

## Communication 4312 -- Lie/Lay and Sit/Set

The verbs that give everyone the most trouble are lie/lay, sit/set, affect/effect, lend/loan and proved/proven.

Lie/lay: The principal parts are lie/lay/lain/lying and lay/laid/laid/laying. To lie is intransitive, meaning that it cannot take an object. To lay is transitive, meaning that it must take an object. Here are examples of correct usage:

She was lying on the sofa.  
She lay down to take a nap.  
She laid the book on the table.

Lie and lay figure in many colloquialisms. It's the lie of the ball and the lay of the land. Laying by is a farming term.

Don't confuse these words with the verb to lie, meaning to make a false statement. The principal parts are lie/lie/lie/lying. Don't use this lie unless you mean it and are able to prove it. To lie, meaning to tell a falsehood, is most derogatory.

The flowers that you get in Hawaii are a lei (singular) or leis (plural).

Sit/set: The principal parts are sit/sat/sat/sitting and set/set/set/setting. Sit is intransitive. Set is transitive. Examples of correct usage:

She sat down at the piano and began to play.  
She set the bottle on the mantel.

Affect/effect: Affect is a verb. Effect can be a noun or a verb. Usually it is a noun. Examples:

Don't let her situation affect you.  
What are the effects of her action?

When effect is a verb, it means to bring about, cause to occur, as in to effect a settlement.

Lend/loan: Use lend as a verb and loan as a noun. The principal parts of lend are lend/lent/lent/lending.

Proved/proven. Use proved as a verb, proven as an adjective. The principal parts of verb are prove/proved/proved/proving.

A proofreader reads proofs, but the verb to prove should be used to explain that the reader had proved type that has been set (not proofed).

■ David McHam