hall was insured against damage caused by rowdy Bingo players.

**Capital/Capitol**

Capital has several meanings. It can refer to an uppercase letter, money, or a city where a seat of government is located: Chester visited Brasίlia, the capital of Brazil.

Capitol means the building where a legislature meets: Posey visited the cafe in the basement of the capitol after watching a bill become a law.

**Complement/Compliment**

A complement is something that completes something else. It’s often used to describe things that go well together: Chester’s lime green boots were a perfect complement to his jacket.

A compliment is a nice thing to say: Posey received many compliments on her purple fedora.

**Disinterested/Uninterested**

Disinterested means impartial: A panel of disinterested judges who had never met the contestants before judged the singing contest.

Uninterested means bored or not wanting to be involved with something: Posey was uninterested in attending Chester’s singing class.

**Emigrate/Immigrate**

Emigrate means to move away from a city or country to live somewhere else: Chester’s grandfather emigrated from Canada sixty years ago.

Immigrate means to move into a country from somewhere else: Posey’s sister immigrated to Ireland in 2004.

**Empathy/Sympathy**

Empathy is the ability to understand another person’s perspective or feelings.

Sympathy is a feeling of sorrow for someone else’s suffering. A sympathizer is someone who agrees with a particular ideal or cause.

**Farther/Further**

Farther refers to physical distance: Posey can run farther than Chester.

Further refers to metaphorical distance: Chester is further away from finishing his project than Posey is.

**Historic/Historical**

Historic means famous, important, and influential: Chester visited the beach in Kitty Hawk where the Wright brothers made their historic first airplane flight.

Historical means related to history: Posey donned a historical bonnet for the renaissance fair.

**Imply/Infer**

Imply means to hint at something without saying it directly: Chester implied that Posey was in trouble, but he wouldn’t tell her why.

Infer means to deduce something that hasn’t been stated directly: Posey inferred that Chester was nervous about something from the way he kept looking over his shoulder.

**Principal/Principle**

Principal can be a noun or adjective. As a noun, it refers to the person in charge of a school or organization: Posey was called into the principal’s office. As an adjective, it means most important: The principal reason for this meeting is to brainstorm ideas for the theme of Chester’s birthday party.

A principle (always a noun) is a firmly held belief or ideal: Posey doesn’t like surprise parties as a matter of principle.

**Inquiry/Enquiry**

Inquiry and enquiry both mean “a request for information.” Inquiry is the standard American English spelling. Enquiry is the British spelling.

**Desert/dessert**

Desert is dry land. - The desert is a hot and dry place.

Dessert is a sweet eaten after a meal. - I'd love a piece of chocolate for dessert!

**Stationary/Stationery**

Stationary means unmoving: The revolving door remained stationary because Posey was pushing on it the wrong way.

Stationery refers to letter writing materials and especially to high quality paper: Chester printed his résumé on his best stationery.

**Than/Then**

Than is used for comparisons: Posey runs faster than Chester.

Then is used to indicate time or sequence: Posey took off running, and then Chester came along and finished her breakfast.

**To/Too**

To is a preposition that can indicate direction: Posey walked to school. She said hello to Chester when she saw him. To is also used in the infinitive form of verbs: Chester waited until the last minute to do his homework.

Too is used as an intensifier, and also means “also”: Posey waited too long to do her homework, too.

**Accept/except**

Accept means to receive. - I accept your gift.

Except means to exclude. - I'll give you all my baseball cards except for the Micky Mantle.

**Advice/advise**

Advice is an opinion offered as a guide. - My advice is to study before tests.

Advise is the action of offering an opinion as a guide. - I advise you to study before tests.

**Beside/besides**

Beside means next to. - He sat beside me.

Besides means in addition. - I love ice cream besides chocolate.

**Breath/breathe**

Breath is air that you take in. - I was out of breath after running.

Breathe is the action of taking in air. - I breathe heavily after running.

**Conscience/conscious**

Conscience is your inner, moral guide. - My conscience told me not to steal that candy bar, but I was hungry and took it anyway.

Conscious means aware or awake. - I was conscious of a guilty feeling over taking the candy bar.

**Loose/lose**

Loose means not fastened or unbound. - His shoelaces were loose.

Lose is to be unable to find or to not win. - I lose every time I play cards.

**Piece/peace**

Piece means a part of something. - May I have a piece of pie, please?

Peace is a state of agreement and well-being with the world. - The two nations settled their differences when they agreed to a peace treaty.

**Quiet/quite**

Quiet means an absence of noise. – Night time isn't completely quiet; you can still hear the breeze and occasional animals.

Quite means entirely or completely. - That is not quite the right thing to do.