



Writing Advice*: Frequently misused and misspelled words.

Learning the proper spelling and usage of words helps you write what you mean.

A brief list of words that, when used incorrectly, distract the reader:

	Meaning	Example
affect effect	(verb) to influence (noun) result	<i>The humidity will affect my test results The effect of long periods of humidity can be an increase in mold</i>
assure	(verb) relates to persons: to promote a sense of peace of mind	<i>She told me to assure you that the chapter would be published</i>
insure	(verb) to guarantee against risk	<i>Clemson offers to insure students with medical coverage, if the students need it.</i>
ensure	(verb) to make certain	<i>By completing the questionnaire, you will ensure that your laboratory's needs are recorded for budgeting purposes</i>
complement	(noun) the quantity or amount that completes or fills; complete quantity, provision, or set; full allowance, totality. verb, to make complete	<i>The two angles are a complement when their sum totals 90 degrees He offered a complement of side dishes at the dinner</i>
compliment	(noun) praise	<i>He was complimented on his recent publication</i>
continually	(adverb) interrupted actions, over a time period	<i>We make back-up copies of our data continually throughout the day.</i>
continuously	(adverb) uninterrupted actions	<i>The printer stays on continuously during works hours, and doesn't go into sleep mode</i>
discreet	(adjective) prudent, sound judgment	<i>He is a discreet assistant, checking his manager's calculation before sending them on for review</i>
discrete	(adjective) separate	<i>We counted seven discrete examples of faulty reporting</i>

Word	Meaning	Example
Further	adj., refers to a degree, quantity, or time	<i>Staff were told that further meetings will be held in the next month</i>
Imply	verb, to suggest (based on experience or reasoning); what the writer does	<i>The data implies that the solution we recommended may not be tenable</i>
Infer	verb, to take the suggestion or to draw a conclusion; what the reader does	<i>We inferred from your data that your recommended solution is not tenable</i>
Stationary	noun, writing paper	<i>She was advised not to use personal stationary for official communications</i>
Stationary	adj., Fixed in place, immovable	<i>The car must be stationary when balancing tires</i>

*Adapted and revised from: Rude, C. D., & Dayton, D. (2006). *The Longman guide to technical editing: a comprehensive reference guide for editors and information managers*. New York: Pearson/Longman.



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