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 Smiths 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.