One word or two?

**Already and All ready**

*Already* is an adverb meaning *something that has happened before.*

   I am *already* at the mall.

*All ready* is an adjective that refers to a *group who is prepared.*

   We are *all ready* to leave.

**Awhile and A while**

*Awhile* is an adverb meaning *for a short time.*

   I guess we can stay *awhile* longer.

*A while* is a paired article and noun meaning *period of time.*

   We stayed at the concert for *a while.*

**A lot and Allot**

*A lot* is always spelled as two words and means *many.*

   You can put *a lot* of marshmallows in your mouth.

*Allot* is a transitive verb that means *assign or designate.*

   We will *allot* you two cars for your trip.

**All right and NOT Alright**

*All right* can be an adjective that mean *yes or OK.*

   I’m *all right.*

*All right* can also be an adverb meaning *satisfactory.*

   The dinner was *all right.*

*Alright* is not a currently valid English word. Do not use it.

**Anyone and Any one**

*Anyone* is a pronoun meaning *any person at all.*

   *Anyone* who can explain the meaning of life is a genius.

*Any one* is a paired adjective and noun meaning *a specific item in a group.*

   *Any one* of those people could have killed him.

**Anyway and Any way**

*Anyway* is an adverb meaning *in any case or nonetheless.*

   I told him not to, but he saw the movie *anyway.*

*Any way* means *any particular course, direction, or manner.*

   *Any way* you go might lead to danger.

**Maybe and May be**

*Maybe* is an adverb meaning *perhaps.*

   *Maybe* we should wait until the rain stops.

*May be* is a future form of *be.*

   I *may be* our last chance at winning the game.
Some More Complex Words:

**Lay and Lie**
The verb *lay* means *put* and like that verb requires an object. If you are not sure of when to use *lay* try substituting the word with *place* or *put*.

- We must *lay* our cards on the table. (We must *put* our cards on the table.)
- She *laid* the octopus in the pot. (She *placed* the octopus in the pot.)

The word *lie* means *be reclined* or *be located* and does not take an object. The past of the verb *lie* is *lay*, just as with the present form of the verb *lay*.

- If you are tired you should *lie* down and relax.
- Every day, I *lie* on my sofa after lunch.
- Abandoned flying saucers were *lying* in the desert.
- Yesterday, the cat *lay* in the sun, charging itself for another busy night.
- The papers have *lain* on the desk for several days.

With closely related meanings and overlapping forms, the verbs *lay* and *lie* are probably the two most frequently confused words in English. Typically, people will use *lay* and *laying* when they need *lie* and *lying*. Adding to the confusion is the second meaning of the *lie*, namely, saying something that isn’t true. In this meaning *lie* is a regular verb (lie, lied, lied).

**Remember** this helpful hint:

Only hens can lay on a couch (i.e. lay eggs).

People must always lay *something somewhere* (e.g. lay a baby in a crib, lay a sick dog on a couch, or lay one’s books on the table)

**Which and That and Who**

When *that* introduces a relative clause, the clause is often restrictive, that is, essential to the complete meaning of the sentence. In *The keys that I lost last month have been found*, the keys referred to a particular set. Without the *that* clause, the sentence *The keys have been found*, would be vague and probably puzzling.

The relative pronoun *that* represents the preceding noun and introduces an essential clause describing that noun.

- Many of the workers *that* built the pyramids died while working.
- The negotiator made an offer *that* was very attractive to the union.

The relative pronoun *that* is sometimes omitted when it is used as an object.

- The garage *(that)* we take our car to is very reliable.
- The films *(that)* Chaplin made have become classics.

*That* can act as a conjunction. When this occurs, *that* is often omitted, especially when a dependent clause begins with a personal pronoun (he, she, etc.) or a proper name (Sally, John, etc.).

- She said *(that)* they would arrive in separate cars.

The relative pronoun *which* represents the preceding noun and introduces a non-essential clause describing that noun.

- Mr. Murphy’s favourite hat, *which* I rescued from the sinking ship, now sits gathering dust in one of his many closets.
- Humber College, *which* has North America’s only comedy diploma program, is located near Pearson International Airport.

The relative pronoun *who* represents the preceding noun when it refers to a human being.

- She is the only one of the managers *who* can speak Japanese fluently.

The Writing Centre
Department of English
Exercise

1) Anyone vs. Any one
   I won’t pick just _________ to be my wife.

2) Maybe vs. May be
   We _________ in trouble.

3) Already vs. All ready
   I ________ ate lunch today.

4) That vs. Which vs. Who
   Tom, ______ killed my dog, isn’t a nice person.

5) Awhile vs. A while
   His speech went on for ________.

6) Any way vs. Anyway
   I am going to go to the store ________.

7) Lay vs. Lie
   Go and ______ down.

8) Lay vs. Lie
   Go and _____ the papers on my desk.

9) A lot vs. Allot
   I have ______ of money.

10) That vs. Which vs. Who
    The car ______ rolled down the hill crashed into a tree.