Tricks to Remembering Commonly Confused Words

Affect/Effect
Affect = To change; Effect = A result
☼ If an action is being described, use “a.” (Exception: to “effect” change)

Lose/Loose
Lose = misplace; Loose = not tight
☼ Think of loose shoes as having loops.

Between/Among:
Between = comparing two things; Among = comparing three plus things
☼ Picturing yourself standing between two trees in your yard is easy, but try imagining yourself between the trees in Stanley Park. You would be among them!
☼ I have a hard time choosing between Richard II and Richard III.
☼ Among A Winter’s Tale, Measure for Measure, and Romeo & Juliet, I would choose Measure for Measure.

Principal/Principle:
Principal = main; Principle = rule
☼ Think of the principal as your pal.

Then/Than:
Then = time; Than = comparison
☼ Think of then meaning when

Who/Whom:
Who = subjective pronoun (the pronoun that perform the action);
Whom = objective pronoun (the pronoun that has the action performed on it)
☼ That doesn’t help much. Here’s a trick – if you could replace the “who/whom” with “them” or “him” (or “her”, of course, but think of “him” because it ends in an “m” like “whom”), the correct word is “whom”.
☼ Example: The investigator wants to know who was involved (She, he, or they were involved, so use “who”).
☼ Example: The investigator wants to know on whom the joke was pulled (the joke was pulled on him, her, or them, so use “whom”).

Whose/Who’s:
Whose = ownership; Who’s = contraction of “who is” or “who has”

Your/You’re:
Your = ownership; You’re = contraction of “you are.”

Whether/Weather:
Whether = which of the two; Weather = climate
☼ Heather likes the weather!
Too/Two/To:
Too = more than enough
☼ Too has too many o’s!
Two = a number;
☼ Two = the owl’s telephone number
To = all other meanings (often location)
☼ Think of “go” and “to” (location)

Alot/A lot:
Alot is not a word!

Could of:
Should be could have.

Aloud/Allowed:
Aloud = out loud; Allowed = permission
☼ When something is loud, it is aloud!

Compliment/Complement:
Compliment = a nice thing to say; Complement = to make complete
☼ I like receiving compliments.

Dessert/Desert:
Dessert = cake, pie, etc; Desert = a hot, dry place with cacti, or, to leave someone alone
☼ Most people would take seconds on dessert (2 s’s), but would only visit the desert once (1 s).

Hear/Here:
Hear = what you do with your ears; Here = all other meanings
☼ Hear has the word ear right in it.

Roll/Role:
Roll = turning over; Role = a part
☼ Roll = turning over twice (2 l’s)

Which/Witch:
Which = a question/decision; Witch = a magical lady with a broomstick
☼ A person can itch; a pronoun can’t.

Their/There/They’re:
Their = ownership.
☼ Think heir.
There = points out something, or indicates location.
☼ Think here.
They’re = contraction of “they are.”