



Common Errors in the English Language

The English language is insanely complicated. According to Merriam Webster's online dictionary, the English language has over 1 million words! Because of this, even the most advanced linguist makes mistakes sometimes. Here's a list of commonly made errors and how to avoid them.

Vocabulary Errors

- **To vs. Two vs. Too:** These three words are often confused with one another. Here's a breakdown of their meanings.
 - ***To** is either used before a verb as part of the infinitive or as a preposition.
EX: I'm going **to** the store **to** buy a puppy.
 - ***Two** is the number.
EX: One puppy just isn't enough, so I bought **two**.
 - ***Too** is an adverb that means "extra".
EX: I decided that three was just **too** many puppies.
- **Their vs. They're vs. There:** This is another triple threat to language usage.
 - ***Their** is a possessive pronoun that means something belongs to a group of people.
EX: Spot is **their** dog.
 - ***They're** is the contraction of "they" and "are".
EX: **They're** saying they are going to let me pet Spot.
 - ***There** is an introductory subject as well as a place-describing adjective.
EX: **There** is a very cute puppy over **there**.
- **You're vs. Your:** These are very commonly mixed up when used in a sentence. Here's how to tell them apart.
 - ***You're** is the contraction between "you" and "are". It's a subject in a sentence.
EX: **You're** the best dancer!
 - ***Your** is a possessive pronoun. It means something that belongs to you.
EX: I love **your** tutu.
- **Cite vs. Site vs. Sight:** These three words all sound the same and while two are similar, one is not...
 - ***Cite** is a verb. It means to call upon or quote someone, usually an authority.
EX: I made sure to **cite** the Declaration of Independence in my history article.
 - ***Site** is a noun that is the placement or location of something.
EX: I saw all the important historic **sites**.
 - ***Sight** is usually used as a noun to talk about the power of vision *or* a worth spectacle.
EX: I was never more thankful for my **sight** than when I saw the Liberty Bell!



Vocabulary Errors Continued

- **Advise** vs. **Advice**: these two words are different parts of speech, but have the same essential meaning...here's what we mean by that.

***Advise** is a verb that means to counsel or recommend.

EX: I would **advise** that you avoid the pork burrito.

***Advice** is a noun meaning the opinion that was given.

EX: My **advice** is based on life experience.

- **Weather** vs. **Whether**: Don't let this confusion rain on your parade.

***Weather** is a noun that discusses the state of the atmosphere.

EX: The **weather** sure is gloomy today: I can't believe it's raining again!

***Whether** is a conjunction that introduces an alternative or the first of one or more alternatives in a sentence.

EX: Now I can't tell **whether** it's raining or snowing!

These are just a few of the many word mishaps that may occur in the English language. This is, of course, just a small list, so for any other questions about the expansive English language, feel free to take some time to stop by **The Writing Center!**

Further Assistance: For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library, or call 815-836-5427.