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. If used as a verb, effect means “to cause to come into being” or “to accomplish.”

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.” As a noun, affect is used in psychological jargon to describe the facial expressions, gestures, postures, and vocal intonations that accompany an emotion.

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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