

“OH NO, YOU DIDN'T!”

The Top 10 Common Mistakes Cheat Sheet

#1: LIKE / AS

- like for comparing nouns
- as for comparing verbs

#2: AFFECT / EFFECT

- affect – verb, to influence
- effect – noun, a result
- other ways to use, more complicated than our purposes here –just try to remember this basic idea

#3: DOUBLE NEGATIVES

- nobody likes a Debbie Downer – only 1 negative word in each sentence!
- most common negative words – no, not
- trick negative words – barely, hardly – follow same rules
- don't get fooled by a contraction – remember the n't is NOT

#4: ACCEPT / EXCEPT

- accept – to receive
- except - to exclude
- ex-boyfriend analogy – You want everyone EXcept your EX-boyfriend at your party

#5: YOUR / YOU'RE

- you're – contraction for you are
- your – a possessive, showing ownership
- when in doubt on which to use? Break down contraction – if YOU ARE does not work, you are (ha) making a mistake

#6: OF / HAVE

- error based on the way we speak – when you say them quickly, it sounds the same
- no tricks, just be aware of it!

#7: THAN / THEN

- than - comparison word
- then - tells time
- an easy trick to remember – *then* tells *when*!

#8: INFORMAL SPELLING

- the SAT is not informal! It is not the place to be cute and this isn't your BFF you're texting! Also, it is not advertising that needs to be catchy!

#9: ITS / IT'S

- 's usually signifies possession – not in this case
- its shows possession
- it's just contraction – do contraction test
- no such thing as its'!
- when in doubt, do the contraction test – does *it is* fit?

#10: MIXED METAPHORS

- metaphor – a comparison where you say that one thing IS something else
- great in descriptive writing if it's a sensible comparison between two things
- stick to 2 items to compare – any more can easily create a mixed metaphor