

Easily Confused Verbs

Often, speakers and writers become confused when they use certain pairs of verbs that sound alike or have similar meanings. Especially in formal or business situations, it is important to use these verbs correctly.

Rise and Raise: *Rise* means "to go up." *Raise* means "to lift something." *Raise* is always followed by an object.

Smoke rises from the fire.

Last night, smoke rose from the fire.

Raise the window a little. (*Window* is the object.)

An hour ago, she raised the window.

Lie and Lay: *Lie* means "to rest or recline." *Lay* means "to set or put something down." *Lay* is always followed by an object.

Lie down before dinner.

Yesterday, he lay down before dinner.

He has lain down before dinner every night this week.

Lay the quilt on the bed. (*Quilt* is the object.)

An hour ago, she laid the quilt on the bed.

She had laid it on the sofa earlier.

Teach and Learn: *Teach* means "to instruct." *Learn* means "to gain knowledge or skill." You *teach* someone how to do something. The person *learns* the skill.

Mrs. Randall will teach you how to knit.

Last year, she taught me how to knit.

You will learn how to knit.

Write each word beside its meaning.

lay lie learn raise rise teach

1. _____ to set something down
2. _____ to go up
3. _____ to instruct
4. _____ to lift something
5. _____ to recline
6. _____ to gain skill or knowledge



B Practice

Read each pair of sentences. Then choose the sentence in which the verb is used correctly.

1. A The owner raised the price of his house.
B The owner rose the price of his house.
2. A Sara laid her baby on the changing table.
B Sara lay her baby on the changing table.
3. A I learned myself how to dance from a book.
B I taught myself how to dance from a book.
4. A Audience members rose to their feet at the end of the concert.
B Audience members raised to their feet at the end of the concert.
5. A Michelle is teaching to speak German.
B Michelle is learning to speak German.
6. A Sean's sunburn told us that he had laid in the sun too long.
B Sean's sunburn told us that he had lain in the sun too long.

For each sentence, underline the correct verb in parentheses ().

7. (Lay, Lie) very still until the x-ray has been taken.
8. Will you (teach, learn) us the words to the song?
9. The temperature usually (rises, raises) after noon.
10. Yesterday, we (laid, lay) on the beach for hours.
11. Mr. Gibson has (raised, risen) an interesting question.
12. (Rise, Raise) the picture just a few inches, please.
13. Did you (lay, lie) your jacket over the back of the chair?
14. I am sure that I (lay, laid) the folder right here.
15. The baby (taught, learned) how to walk on his first birthday.

C**Apply**

Read each sentence. If it uses verbs correctly, write *Correct* on the line. If a verb is used incorrectly, rewrite the sentence correctly on the line.

1. My sister learned me how to ride a bike when I was five.

2. We laid in our sleeping bags and looked up at the stars.

3. The landlord says he will rise the rent next month.

4. The lawyer laid the blame on her client's sad childhood.

5. We saw the sun raise beside some pink clouds.

6. The nurse said, "Lie down on the cot and rest."

7. Mrs. Gray will teach a class on figure drawing.

8. We should lie the new area rug in the guest bedroom.

9. The custodian rises the flag every morning.

10. In this class, you will learn how to administer CPR.

11. The wedding dress had laid in the old chest for years.

12. If you raise the price, no one will buy it.

D**Check Up**

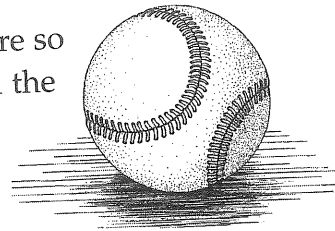
Read each set of sentences. Then choose the sentence that uses verbs correctly.

1. **A** Don't raise their hopes unless you really are going to help.
B Dan raised slowly when his alarm rang.
C Kara is rising two children by herself.
D The committee rose more than ten thousand dollars.
2. **F** Brian will learn his son to fly a kite.
G Maria taught herself how to surf the Internet.
H Will you learn me how to drive a car with a manual transmission?
J Mr. Vargo is learning two classes at the junior college.
3. **A** Don't lay on the bed that I just made.
B My boss just lay some contracts on my desk.
C The tired runner fell and lay on the ground for a few minutes.
D On summer days, I will lay in the hammock and read.
4. **F** When they heard the noise, the birds raised into the air.
G On chilly nights, fog raises over open fields.
H The sun raises in the east and sets in the west.
J Jonah raises tomatoes and beans in his garden.
5. **A** Please rise your voice so I can hear you.
B Will the merchants rise or lower their prices tomorrow?
C Farmers rise early so they can do their morning chores.
D Recent events have risen new problems.
6. **F** Pauline laid the open book on her dresser.
G Zak laid around the house, waiting for the phone to ring.
H Kelly lay her backpack by the door last night.
J As usual, when I laid down, the phone rang.
7. **A** Whoever learned Tina to swing dance did a good job.
B When did you learn the words to that song?
C If you'd like, I will learn you how to make a database.
D The teacher is learning the children important safety rules.
8. **F** Alex found a wallet laying on the ground.
G Phil is going to lay down until he feels better.
H Sally laid the pictures on the table.
J Those bags have laid beside the road for days.

Easily Confused Verbs

It is easy to confuse some pairs of verbs because their meanings are so similar or they sound so much alike. Memorize the meanings and the principal parts of these verbs so you can use the words correctly.

