

# Difference between Affect and Effect

Knowing the difference between affect & effect can be the difference between looking good & looking bad. Don't risk your credibility! Here's why...



Presenting to an audience, writing a report, or sending an email, there are two schools of thought when it comes to spelling and grammar. The first says that it doesn't matter because people will forgive your minor errors. The other school of thought says that with technology like spell check you should not make silly spelling and grammar mistakes. Our belief is - Don't risk it.

## Your Most Popular Questions Answered on the difference between affect and effect



- AFFECT -

- EFFECT -

### What is an example of affect and effect?

The cloud affects the tree by striking it with lightning. The tree is effected by the lightning because it has been reduced to ash.

Affect is usually a verb meaning "to produce an effect upon," as in "the weather affected his mood." Effect is usually a noun meaning "a change that results when something is done or happens," as in "computers have had a huge effect on our lives." There are exceptions, but if you think of affect as a verb and effect as a noun.

## How do you remember affect and effect?

There are six ways you can remember the difference between affect & effect & begin to choose the correct word:

### 1. RAVEN Technique Use the R.A.V.E.N technique, which is:



- R = Remember
- A = Affect
- V = Verb
- E = Effect
- N = Noun

This only works if you know the difference between a verb & a noun. To understand the difference it is useful to understand that one of the two words is a verb & the other is a noun. The verb is 'affect' & a verb is a doing word, which is similar to run, dance, slide, think, & stand. The noun is 'effect' & a noun is a naming word, which is similar to teacher, cleaner, social worker, footballer, & boy.

### Another way to understand these two words is:

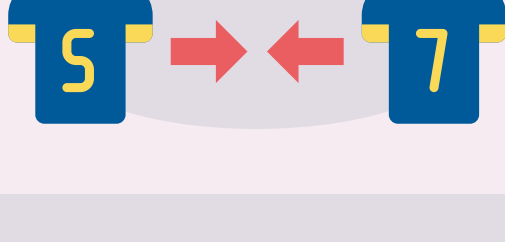
**Affect is a verb:**  
to affect – which means to have influence or have an impact on something.

**Effect is the noun:**  
an effect - which is the result of being affected by something.

### 2. Affect Substitution Method Swap Affect for Another Verb

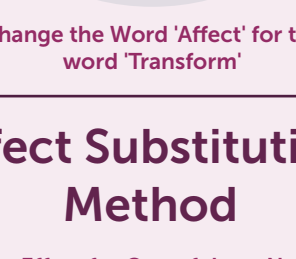
The other way to understand how to choose the correct word of either affect or effect is to substitute affect for another verb. For example:

In this sentence, 'The cloud **affects** the tree by striking it with lightning. The tree is **effected** by the lightning because it has been reduced to ash, you could substitute the word to test if you have chosen the correct word. For example:



- **Original:** The cloud **affects** the tree.
- **Substitute:** The cloud **tickled** the tree - Yes, this works because you have successfully substituted 'affects' for 'tickled', as they are both verbs. Both doing words.
- **Substitute:** 'The people felt the affect of the great storm' - If we change 'affect' for another verb, we get - 'The people felt the jumping of the great storm'. This does not work and so the word we should use in this sentence is 'effect' - 'The people felt the effect of the great storm'.

### Affect Substitution Method



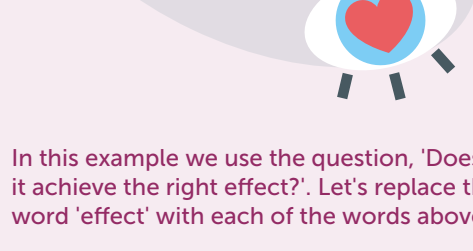
Change the Word 'Affect' for the word 'Transform'

This is a build on the method above, that instead of substituting affect for any verb, try replacing the word with the verb 'transform'. For example:

- **Original:** The cloud **affects** the tree.
- **Substitute:** The cloud **transformed** the tree - Yes, this works because you have successfully substituted 'affects' for 'transformed', and the sentence still makes sense.

