COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS

1. **Advise** is a verb while **advice** is a noun.
   - He **advised** the student to take English.
   - Take my **advice** and go home.

2. **Affect** is always a verb meaning to influence or attack or to touch the emotions. The noun **effect** means the result of a cause.
   - Smoking **affects** the heart.
   - Drugs have side **effects**.

3. **Altogether** means wholly or thoroughly.
   - **All together** means in a group.
     - This test is **altogether** unnecessary.
     - They were **all together** at the restaurant.

4. **Cite** means to quote or refer to an example. **Sight** means to have the power of vision. **Site** means a place where something is or was situated.
   - John will **cite** a portion of Poe's most famous poem.
   - One's **sight** enables one to see many things.
   - The Murphys are going to build a home on that **site**.

5. **Except** means to exclude or to make an exception.
   - **Accept** means to approve or to receive.
     - Everyone **except** John is going to the party.
     - Linda was **accepted** at Georgia Tech.

6. **Fewer** is used with plural nouns and refers to number.
   - **Less** is used with singular nouns and refers to amount.
     - **Fewer** students were in class today, so discussion took **less** time than usual.

7. **Hear** is a verb meaning to listen. **Here** is an adverb meaning time or place, and it is the opposite of **there**.
   - You **hear** with your **ear**.
   - If you want to have a party, have it **here**.

8. **Lay** (laid, laying) means to put or to place.
   - **Lie** (lay, lain, lying) means to rest or to recline.
     - Please **lay** the book on the table.
     - Jim is going to **lie** down and rest for awhile.

9. **Lose** is a verb, but **loose** is usually an adjective.
   - Did you **lose** your umbrella? This belt is too **loose**.

10. **Past** means gone by, over, or having existed in a previous time.
    - **Passed** is the past tense of the verb to pass, meaning to go by.
      - This **past** weekend a car **passed** me going at least 80 mph.

11. **Right** means correct. **Write** means to trace or to inscribe with a pencil, pen, or similar device. **Rite** is a custom or a ceremony.
    - Mary gave the **right** answer to the question.
    - Students have to **write** their answers on a sheet of paper.
    - A Bar Mitzvah is a **rite** of passage.
    - The author of a play, however, is a **playwright**.
12. Then refers to time or order, and than is used in comparisons.
   We are going shopping and then to the movies.
   Billy would rather watch TV than read books.

13. There is an adverb referring to a place or a point in time or an expletive. Their is a
    possessive pronoun. They're is a contraction for they are.
    Put the book over there. There is nothing to do in Duluth.
    Their car is in the shop. They're not going with us.

14. To means toward or in the direction of. Too means also, in addition, or besides. Two is
    a number.

15. Weather refers to climate, but whether is used to introduce an alternative.

16. Won is the past tense of the verb to win, and one is a number.

17. Whole means entire or complete, and a hole is an opening or cavity.

18. Whose is a possessive pronoun, and who's is a contraction for who is.
    Who's going to find out whose book this is.

19. Your is a possessive pronoun, and you're is a contraction for you are.
    You're not going to like what they did to your car.

NOTE: Additional spelling hints may be found in Harbrace College Handbook, Chapters 18 and 19.