

Confusing Words

Make and Do

Many languages have only one verb for **do** and **make**. In English the verb to do basically means “**to perform, to act,**” while the verb to make means “**to produce by action.**” These two verbs are also found in a number of fixed expressions.

Expressions with MAKE

- ✓ Make a mistake
- ✓ Make war
- ✓ Make a comparison
- ✓ Make a discovery
- ✓ Make use of
- ✓ Make a profit
- ✓ Make a suggestion
- ✓ Make a plan
- ✓ Make an investment
- ✓ Make an offer
- ✓ Make a choice
- ✓ Make an attempt
- ✓ Make a decision
- ✓ Make a forecast
- ✓ Make progress
- ✓ Make friends
- ✓ Make an improvement
- ✓ Make a complaint
- ✓ Make enemies
- ✓ Make money

Grammar Tips

Expressions with DO

- ✓ Do one's duty
- ✓ Do homework
- ✓ Do justice to
- ✓ Do business
- ✓ Do work
- ✓ Do wrong
- ✓ Do a kindness
- ✓ Do harm
- ✓ Do research
- ✓ Do an assignment
- ✓ Do one's best
- ✓ Do a service
- ✓ Do damage
- ✓ Do wonders

"After" and "Afterwards"

After (prep) means following in time, later than

Afterwards (adv) means after that, after an event or time that has already been mentioned

- I will see you after the test.
- I will see you afterwards.

"Almost" and "Most"

Almost (adv) means very nearly

Most (adj) means the greatest part

- Almost everyone passed the test.
- Most students received a passing grade.

Common Mistakes

“Among” and “Between”

Among (prep) is used for three or more persons or things

Between (prep) is used for two persons or things

- The work was distributed **between Paul and John**.
- The work was distributed **among the members of the team**.

“Amount” and “Number”

Amount (n) is used with non-count nouns

Number (n) is used with count nouns

- A great amount of money was spent on housing.
- A great number of houses were being built.

“Another” and “Other”

Another (det) means one more. It is used before a singular noun or alone.

Other (det) means the second of the two. It is used before a plural noun or singular noun when preceded by a determiner.

- She needs another piece of paper.
- We have other ideas about this project.

“Because” and “Because of”

Because (conj) introduces an adverb clause and is followed by a subject and verb

Because of (prep) is followed by a noun clause

- Because it was dark, we could not see.
- Because of the dark, we could not see.

Grammar Tips

“Before” and “Ago”

Before (adv) shows the difference between a distant point and a nearer point in the past

Ago (adv) means in the past

- We graduated five years ago.
- She had already graduated three years before (eight years ago).

“Differ” and “Different”

Differ (v) and **different** (adj) mean not the same. They are both followed by “from”.

- People differ from one another in their ability to handle stress.
- These two words are not different from each other in meaning.

“Fewer” and “Less”

Both words mean a small quantity or amount

Fewer (adj) is used with count nouns

Less (adj) is used with non-count nouns

- There were fewer birds.
- **Fewer words and more action.**
- There was less noise.

Common Mistakes

“Hard” and “Hardly”

Hard (adj) means difficult

Hardly (adv) means scarcely, barely

- The reading passages were hard.
- The children were so excited they could hardly speak.

Note: hardly is not the adverb form of the adjective hard. The adverb form of hard is also hard.

“Lonely” and “Alone”

Lonely (adj) means feeling unhappy and abandoned

Alone (adj) means without others

- He had no friends and felt lonely.
- He likes to go to the mountains alone.
- At last, we’re alone together (=there are just the two of us here).

“Near” and “Nearly”

Near (adj) means not far

Nearly (adv) means almost

- The city is near the ocean.
- It took nearly two hours to get here.

Grammar Tips

“Nearly” and “Almost”

Don't use nearly before negative words such as “no” or “nothing”.

Don't say: I know nearly nothing about it.

Don't say: There was nearly no traffic.

You can use almost with negative words such as “no” or “nothing”.

Say: I know almost nothing about it.

Say: There was almost no traffic.

“Old” and “Age”

Old (adj) means advanced in age.

Age (n) means the period of time a person or thing has existed.

- Mozart composed music when he was five years old.
- Mozart composed music at a very young age.
- We're all getting older.
- At my age, it's quite difficult getting up the stairs.

“Percent” and “Percentage”

Percent (adv) (n) (adj) means one part in each 100. It is only used after a number.

Percentage (n) the proportion as a whole of 100.

- I agree with you a/one hundred percent.
- Eighty percent of the population voted.
- Tax is paid as a percentage of total income.
- Only a small percentage of people are interested in politics.