Rise and Raise: *Raise* means "to lift." *Rise* means "to go up."



Present	Past	Past Participle
raise	raised	raised
rise	rose	risen

Set and Sit: *Set* means "to place (something)." *Sit* means "to rest (in a chair)."

Present	Past	Past Participle
sit	sat	sat
set	set	set

Accept and Except: These words are often confused because they sound so much alike. *Accept* means "to take or receive willingly." The principal parts of *accept* follow regular rules. *Except*, in its common use as a preposition, means "other than" or "leaving out."

The baseball team's manager refused to accept defeat.

Everyone except the manager thought the team would lose.

Complete each sentence by writing the principal part described in parentheses.

- (present of *sit*) I like to _____ in the bleachers to watch the game.
- (past of *accept*) Joann _____ her diploma and walked off the stage.
- (past participle of *rise*) The temperature had _____ to 90 degrees by noon.
- (past of *sit*) Erin _____ under the tree and read her book.
- (past participle of *set*) The family had _____ their best china on the table.
- (past of *raise*) Aaron _____ a bucket of water from the old well.
- (present of *accept*) When you _____ a job, you promise to do your best.
- (past of *rise*) The spectators _____ when the judge entered the courtroom.
- (present of *set*) Those noises _____ my teeth on edge.

B**Practice**

Have and Of: Some people run into trouble when they write the verb *have* with a helping verb such as *could*, *would*, or *should*. Because speakers don't always speak clearly, the phrases often end up sounding like *could of*, *would of*, or *should of*, or even *could a*, *would a*, or *should a*. These spellings of the phrases are never correct in formal writing.

Correct: We should have gotten off the freeway at the last exit.

Wrong: We should of gotten off the freeway at the last exit.

For each item, circle the letter of the sentence in which the verb is used correctly.

1. A Gene would of helped us move if he hadn't hurt his back.
B Gene would have helped us move if he hadn't hurt his back.
2. A Everyone except Marty had learned how to ice-skate.
B Everyone accept Marty had learned how to ice-skate.
3. A If you set with your head between your knees, you will feel better.
B If you sit with your head between your knees, you will feel better.
4. A I raised the window, but it fell back down again.
B I rised the window, but it fell back down again.
5. A After Amanda sat the groceries down, she answered the phone.
B After Amanda set the groceries down, she answered the phone.
6. A I except the office of mayor of this great city.
B I accept the office of mayor of this great city.

Complete each sentence by underlining the correct word in parentheses.

7. (Set, Sit) a placecard in front of every plate.
8. Just before the sun (rises, raises), the birds begin to sing.
9. Janice has (sat, set) a bowl of milk out for the stray cat.
10. Please (except, accept) my apology for the misunderstanding.
11. The shipment shouldn't (of, have) been left without a signature.
12. Karl (set, sat) in the doctor's office for over an hour.

C**Apply**

Read each sentence. If you find a verb used incorrectly, rewrite the sentence correctly on the line. If the sentence is written properly, write *Correct* on the line.

1. The seller excepted the offer, so the house is ours!

2. I would of helped you, if I had known you were in trouble.

3. The movers sat the boxes on the dining room floor.

4. The grocery store has risen the prices on their name brand items.

5. I accept the nomination for president of the club.

6. Don't raise my hopes if you aren't going to follow through.

7. You should not of been playing catch inside the house.

8. Driving was made dangerous by the dense fog that had raised.

9. All the kittens accept the small calico have been adopted.

10. The old mansion sets on a hill overlooking the valley.

11. After the children had sat quietly for ten minutes, they became impatient.

12. Our team would a won if we had kicked a field goal.

D**Check Up**

For each item, choose the sentence that is written correctly.

1. **A** The grandfather clock had set in the same spot for thirty years.
B On weekdays, Rita sets her alarm for six o'clock.
C My dog sets by the door and waits for me after work.
D I know I sat my wallet on the nightstand last night.
2. **F** We should of known that it would rain on our picnic.
G If I had left early, we might not of met.
H Dan would have met you at the airport if he had known your flight number.
J I shouldn't a counted on getting a raise.
3. **A** The price of a gallon of milk has risen over the last month.
B Our club has risen over one thousand dollars for local charities.
C Tonight, the moon will raise at ten o'clock.
D A cloud of steam raised above the sidewalk grate.
4. **F** I can't except such an expensive gift from you.
G Nancy had planned for every possibility accept the one that actually happened.
H No one accept you knows my secret.
J This store does not accept credit cards.
5. **A** The wolf's howl raised mournfully into the night air.
B You have risen a son you can be proud of.
C The singer raised her voice to be heard over the orchestra.
D Please help me rise this mirror just a little.
6. **F** Please except this token of our appreciation.
G The maid will do any job except washing the windows.
H This parking meter will not except pennies.
J Julie has been to every state accept Alaska and Hawaii.
7. **A** I shouldn't a read the last pages of the book first.
B Sally could of been working on the project all week.
C I should of ordered a salad instead of a sandwich.
D We couldn't have completed the project on time without your help.
8. **F** Please sit the books on the table by the window.
G Wendy was tired of sitting at a computer all day.
H Setting in the comfortable easy chair, Leo fell asleep.
J The enemies have sat aside their differences and agreed to a compromise.