

Word for Word

Affect or effect?

Even though *affect* and *effect* can both be used as verbs or nouns, *affect* is often used as a verb and *effect* as a noun.

That is, *affect* is most often used as a verb to mean “to act on and cause a change in,” “to cause illness in,” “to produce an emotional response in,” and “to influence” someone or something.¹ If used as a verb, *effect* means “to cause to come into being”² or “to accomplish.”³



Example

- Early screening in high-risk patients positively **affects** mortality from breast cancer.

Most often used as a noun, *effect* means “something that inevitably follows as an antecedent, such as a cause or agent.”² As a noun, *affect* is used in psychological jargon to describe the facial expressions, gestures, postures, and vocal intonations that accompany an emotion.¹

Example

- Early screening in high-risk patients has a positive **effect** on mortality from breast cancer.

You can remember the common uses of affect and effect by the mnemonic *affect for action; effect for event*.

Bibliography

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2. Effect. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/effect>. Accessed November 13, 2020.
3. 'Affect' vs. 'Effect'. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/affect-vs-effect-usage-difference>. Accessed November 13, 2020.

--Ashli Villarreal

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