26 Commonly confused nouns: *effect*, *influence* and *impact*

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

1 a Changes to the exam format could have a serious influence on candidates.
  b Changes to the exam format could have a serious effect on candidates.
2 a It is difficult to assess the impact of the disaster on tourism.
  b It is difficult to assess the extent of the disaster on tourism.

An *influence* is something which causes people to think or behave in a different way:
We need to learn more about the ***influence of*** *violent computer games* ***on*** *young people.*
Our experiences ***have*** *a huge* ***influence on*** *our personality.*

An *effect* is what happens to someone or something as a result of something else:
Research has shown the harmful ***effects of*** *stress* ***on*** *the mother and unborn baby.*
The new resort has ***had*** *a beneficial* ***effect on*** *local businesses.* (not ~~*effect to*~~)
☆ Remember, *effect* is a noun. The verb form is *affect*:
Homes on the west coast were most ***seriously affected by*** *the hurricane.*

An *impact* is a powerful effect of something, especially something new, on a person or situation:
We need to look at the environmental ***impact of*** *the new dam.*
Recent advances have ***had*** *a massive* ***impact on*** *the personal computer industry.*

The word *consequences* is also used to talk about the results, often bad, of an action:
Children need to be taught about ***the consequences of*** *doing wrong.*
He believes that the 24–7 society ***has*** *negative* ***consequences for*** *family life.*

2 Correct the mistake below.



We're very worried about ..... .

3 Are these sentences right or wrong? Correct those which are wrong.

1 The working environment can have an effect in the health of the workforce.
2 Water pollution has a particularly harmful influence on fish.
3 We see the impact of religion on dress and customs.
4 The new regulations will have a huge impact on the computer industry.
5 Many people are concerned about the efforts of violent films.
6 Celebrities have to be aware of the influence they make on young people.
7 Alcoholism can have a devastating affect on family life.
8 What is the social impact of such a project?

LIVEWORKSHEETS