

Name _____

Date _____

Troublesome Words 1

Even good spellers and writers need practice with these troublesome words:

affect/effect

can/may

Affect is almost always a verb. It means “to have an effect on.”

Maria wondered whether the amount of water in the jug would *affect* the experiment. **Synonyms:** modify, change, alter, influence, disturb

Effect is almost always a noun. It means “outcome, result.”

Too much watering had a negative *effect* on the plant.

Synonyms: conclusion, end, consequence, reaction

Circle the correct word in each sentence below.

1. When we heard Esteban laughing, we realized that the new puppy must have had a positive **affect/effect** on the shy boy.
 2. If there are too many people working in the computer room, it will **affect/effect** the speed of the computers.
 3. The **affect/effect** of the new mall was an increase in our town spending.
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Can means “to be able to.” Use *can* in sentences about ability. Do not use *can* when asking permission.

Melinda *can* do the most pull-ups in our class.

INCORRECT: *Can* I have a turn now?

May is used when the sentence asks for permission or suggests possibility.

May I have a look at your socks?

Circle the correct word in each sentence below.

4. **Can/May** we stay to watch the credits after the movie ends?
5. Eileen is the only student who **can/may** complete her 12 times tables.
6. You **can not/may not** borrow my pen.

CHALLENGE Use the words *affect*, *effect*, *can*, and *may* in a paragraph about a topic of your choice. Have a partner edit you for correctness.

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Troublesome Words 2

Even good spellers and writers need practice with these troublesome words:

learn/teach

let/leave

Learn is when you receive knowledge.

I want to *learn* how to play the trombone.

Synonyms: understand, uncover, comprehend, grasp

Teach is when you give knowledge.

On Mondays we visit preschool classes to *teach* colors and shapes.

Synonyms: instruct, educate, train, advise, guide

You Try: Circle the correct word in each sentence below.

1. Ms. Vergara asked me to **learn/teach** the first graders about hallway safety.
 2. My aunt applied to medical school to **learn/teach** how to be a doctor.
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Let means "allow."

Most bus drivers will *let* you sit next to your friends on long trips.

Synonyms: enable, permit, approve

Leave as a verb means "to go out of or away from."

If you *leave* the onions out too long, the whole kitchen will smell.

You Try: Circle the correct word in each sentence below.

3. "Please, **let/leave** me alone for five minutes," requested my sister.
4. I opened the door to **let/leave** the dog inside when it began to rain.
5. It got so windy that finally I had to **leave/let** the kite string go!
6. **Let/Leave** the water alone and it will boil more quickly.

CHALLENGE Use the words *learn* and *teach* in one sentence. Repeat the activity for *let* and *leave*.

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Troublesome Words 3

Even good spellers and writers need practice with these troublesome words:

affect/effect

can/may

learn/teach

let/leave

After completing the lessons on the above words, review the differences between the words in each pair. Then circle the correct boldfaced words in the dialogue below.

Mr. Alvarez: Today we are going to **learn / teach** about the sun. First, let's see what we know about the sun.

Geoff: I know it's a star!

Mr. Alvarez: Good, Geoff. What else do we know?

Lori: Are you going to **let / leave** us go outside and look at the sun?

Mara: Yes, please! **Can / May** we go outside?

Mr. Alvarez: Okay, Okay, I promise that once I get to **learn / teach** you a little about the sun, we will go outside. But first you must tell me what you already know about this bright star.

Sam: Well, our third grade teacher was going to **learn / teach** us about the sun, but then it rained.

Mr. Alvarez: [laughs] Did anyone else ever **learn / teach** you about the sun?

Sam: I read that it will **affect / effect** your eyes if you look at it for too long.

Mr. Alvarez: Good one! That is true. Does anyone know what **affect / effect** the sun has on skin?

June: It makes you tan. That's one **affect / effect**.

Mr. Alvarez: Yes, wear suntan lotion! What else **can / may** the sun do?

Lori: If you **let / leave** a piece of chocolate out in the sun too long it will melt!

Mr. Alvarez: True—and you'll have a mess!

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Troublesome Words 4

Angela: If we wear sunglasses, **can / may** we look at the sun?

Mr. Alvarez: You should never look directly at the sun. It is too strong for your eyes. And be sure to wear suntan lotion to protect your skin, too. We do not want to have any negative **affects / effects** from this powerful star.

Lori: I **can / may** share my lotion with the class. It's in my backpack.

Mr. Alvarez: Thank you, Lori. Now I think you all have enough information and **can / may** do your next activity. Everyone line up for the door. We're heading out closer to the sun!

CHALLENGE Write five more lines of dialogue for the above conversation. Begin at the point when Mr. Alvarez takes his class outside. Use the words learn, teach, leave, let, may, can, affect, and effect.