

Affect Versus Effect



When should you use "affect" vs. "effect"? Most of the time "affect" is a verb and "effect" is a noun, but there are exceptions. We have an example, a memory trick, and a cartoon to help you remember when to use "affect" or "effect."

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I get asked whether to use *affect* or *effect* all the time, and it is by far the most requested grammar topic, so I have a few memory tricks to help you remember. Before we get to the memory trick though, I want to explain the difference between the two words.

What Is the Difference Between 'Affect' and 'Effect'?

The majority of the time you use *affect* as a verb and *effect* as a [noun \(https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar/nouns-concrete-abstract-collective-and-compound\)](https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar/nouns-concrete-abstract-collective-and-compound). *Affect* can either mean "to influence" or "to act in a way that you don't feel." *Effect* typically means "a result."

'Affect' and 'Effect' Are Pronounced Differently

The words sound the same to a lot of people, but there is actually a small difference in how they are pronounced.

Effect is pronounced [ih-fekt], almost like it has an I-sound at the beginning.

The main way *affect* is pronounced is [uh-fekt], more like it has an A-sound at the beginning.

When Should You Use 'Affect'?

Affect with an a means "to influence," as in, *The arrows affected Aardvark*, or *The rain affected Amy's hairdo*. *Affect* can also mean, roughly, "to act in a way that you don't feel," as in, *She affected an air of superiority*.

When Should You Use 'Effect'?

Effect has a lot of subtle meanings as a noun, but to me the meaning "a result" seems to be at the core of all the definitions. For example, you can say, "The effect was eye-popping," or "The sound effects were amazing," or

"The rain had no effect on Amy's hairdo."

'Affect' vs. 'Effect' Example Sentences

Here are more examples of the common uses of *affect* and *effect*:

***Effect* as a noun**

Squiggly marveled at the *effect* fishing had on Aardvark's mood.

Aardvark wondered whether the heat was having an *effect* on the fish.

***Affect* as a verb**

Squiggly wished that beans didn't *affect* his stomach so much.

Aardvark's grumpiness *affected* everyone else's mood last night.

'Affect' vs. 'Effect': Common Uses

“Most of the time, *affect* is a verb and *effect* is a noun.”

There are rare instances where the roles are switched, and I'll get to those later, but for now let's focus on the common meanings. This is "Quick and Dirty" grammar, and my impression from your questions is that most people have trouble remembering the basic rules of when to use these words, so if you stick with those, you'll be right about 95% of the time.

Most of the time, *affect* is a verb, and *effect* is a noun; and now we can get to the memory tricks and more examples,

'Affect' vs. 'Effect': The RAVEN Trick

I remember how to use *affect* and *effect* by thinking of a big black raven. A raven? Yes, a raven! Because *raven* has the letters A-V-E-N in it, and those also stand for

Affect: **V**erb **E**ffect: **N**oun

Fix that image of a raven in your mind, and you'll always remember the most common way to use these words. I actually remember the sentence *The craven raven flew down the avenue*, because *craven*, *raven*, and *avenue* all

have the A-V-E-N sequence, and in my mind, the evil raven is flying down the avenue of a German town with those timbered white Bavarian-style houses. I don't know why. I have a wild imagination. Find yours, and really imagine that *affect-verb-effect-noun* raven so you'll always remember it.

word choice

AFFECT

or

EFFECT

