

“Effect” or “Affect”

Many teachers have asked for help with the use of “Effect/Affect”. Students have a difficult time understanding which to use in their problem statements and even in a hypothesis. It is one of the most common errors judges find while reading reports.

“Effect” is most commonly used as a noun to refer to the consequence or result of some activity. The problem statement, “What are the Effects of Aged Compost on Bean Plant Growth?” uses “effects” as a noun to refer to the result of growing beans with different ages of compost. There is often a noun determiner (a, an, or the) before effect.

“Affect” is most commonly used as a verb to describe a change to something else. For instance, the problem statement “Does the Age of the Compost Affect the Growth of Bean Plants?” uses “affect” as the verb describing a change to the bean plants. Sometime the presence of a verb helper before the word “affect” can be a clue.

There are some exceptions to these explanations; but only in rare cases. They are not likely to show up in the problem statement. So, remember, if you need a noun, use “effect.” If you need a verb use “affect.”

Also, an English teacher can give you assistance with this as well.

Good luck! We hope the effect of all the hard work on your project will affect the judges in a positive way!