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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.

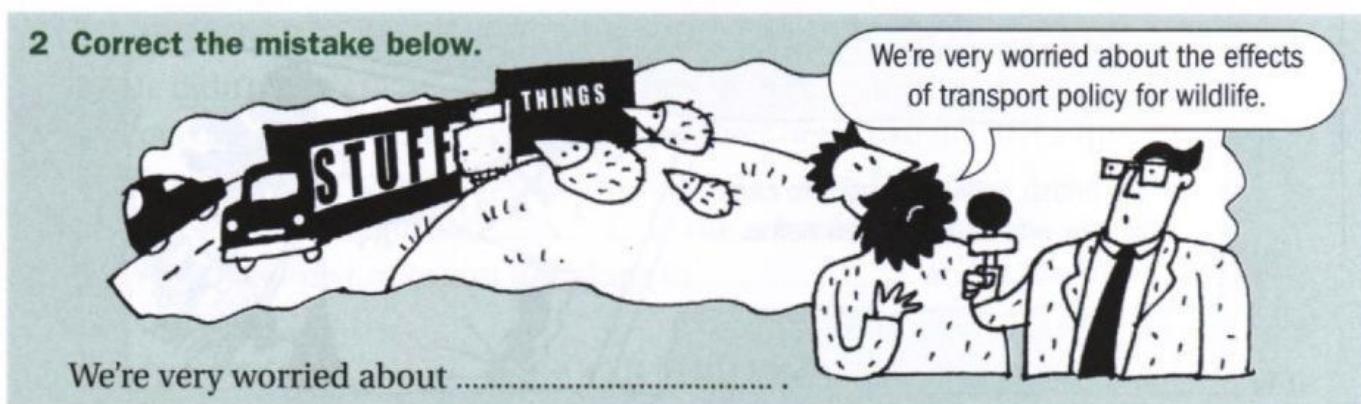
Recent advances have had a massive impact on the personal computer industry.

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.



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?