

CONFUSING WORDS 10

Be sure to consult a dictionary as some of the words below have other meanings not described here.

1. to, too, two: As a preposition, *to* means “in the direction of”; “reaching as distant as”; “toward a given condition.” *Too* is an adverb that means “as well”; “exorbitantly.” *Two* is a number.

It makes the **two** of us going **to** the Cayman Islands for a deserved break. Are your children coming along **too**?

2. try and: Nonstandard for *try to*.

We **try to** [not *try and*] be understanding of his past, but it does not seem to matter to him.

3. vain, vane, vein: As an adjective, *vain* means “excessively holding one's self in high regard”; “fruitless or not yielding the desired result.” When used in the phrase *in vain*, as an idiom, it means “to no success.” *Vane* is a noun that means “an instrument set on an elevated object to show the direction of the wind.” *Vein* is also a noun meaning “a blood vessel”; “one of the ribs that support the wings of an insect.”

For someone with considerable financial wealth, he was not the least **vain**.

The **vane** always makes that creaky noise even with the slightest breeze.

It is my body's symptom for stress whenever **veins** bulge out of my forehead.

4. waist, waste: *Waist* is a noun that means “the part of the human between the bottom of the ribcage and the hips.” As a verb, *waste* means “to use or consume carelessly”; “to lose energy or strength”; “to pass without being used.” As an adjective, *waste* means “regarded as useless.”

Chinwe complained of numbing pain about her **waist**.

Why would anyone let all that food go to **waste**?

5. wait for, wait on, weight: *Wait for* is used to mean “to expect”; “To be in anticipation or readiness.” *Wait on* is used to mean “to serve to the needs of.” *Weight* is a noun meaning “the

measure of heaviness or mass of an object.”

We will **wait for** [not *wait on*] you by the right entrance of the train station.

Pardon me madame as I have to **wait on** another customer.

I need to lose some of this **weight** my body carries.

6. ware, wear, where: *Ware* as a noun, means “items of the same general kind”; “products for trade.” As a verb, *ware* means “to beware of.” *Wear* is a verb meaning “to have on or put on”; “to erode by long or hard use.” *Where* is an adverb that means “at or in what place”; “in what situation or position.” When used as a conjunction, *where* means “in a place or situation in which.”

The **silverware** manufactured by my partners are the best in the business.

If you continue to **wear** those boots in the manner you do, they will **wear** quickly.

Where is the next best place to home?

7. weather, whether: *Whether* is a conjunction used to introduce alternative possibilities. *Weather* is a noun meaning “the condition of the atmosphere at any given time and place.” As a verb, *weather* means “to withstand the effects of adverse conditions.”

Tomorrow's **weather** will determine **whether** I will visit the museum.

8. who, which, that: *Which* is a pronoun meaning “what particular one or ones”; “the one or ones previously implied”. *Who* is also a pronoun which means “what or which person or persons”; “the person or persons that”. As a pronoun, *that* means “the one implied, mentioned, or understood”; “the further or less immediate one”. Use *who* or *that* to refer to persons, and not *which*. Additionally, *that* is used to introduce restrictive clauses. *Which* can introduce both restrictive and non-restrictive clauses, yet many writers use *which* exclusively for non-restrictive clauses.

The images **that** have been used within the past two weeks should be left untouched.

The images, **which** have been used within the past two weeks, should be left untouched.

Who designed these images?

9. who, whom: *Who* is used for the subjective case within a sentence. *Whom* is used for the objective case within a sentence.

To **whom** am I speaking?

Who is speaking?

10. who's, whose: *Who's* is a contraction of the phrase “who is.” *Whose* is the possessive form of both *who* and *which*.

Who's the man outside?

Whose guest is outside?

11. wood, would: *Wood* is a noun that means “the tough stuff of trees and shrubs that lies beneath the bark.” *Would* is the past tense of the verb *will*.

I **would** have cut down some more **wood** had I known you were returning so soon.

12. your, you're: *Your* is the possessive form of *you*. *You're* is a contraction of the phrase “you are.”

Finally! **Your** doctor has arrived.

You're behaving in the most wretched manner!

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