



## S | NO. 8 IN THE CENTER FOR WRITING AND SPEAKING HANDOUT SERIES

### Affect vs Effect

*Affect and effect have different meanings. They are often confused with each other. It is important to know the difference between these two words because they can change the meaning of your sentence. This handout will help you understand the difference between these two and use them in your writing.*

#### Affect definition:

Affect is a verb that means “to act on and cause a change in someone or something”.

Ex. I do not want school to **affect** my sleep schedule.

Ex. Loud music **affects** my hearing abilities.

#### Effect definition:

Effect is a noun meaning the result of something.

Ex. This medication has multiple side **effects**.

Ex. Studying has a positive **effect** on your grades.

#### Special Exceptions

Similar to other English words, there are some exceptions to the rules. The exceptions are:

1. Effect can be used as a verb meaning “To cause to come into being” or “To accomplish”.  
Ex. The writer's strike **effected** change within the film industry.
2. Affect can be used as a noun meaning “An observable emotional response”  
Ex. Her **affect** did not change after hearing the news.

#### Examples:

- Staying up late might affect your performance tomorrow.
  - In this example, “effect” would not be correct because the performance is being acted on
- The fog created an eerie effect.
  - In this example, “affect” would not be correct because the word “effect” is being used as a noun, something that is being created