Sleight vs. Slight

Because they are homophones or words that sound alike but have different spellings, meanings, or origins, sleight and slight are often misused or interchanged by some writers. Spell checks would not be effective when these terms are mixed up but are not misspelled. This post will help you determine how to properly used these words so you can use them effectively in your writing.

The term sleight is commonly used as a noun which refers to “the use of dexterity or cunning, especially so as to deceive.” It is often seen as part of the phrase sleight of hand meaning “manual dexterity, typically in performing tricks” or “a cleverly executed trick or deception.”

Tories accused of ‘sleight of hand’ on manifesto grammar schools data

BBC

“So when the chance of a penalty shot comes your way, and your pal has the ball in his grasp to take it, a bit of sleight of hand is needed.” “His family moved to Chicago, and it was here that Anderson was introduced to sleight of hand magic.”

The Star

“This marketing sleight-of-hand partially obscures the fact that the iPhone 8 and the iPhone 8 Plus both cost $50 more than their predecessors did.”

Fortune

On the other hand, the word slight is more commonly used as an adjective meaning “small in degree or inconsiderable” It may also mean “not sturdy and strongly built” when referring to to persons or their build.”

State sees slight increase in cougar hunting permits

The Park Record
Sleight vs. Slight

KTXS Forecast: Warm with slight rain chances
KTXS

“There are also concerns over his slight frame.”
Heavy.com

However, it may also be used as a verb meaning “to insult someone by treating or speaking of them without proper respect or attention.”

Russia, Feeling Slighted by Trump, Seeks a Reset
New York Times

The Worst Emmy Snubs And Slights In History, From ‘Star Trek’ To Elisabeth Moss
Newsweek

Standing Rock Sioux chairman: ‘I was slighted. I was disrespected.’
Washington Post

Now that we have differentiated between the meanings and uses of sleight and slight, you can be more confident when deciding which of these two to use in your writing. Remember that sleight or sleight of hand can help you become successful because you can take advantage of your dexterity while you use slight to describe things that are insignificant to you.