### Effect Substitution Method

Swap Effect for One of these Nouns; Outcome, Consequence or Appearance



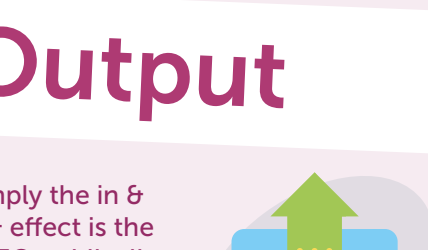
In this example we use the question, 'Does it achieve the right effect?'. Let's replace the word 'effect' with each of the words above:

- **Original:** 'Does it achieve the right effect?'
- **Outcome:** 'Does it achieve the right outcome?' - the sentence still reads well.
- **Consequence:** 'Does it achieve the right consequence?' - a bit clunky but it still works.
- **Appearance:** Does it achieve the right appearance?' - a bit clunky but it still works.

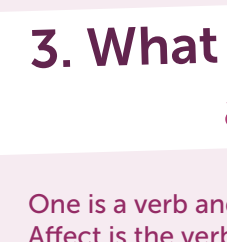
So, to check whether effect is the correct choice of word between affect and effect, replace effect with either Outcome, Consequence or Appearance, and if they still read well, then you made the correct choice. If they don't read well, use affect.

## 'An' or 'the' - Use Effect

If the word before affect or effect is 'an' or 'the', then you are most likely to want to use the word 'effect'. This is because 'an' and 'the' always sit before nouns, and effect is a noun.



## Input and Output

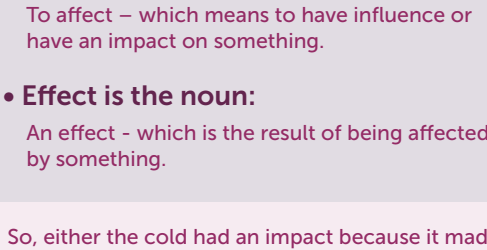


Simply affect & effect is simply the in & the out. Affect is the input & effect is the output. For example, 'The CEO publically praised the Head of HR which affected her very positively <input> & the effect was that she was smiling.' <output>



### 3. What is the difference between affect and effect for dummies?

One is a verb and the other is a noun. Affect is the verb, the doing word, and effect is the noun, the naming word. For example, 'The house was affected by the storm and the effect was that the roof had been blown off.'



### 4. Did the cold affect or effect you?

In this example above the cold can either affect or effect. Remember the above:



- **Affect is a verb:**  
To affect – which means to have influence or have an impact on something.
- **Effect is the noun:**  
An effect - which is the result of being affected by something.

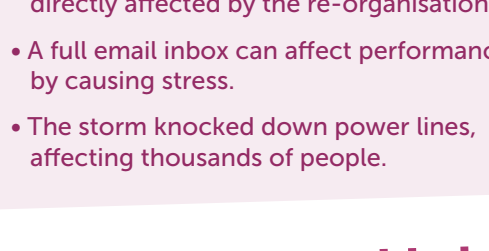
So, either the cold had an impact because it made us cold - affect, and then we felt cold - effect. It's a difficult example because it exposes a flaw in the English language whereby 'Did the cold affect or effect you?' makes it hard to understand each word with this question.

### 5. How do you use effect in a sentence?



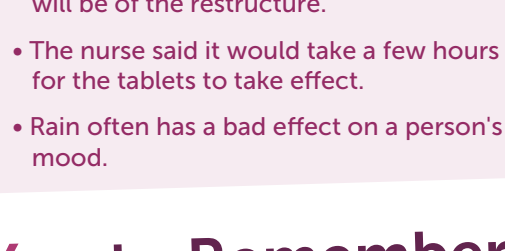
'The reprimand had the desired effect.'

### 6. What are examples of affect? And what are examples of effect?



#### Affect Examples

- Several of my colleagues have been directly affected by the re-organisation.
- A full email inbox can affect performance by causing stress.
- The storm knocked down power lines, affecting thousands of people.



#### Effect Examples

- My team and I are unsure what the effect will be of the restructure.
- The nurse said it would take a few hours for the tablets to take effect.
- Rain often has a bad effect on a person's mood.

## 7. Images to Help You to Remember

These images will help you to remember the difference between affect and effect.

