

Effects or Affects?

**Affect** is usually a verb, and it means to impact or change.

**Effect** is usually a noun, an effect is the *result* of a change.

There are, however, some exceptions to this, so if you are unsure, please check

1. **When to Use Affect**

**Affect** means to influence or to produce a change in something. It is a verb.

For example:

Drinking will **affect** your ability to drive.

Difficulties at home **affected** Tina’s performance in school.

**TIP! Remember this mnemonic: A is for Action. Verbs are about action. Affect starts with an A, so it’s a verb.**

**Examples in your text:**

To avoid ecological issues, scientists and governing agencies consider how sustainable development **affects** the environment and its place in deciding future environmental issues (Bright Hub, 2017).

According to Keegan (2014) an unarmed soldier was quoted as saying “and we could do nothing to help them; Dunham was crying quietly beside me, and all the men were **affected** by the piteous cries”.

1. **When to Use Effect**

**Effect** is a noun, and it means the result of a change. So, if an event *affects* your life, you will feel the event’s *effect*.

For example:

The **effect** of the tornado was devastating.

You’ll feel the **effect** of the medication in the next twenty minutes.

**TIP! Sometimes, it’s helpful to think of effect as “end result” - it’s an outcome of a thing. The phrase “cause and effect” reiterates how it’s a consequence (the cause influenced the effect).**

**Examples in your text:**

Climate change may actually benefit some plants by lengthening growing seasons and increasing carbon dioxide. Yet other **effects** of a warmer world, such as more pests, droughts, and flooding, will be less benign (National Geographic, 2019).

And here’s an example of how **both** words might fit into a single sentence:

The most common side **effects** of antibiotics **affect** the digestive system (NHS Choices, 2018).

**Recap: When to Use Affect or Effect**

Let’s recap how and when to use which word:

Use **affect** as the verb in a sentence when you’re talking about producing change or making a difference. For example, a new discovery can **affect** a scientific theory, and failing a test can **affect** someone’s mood.

**Synonyms of affect include:** alter, change, influence, modify, and impact (the verb version).

Use **effect** as the noun in a sentence when it is the outcome of an event or situation that created a change. For example, you can feel the **effects** of a cold or an earthquake, and the sun coming out can have a positive **effect** on your mood.

**Synonyms of effect include**: result, repercussion, consequence, outcome, aftermath, and the noun version of impact.

Finally, a tip that may help you to remember is known as **The Raven Trick!**

Why a raven? Well, it includes the letters A-V-E-N in it, and those also stand for

**A**ffect: **V**erb              **E**ffect: **N**oun

Fix that image of a raven in your mind, and you’ll always remember the most common way to use these words.

