

# 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?