

Vocabulary: Problem Words

The words in the groups below sound the same, or almost the same, and are often confused. However, they are spelled differently and have different meanings.

1. (a) affect (verb) – influence, move emotionally
(b) effect (noun) – result; power to influence
 effects (plural) – personal property, belongings, goods
2. (a) lessen (verb) – reduce
(b) lesson (noun) – instruction period; useful experience
3. (a) coma (noun) – long period of unconsciousness
(b) comma (noun) – punctuation mark
4. (a) idle (adjective) – not working or in use; lazy
(b) idol (noun) – object of adoration; object worshiped as god
5. (a) final (adjective) – last; allowing no change; ending
(b) final (noun) – end of a series
(c) finale (noun) – final theatrical number
6. (a) metre (noun) – unit of length
(b) metre (noun) - device for measuring amount of flow
(c) meteor (noun) – fiery mass of rock from space
7. (a) canvas (noun) – heavy fabric, used for sails and for painting on
(b) canvass (verb) – visit somebody to solicit something, debate something, look at something carefully

Make two sentences using one of the vocabulary words above. Read them aloud to another student who must write the vocabulary word on the board. The others in the group must decide if the word is written correctly.

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

AFFECT

EFFECT

1. What _____ will this move have on the results?
2. When they were transferred to Europe, they took all their personal _____ with them.
3. The century has been full of inventions that have _____ the way we live.

LESSEN

LESSON

4. Driving defensively will _____ the chances of having an accident.
5. He learned a hard _____ from this experience.

COMA

COMMA

6. We use a _____ to separate things in a series of lists.
7. After the blow on his head, he was in a _____ for several days.

IDLE

IDOL

8. His popular recordings made him a teenage _____.
9. It is an old saying that the devil finds work for _____ hands to do.

FINAL

FINALE

10. Their team played well but didn't make it to the _____ match.
11. The whole cast appeared on stage for the grand _____ of the performance.

METRE

METEOR

12. It was fascinating to see the _____ shoot through the sky.
13. It says on my electric bill that the _____ is read once every two months.
14. The athlete needed to jump 10.6 _____ to win the competition.

CANVAS

CANVASS

15. They will have to _____ for more memberships to keep the club going.
16. His tent was made of durable _____.