

COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS

Part 2

Is it one word or two?

Already and **All ready**

Already is an adverb meaning *something that has happened before*. I am already at the mall.

All ready is an adjective meaning *completely prepared*. We are all ready to leave.

Awhile and **A while**

Awhile is an adverb meaning *for a short time*. I guess we can stay awhile longer.

A while is a noun phrase meaning *period of time*. We stayed at the concert for a while.

A lot and **Allot**

A lot is always spelled as two words and means *many*. You can put a lot of marshmallows in your mouth.

Allot is a verb that means to *assign as a share or portion*. They will allot only 10,000 tickets for the concert.

All right and **Alright**

All right can be an adjective that means *satisfactory or acceptable*. Whatever you decide is all right with me.

All right can also be an adverb meaning *in a satisfactory manner*. Everything will turn out all right.

Alright is less formal and is used as an adverb to mean *well* or 'OK'. Is the temperature alright?

Anyone and **Any one**

Anyone is a pronoun meaning *any person at all*. Anyone who can explain the meaning of life is a genius.

Any one is a noun phrase meaning *any single person or thing*. Any one of those people in the blue vest can help you.



Anyway and Any way

Anyway is an adverb meaning *in any case or nonetheless*. I told him not to, but he saw the movie anyway.

Any way means *in any manner or by any means*. Any way you go might lead to danger.

Maybe and May be

Maybe is an adverb meaning *perhaps*. Maybe we should wait until the rain stops.

May be is a verb phrase meaning *might be*. I may be our last chance at winning the game.

Some More Complex Words:

Lay and Lie

The verb *lay* means *to place or put* and requires a direct object. If you are not sure of when to use *lay* try substituting the word with *place* or *put*.

We must lay our cards on the table. (We must put our cards on the table.) She laid her purse on the floor. (She placed her purse on the floor.)

The word *lie* means *to rest in a horizontal position* and does not take a direct object. The past of the verb *lie* is *lay*, just as with the present form of the verb *lay*.

If you are tired, you should lie down and relax.

Every day, I lie on my sofa after lunch.

The toddlers were lying on the floor.

Yesterday, the cat lay in the sun, recharging itself for another busy night.

The papers have lain on the desk for several days.

With closely related meanings and overlapping forms, the verbs *lay* and *lie* are probably the two most frequently confused words in English. Typically, people will use *lay* and *laying* when they need *lie* and *lying*. Adding to the confusion is the second meaning of *lie*, namely, saying something that isn't true. In this meaning *lie* is a regular verb (*lie, lied, lied*).

Remember this helpful hint:

People must always lay *something somewhere* (e.g. lay a baby in a crib, lay a sick dog on a couch, or lay one's books on the table)



Which and That and Who

When *that* introduces a relative clause, the clause is often restrictive, that is, essential to the complete meaning of the sentence. In *The keys that I lost last month have been found*, the keys referred to a specific set of keys. Without the *that* clause, the sentence ‘*The keys have been found*,’ would be vague and probably puzzling.

The relative pronoun *that* represents the preceding noun and introduces an essential clause describing that noun. *That* can refer to people, animals, and things.

Many of the workers *that* built the pyramids died while working.

The negotiator made an offer *that* was very attractive to the union.

The relative pronoun *that* is sometimes omitted when it is used as an object.

The garage (*that*) we take our car to is very reliable.

The films (*that*) Chaplin made have become classics.

That can act as a conjunction. When this occurs, *that* is often omitted, especially when a dependent clause begins with a personal pronoun (he, she, they, etc.) or a proper name (Becky, Jorge, etc.).

She said (*that*) they would arrive in separate cars.

The relative pronoun *which* represents the preceding noun and introduces a non-essential clause describing that noun. *Which* is used to refer to animals and things.

Mr. Murphy’s favourite hat, *which* I rescued from the sinking ship, now sits gathering dust in one of his many closets.

Humber College, *which* has North America’s only comedy diploma program, is located near Pearson International Airport.

The relative pronoun *who* represents the preceding noun when it refers to people and sometimes pet animals.

She is the only one of the managers *who* can speak Japanese fluently.

Exercise

1) Anyone vs. Any one

I won’t pick just _____ to be my husband.

2) Maybe vs. May be

We _____ in trouble.



- 3) Already vs. All ready
I _____ ate lunch today.
- 4) That vs. Which vs. Who
Mustafa, _____ shovelled my driveway, is a nice person.
- 5) Awhile vs. A while
His speech went on for _____.
- 6) Any way vs. Anyway
I am going to go to the store _____.
- 7) Lay vs. Lie
Go and _____ down.
- 8) Lay vs. Lie
Go and _____ the papers on my desk.
- 9) A lot vs. Allot
I have _____ of money.
- 10) That vs. Which vs. Who
The car _____ rolled down the hill crashed into a tree.

