

Commonly Confused Words	What They Mean	Example Sentence
Advice	(noun) – guidance or recommendations	The advice was followed carefully.
Advise	(verb) – to give guidance/recommendations	We advise you to book early.
Adverse	(adjective) – something that is negative/harmful	Adverse weather conditions prevent travel.
Averse	(adjective) – dislike/disagree with something strongly	I am averse to driving at rush hour.
Affect	(verb) to influence something	The loss has affected him on a personal level.
Effect	(noun) a result or consequence	It had an unintended effect on his health.
Alternate	(adjective) every other	I work alternate shifts.
Alternative	(adjective) another possibility	I have only two alternatives.
Altogether	(adverb) – completely/totally	He was altogether dissatisfied.
All together	(phrase) all in the same place or all at the same time	We entered the room all together.
Appraise	(verb) assess the value/quality of something	My employer has appraised my work.
Apprise	(verb) to inform	He saw no reason to apprise me of the result.
Complement	(verb) add to something to improve it	Your hat complements your scarf.
Compliment	(verb) to give praise or admiration	I compliment you on your dress sense.

Continual	(adjective) to happen frequently	There is continual disruption on the motorway.
Continuous	(adjective) to happen without stopping	The continuous crying of the baby kept me up all night.
Council	(noun) administrative body	The council has decreased its budget.
Counsel	(verb) to give advice or guidance	I have received wise counsel.
Councillor	(noun) person who works for/is a member of a council	The local councillor has promised to find extra money to fix the pot-holes.
Counsellor	(noun) person who supports people with psychological issues	My counsellor tells me my condition has improved.
Criterion	(noun singular) a thing which something is judged by	The most important criterion for entry is that applicants must hold a current driving license.
Criteria	(noun plural) things which something is judged by	The marking criteria for the exam are very complex.
Discrete	(adjective) individually separate or distinct	The application form has seven discrete sections.
Discreet	(adjective) careful/not attract attention	I need a discreet word with my personal tutor.
Definitive	(adjective) decisive with authority	This is the definitive study on the subject.
Definite	(adjective) certain or sure	I haven't made any definite plans yet.

Desert	(noun) place with lots of sand and no water	The desert covers an area of 250 square miles.
Dessert	(noun) ice cream and cake	The chef makes award-winning desserts.
Draw	(verb) make a picture with a pencil	I love to draw people's faces.
Drawer	(noun) a place to keep clothes	My sock drawer is full.
Elicit	(verb) to draw out a reaction, answer, response from someone	We need to elicit the views of the local community.
Illicit	(adjective) forbidden or a strong disapproval of something	The illicit sale of alcohol is a problem in some communities.
Imply	(verb) indicate something but not say it directly	I did not wish to imply you were untrustworthy.
Infer	(verb) to work something out through reasoning	I infer from your face that you don't want to be here.
Impractical	(adjective) not sensible/suitable	Your outfit is impractical, given the weather.
Impracticable	(adjective) impossible to do	The renovation project proved impracticable, and was eventually abandoned.
Its	(possessive pronoun) belongs to it	The dog licked its paw.
It's	(contraction) it is	It's raining outside.
Less	(Adverb) not as much (use for uncountable nouns, eg less rain)	There was less opposition than expected.
Fewer	(Adverb) not as many (use with countable nouns, eg fewer apples)	Fewer cars are on the road due to adverse conditions.

Officious	(adjective) asserting authority or interfering and trying to dominate	The head of the company was an officious and annoyed everyone.
Official	(adjective) having been approved by an authoritative body	My official job title is 'Vice-Principal'.
Practice	(noun) training/repeating something to get better	Practice is essential if you want to get better.
Practise	(verb) to train/repeat to improve	You need to practise more regularly.
Precede	(verb) to go before something	Take care to read the sections that precede the recipes.
Proceed	(verb) to continue with something as planned	Please proceed with the arrangements.
Prescribe	(verb) to recommend with knowledge/authority	I want the doctor to prescribe different medication.
Proscribe	(verb) to prohibit something	It is necessary to proscribe this dangerous group.
Principal	(adjective) the main thing or a role, eg the College Principal	She is the Principal of the university.
Principle	(adjective) fundamental belief	He was a man of principle.
Stationary	(adjective) stay still	The cars are stationary on the motorway.
Stationery	(noun) pens, pencils, rulers etc.	I need to buy new stationery for my course.
Subsequently	(adverb) after the thing before	He was subsequently found to have lied.
Consequently	(adverb) the result of something	She failed the test and consequently had to rebook it.
There	(adverb) in, at or to that place	There are differing views on this subject.
Their	(possessive pronoun) belonging to them	The students opened their laptops.

They're	(Contraction) They are	The children are tired, and they're not happy.
Unsociable	(adjective) not enjoying the company of others	I never see my unsociable neighbour.
Unsocial	(adjective) socially inconvenient	I work unsocial hours.
Antisocial	(adjective) not following acceptable social behaviour	They were arrested for antisocial behaviour.
Weather	(noun) sun, rain, snow	I hope the weather is pleasant today.
Whether	(conjunction) express doubt or choice between two things	I don't know whether to ring or email him.
Who's	(contraction) who is	Who's coming to the party?
Whose	(possessive pronoun) belonging to	Whose keys are these?
Your	(possessive pronoun) belongs to you	Please move your car.
You're	(contraction) you are	You're distracting me by talking too loudly.