Affect vs Effect
While these words sound very similar, their meanings and usages differ, and using the wrong one can change the meaning of your sentence into something you didn’t intend.

Identifying Affect and Effect
This distinction can get tricky. Let’s start with a simple way to think about it. If you are using a verb, you probably want affect. If you are using a noun, you probably want effect.

Do you mean that something influenced or impacted something else? You probably want affect. Her explanation affected me. The results of this influence, the aftereffects, are just that: effects. Her explanation had an effect on me.

You might try this mnemonic to help you remember: A as in Affect refers to Actions; E as in Effect refers to the End result.

Exceptions to the Rules
The above explanation, although useful, is a bit of an oversimplification. Sometimes, affect can be a noun and effect can be a verb. For example, if someone has inappropriate affect, they tend to laugh or smile at very sad times. Or, if a counselor works with that person, and the person’s behavior changes for the better, the counselor has brought about change in that person’s behavior and has therefore effected positive change.

This might seem like it defies the rules we explained above, but when we look harder, it doesn’t, necessarily. When affect is a noun, it generally refers to displays of emotion, ways we express the condition of being affected. When effect is a verb, it refers to the process of getting to the end result or the act of creating an effect.

Practice Sentences from Purdue OWL
Fill in the blank with Affect or Effect (answer key below Conclusion and Sources Referenced)

1. Wars _____________ everybody, and their destructive _______________ last for generations.
2. Television has a strong _______________ on public opinion.
3. My mood can _____________ my thinking, too.
4. I see that you're trying to _____________ apathy, but I know that you really do care.
5. Falling on my head had a bad _______________ on my memory.
6. His years of smoking have negatively _____________ed his health.
7. This plan will surely _______________ significant improvements in our productivity.
8. The patient shows normal _______________ and appears to be psychologically stable.
9. The principal's new rules _______________ the school.
10. Supply and demand have a direct ________________ on the prices of commodities.
11. The _______________ of the speech was visible on the faces of the sleeping audience.
12. He's just trying to seem cool; his indifference is completely _______________ed.
13. We may never know the full _______________ of the radiation leak.
14. The early frost will _______________ the crops.
15. What kind of _______________ can this quiz have on your dinner tonight?

**Conclusion**
While telling the difference between these two words may seem confusing at first, take a second to slow down and think through what you mean to say. While these homonyms might affect your mood, if you take your time and think through the definitions listed on this worksheet, you’ll be able to create your intended effect!

**References Consulted**
Answer Key

1. Wars affect everyone, and their destructive effects last for generations.
2. Television has a strong effect on public opinion.
3. My mood can affect my thinking, too.
4. I see that you’re trying to affect apathy, but I know that you really do care.
5. Falling on my head had a bad effect on my memory.
6. His years of smoking have negatively affected his health.
7. This plan will surely effect significant improvements in our productivity.
8. The patient shows normal affect and appears to be psychologically stable.
9. Slim tried to effect an escape through the air ducts.
10. Supply and demand have a direct effect on the prices of commodities.
11. The effect of the speech was visible on their faces.
12. He was just trying to seem cool; his indifference is completely affected.
13. We may never know the full effect of the radiation leak.
14. The early frost will affect the crops.
15. What kind of effect will this quiz have on your dinner tonight?