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