Commonly Confused Words – Worksheet 1

Name: Class: Date: Score: / 40

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Exercise 1: Choose the correct word

Complete each sentence with the correct word from the brackets.

Example: I need your ___ (advice / advise). → advice

1. The new law will _____ (affect / effect) thousands of small businesses.
2. My doctor gave me some useful _____ (advice / advise) about sleep.
3. Everyone _____ (accept / except) Daniel arrived on time.
4. These jeans are too _____ (lose / loose); I need a belt.
5. Can you _____ (lend / borrow) me your charger for an hour?
6. She is very _____ (sensible / sensitive) to criticism, so be kind.
7. Prices _____ (rose / raised) sharply last year.
8. There were _____ (fewer / less) people at the concert than we expected.

Exercise 2: Complete with words from the box

Complete the sentences with words from the box. There are two extra words.

WORD BOX

compliment **complement** **stationery** **stationary** **economical** **principle** **historic** **ensure** **besides** **alternative**

9. A small car is more _____ to run than a large one.
10. Please _____ that all the windows are closed before you leave.
11. The office has run out of _____, so we need more paper and envelopes.
12. Winning the championship was a _____ moment for the club.
13. She paid me a lovely _____ on my presentation.
14. I won't lie to my friends – it's a matter of _____.
15. _____ being cheap, the hotel is close to the beach.
16. If the train is cancelled, is there an _____ route?

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Exercise 3: Match the words with their meanings

Match each definition with a word from the box. There are two extra words.

WORD BOX

imply infer persuade convince ensure insure alternate alternative complement compliment

17. to suggest something without saying it directly → _____
18. to reach a conclusion from the evidence or information you have → _____
19. to make someone believe that something is true → _____
20. to make someone decide to do something by giving reasons → _____
21. to protect yourself against financial loss by paying a company → _____
22. to make certain that something happens → _____
23. happening every second time, e.g. every other week → _____
24. another possible choice or option → _____

Exercise 4: Form the correct word

Use the word in capitals to form a word that fits the gap.

Example: It's a very ___ decision. (SENSE) → sensible

25. It's _____ to wear a helmet when you go cycling. (SENSE)
26. This cream is designed for people with _____ skin. (SENSE)
27. The country is going through a period of strong _____ growth. (ECONOMY)
28. Buying food in large packs is more _____ for big families. (ECONOMY)
29. The museum has a collection of _____ documents from the 18th century. (HISTORY)
30. The noise from the motorway was _____; it never stopped for a moment. (CONTINUE)
31. I couldn't concentrate because of the _____ interruptions from my phone, every few minutes. (CONTINUE)
32. Shouting at staff is completely _____ in this company. (ACCEPT)

Exercise 5: Correct the mistakes

Each sentence has one mistake. Rewrite the sentence correctly.

Example: I need some advises. → I need some advice.

33. The traffic was stationery for over an hour.

_____

34. Can I lend your pen for a moment?

_____

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35. Please remember me to call my sister tonight.

36. The medicine had no affect on my headache.

37. I advice you to book your tickets early.

38. He laid on the sofa all afternoon.

39. The government plans to rise taxes next year.

40. Don't loose your passport while you're travelling.

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Answer key – Commonly Confused Words – Worksheet 1

Exercise 1: Choose the correct word

1. **affect**
   'Affect' is the verb meaning 'to have an influence on'.
2. **advice**
   'Advice' is the uncountable noun; 'advise' is the verb.
3. **except**
   'Except' means 'not including'.
4. **loose**
   'Loose' is the adjective meaning 'not tight'.
5. **lend**
   You lend something to someone; you borrow something from someone.
6. **sensitive**
   'Sensitive' means easily upset or hurt.
7. **rose**
   'Rise' has no object; 'raise' needs an object.
8. **fewer**
   Use 'fewer' with countable plural nouns like 'people'.

Exercise 2: Complete with words from the box

9. **economical**
   'Economical' means not using much money or fuel.
10. **ensure**
    'Ensure' means to make certain.
11. **stationery**
    'Stationery' (with -ery) means paper, pens and envelopes.
12. **historic**
    'Historic' means important in history.
13. **compliment**
    A 'compliment' is a kind remark; we say 'pay someone a compliment'.
14. **principle**
    A 'principle' is a moral rule; 'principal' means main or head of a school.
15. **Besides**
    'Besides' means 'in addition to'; 'beside' means 'next to'.
16. **alternative**
    'Alternative' means another possible option.

Exercise 3: Match the words with their meanings

17. **imply**
    The speaker implies; the listener infers.
18. **infer**
    The listener or reader infers meaning.
19. **convince**
    We convince someone of a fact.
20. **persuade**
    We persuade someone to do something.
21. **insure**
    'Insure' is connected with insurance.
22. **ensure**
    'Ensure' means to guarantee a result.
23. **alternate**
    'Alternate' days or weeks means every second one.
24. **alternative**
    An 'alternative' is a different option.

Exercise 4: Form the correct word

25. **sensible**
    'Sensible' means showing good judgement.
26. **sensitive**
    'Sensitive' skin reacts easily to things.
27. **economic**
    'Economic' relates to the economy.
28. **economical**
    'Economical' means saving money.
29. **historical**
    'Historical' means connected with the past; 'historic' means very important.
30. **continuous**
    'Continuous' means without any break.
31. **continual**
    'Continual' means happening again and again, with breaks.
32. **unacceptable**
    The negative prefix un- and the suffix -able give 'unacceptable'.

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Exercise 5: Correct the mistakes

33. **The traffic was stationary for over an hour.**
    'Stationary' (with -ary) means not moving.
34. **Can I borrow your pen for a moment?**
    You borrow something from someone.
35. **Please remind me to call my sister tonight.**
    'Remind someone to do something' means to help them remember.
36. **The medicine had no effect on my headache.**
    'Effect' is the noun: 'have an effect on'.
37. **I advise you to book your tickets early.**
    'Advise' is the verb.
38. **He lay on the sofa all afternoon.**
    The past of 'lie' (rest) is 'lay'; 'laid' is the past of 'lay' (put down).
39. **The government plans to raise taxes next year.**
    'Raise' takes an object (taxes); 'rise' does not.
40. **Don't lose your passport while you're travelling.**
    'Lose' is the verb; 'loose' is an adjective.

Notes for teachers: Start by eliciting the pairs and asking learners to explain the difference in their own words. Then do the exercises in order, because they move from choosing words to forming and correcting them. Typical mistakes include using 'effect' as a verb, confusing 'lend' and 'borrow', and using 'raise' without an object. Spelling errors such as loose/lose and stationary/stationery are also common. As a follow-up, ask pairs to write their own 'one mistake' sentences for classmates to correct.

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