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## Oops!

## Do I Do That?

Adviser  
vs.  
Advisor

While both words have the same meaning, *adviser* is preferred.

When a word has more than one spelling (adviser/advisor, ambiance/ambience, etc.), the preferred spelling is often whichever one comes first alphabetically.

YES:

"My adviser always had a unique ambience about him."

NO:

"My advisor always had a unique ambience about him."

**kelcilynn.com**

584 Castro Street #267

San Francisco, CA

94114

(415) 378-8239

info@kelcilynn.com

www.kelcilynn.com

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**Less vs. Fewer**

One of the biggest pet peeves of many editors – and, similarly, one of the most common mistakes among writers – is the incorrect use of *less* and *fewer*.

Despite what audiences may hear or read in the mainstream media, there is, in fact, a major difference between *less* and *fewer*. According to [A Writer's Reference](#) (Sixth Edition) by Diana Hacker:

- *Fewer* refers to items that can be counted.
- *Less* refers to items that cannot be counted.

On the kelcilynn.com Web site, for example, visitors will notice specific rates for "100 pages or *fewer*." *Fewer* people than last year may now be living on a nearby street; *fewer* pets are being adopted because of the economy. These sentences are correct because the items to which *fewer* refers can be counted: pages, people, pets.

Similarly, my sister may want *less* sugar in her coffee; the boys had *less* fun at summer camp this year; and little Abby is becoming *less* afraid of the dark as she gets older.

**Document Formatting**

Having problems making those last two lines fit onto the first page of a document? Can't think of any other way to make the text fit without altering the margins too much?

If you absolutely must make text fit into a specified area, try changing the font size to an "in between" option. In Microsoft Word, you can type "10.5," "11.5," etc., into the toolbar that shows what font size you are using. Even though those options won't come up in the drop-down menu, they are still available.

**Proper Use of "Unique"**

*Unique*: Being the only one; being without a like or equal

*Unusual*: Uncommon, rare

*Unique* and *unusual* are often used interchangeably – and incorrectly. Describing something as *unique* means that there is no other item like it. Describing something as *unusual* means that it is uncommon and, often, a bit strange – but not the only one of its kind.

Similarly, another common mistake – describing something as *very unique* – only furthers the misuse. If something is indeed one-of-a-kind, it can't logically be described as *very one-of-a-kind*.

**Nifty Word of the Month**

On May 30, 2008, 13-year-old Sameer Mishra, an eighth grader from West Lafayette, Indiana won the 2008 National Spelling Bee with the following word:

**guerdon**, *noun*:

something that one has earned or gained: a reward, recompense, requital (pronunciation: hard *g*, rhymes with *burden*)

(Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, June 30, 2008)

**Need a Thesaurus?**

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