



DeYoung Consulting Services

*Helping People Learn up to Their Potential*

English can sometimes be a tricky language. We often misuse words both in speech and writing. While people may not consciously notice when you use words correctly, they are much more likely to take note when you use them incorrectly.

Here are six commonly misused words. Take a look to see if this is a problem area for you:

**Affect/Effect**—*Affect* is usually used as a verb meaning *to influence*. *Effect* is most often used as a noun meaning *result*. *Effect* can also be a verb meaning *to bring about* or *accomplish*.

**Borrow/Lend**—To *borrow* is to receive something on loan. To *lend* is to give something temporarily. A bank loans money to a person. A person borrows money from a bank.

**E.g./i.e.**—*E.g.* means *for example* and is followed by a short list of items. *I.e.* means *in other words* and is followed by a rephrasing of the original statement. Both abbreviations are always followed by commas.

**Fewer/Less**—*Fewer* is used for numbers of things. (I have fewer books than my brother.) *Less* refers to quantity. (I read less than my brother.)

**Farther/Further**—*Farther* refers to distance. *Further* refers to degree. (He drives farther to work than she does. We discussed our options further.)

**It's/Its**—*It's* is the contraction of *it is* or *it has*. *Its* is a possessive pronoun. (It's about to snow. The squirrel built its winter nest.)

A more complete list of misused words is available on the University of Minnesota Web site at <http://www1.umn.edu/urelate/style/language-usage.html#Anchor-58644>. You can improve your writing by printing the list and referring to it often. To encourage you in the process, I'll send a gift card to Starbucks to the first person who sends me three examples of words misused in writing or speech.

May 2006

If you're not confident your training materials are free of misused words, give me a call. I'll happily review them for you.

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DeYoung Consulting Services

*DeYoung Consulting Services provides quality learning experiences for individuals and groups. We develop materials and activities that advance individual, team, and organizational learning. Our work is done with integrity, reliability, and accountability.*

*If you would like to be removed from this list, please send an email to [deyoung4@aol.com](mailto:deyoung4@aol.com) and type "remove" in the subject. Or, just reply to this message.*

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From DeYoung Consulting: Frequently Misused Words

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