Frequently confused words

Here’s a quick-reference list of pairs of words that regularly cause people problems. The words follow the accepted British English spelling. Some of them do have alternative American spellings and you will find these at the main dictionary entry on this website.

To – he went to the doctor

Two – 2

Too – also

There – location, she is over there

They’re – contraction, they are

Their – possession, it is their dog

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| ***Confusables*** | ***Meanings*** |
| [accept](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/accept)[except](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/except) | to agree to receive or donot including |
| [adverse](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/adverse)[averse](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/averse) | unfavourable, harmfulstrongly disliking; opposed |
| [advice](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/advice)[advise](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/advise) | recommendations about what to doto recommend something |
| [affect](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/affect)[effect](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/effect) | to change or make a difference toa result; to bring about a result |
| [aisle](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/aisle)[isle](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/isle) | a passage between rows of seatsan island |
| [all together](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/all#all__76)[altogether](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/altogether) | all in one place, all at oncecompletely; on the whole |
| [along](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/along)[a long](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/long) | moving or extending horizontally onreferring to something of great length |
| [aloud](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/aloud)[allowed](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/allow) | out loudpermitted |
| [altar](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/altar)[alter](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/alter) | a sacred table in a churchto change |
| [amoral](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/amoral)[immoral](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/immoral) | not concerned with right or wrongnot following accepted moral standards |
| [appraise](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/appraise)[apprise](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/apprise) | to assessto inform someone |
| [assent](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/assent)[ascent](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/ascent) | agreement, approvalthe action of rising or climbing up |
| [aural](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/aural)[oral](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/oral) | relating to the ears or hearingrelating to the mouth; spoken |
| [balmy](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/balmy)[barmy](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/barmy) | pleasantly warmfoolish, crazy |
| [bare](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bare)[bear](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bear) | naked; to uncoverto carry; to put up with |
| [bated](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bated)[baited](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bait) | in phrase 'with **bated** breath', i.e. in great suspensewith bait attached or inserted |
| [bazaar](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bazaar)[bizarre](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bizarre) | a Middle Eastern marketstrange |
| [berth](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/berth)[birth](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/birth) | a bunk in a ship, train, etc.the emergence of a baby from the womb |
| [born](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/born)[borne](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/borne) | having started lifecarried |
| [bough](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bough)[bow](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bow) | a branch of a treeto bend the head; the front of a ship |
| [brake](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/brake)[break](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/break) | a device for stopping a vehicle; to stop a vehicleto separate into pieces; a pause |
| [breach](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/breach)[breech](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/breech) | to break through, or break a rule; a gapthe back part of a gun barrel |
| [broach](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/broach)[brooch](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/brooch) | to raise a subject for discussiona piece of jewellery |
| [canvas](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/canvas)[canvass](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/canvass) | a type of strong clothto seek people’s votes |
| [censure](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/censure)[censor](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/censor) | to criticize stronglyto ban parts of a book or film; a person who does this |
| [cereal](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cereal)[serial](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/serial) | a grass producing an edible grain; a breakfast food made from grainshappening in a series |
| [chord](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/chord)[cord](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cord) | a group of musical notesa length of string; a cord-like body part |
| [climactic](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/climactic)[climatic](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/climatic) | forming a climaxrelating to climate |
| [coarse](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/coarse)[course](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/course) | rougha direction; a school subject; part of a meal |
| [complacent](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/complacent)[complaisant](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/complaisant) | smug and self-satisfiedwilling to please |
| [complement](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/complement)[compliment](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/compliment) | to add to so as to improve; an addition that improves somethingto praise or express approval; an admiring remark |
| [council](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/council)[counsel](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/counsel) | a group of people who manage or adviseadvice; to advise |
| [cue](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cue)[queue](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/queue) | a signal for action; a wooden roda line of people or vehicles |
| [curb](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/curb)[kerb](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/kerb) | to keep something in check; a control or limit(in British English) the stone edge of a pavement |
| [currant](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/currant)[current](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/current) | a dried grapehappening now; a flow of water, air, or electricity |
| [defuse](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/defuse)[diffuse](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/diffuse) | to make a situation less tenseto spread over a wide area |
| [desert](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/desert)[dessert](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/dessert) | a waterless, empty area; to abandon someonethe sweet course of a meal |
| [discreet](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/discreet)[discrete](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/discrete) | careful not to attract attentionseparate and distinct |
| [disinterested](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/disinterested)[uninterested](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/uninterested) | impartialnot interested |
| [draught](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/draught)[draft](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/draft) | a current of aira first version of a piece of writing |
| [draw](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/draw)[drawer](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/drawer) | an even score at the end of a gamea sliding storage compartment |
| [dual](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/dual)[duel](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/duel) | having two partsa fight or contest between two people |
| [elicit](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/elicit)[illicit](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/illicit) | to draw out a reply or reactionnot allowed by law or rules |
| [ensure](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/ensure)[insure](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/insure) | to make certain that something will happento provide compensation if a person dies or property is damaged |
| [envelop](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/envelop)[envelope](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/envelope) | to cover or surrounda paper container for a letter |
| [exercise](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/exercise)[exorcise](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/exorcise) | physical activity; to do physical activityto drive out an evil spirit |
| [fawn](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/fawn)[faun](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/faun) | a young deer; light browna mythical being, part man, part goat |
| [flaunt](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/flaunt)[flout](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/flout) | to display ostentatiouslyto disregard a rule |
| [flounder](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/flounder)[founder](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/founder#founder-3) | to move clumsily; to have difficulty doing somethingto fail |
| [forbear](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/forbear)[forebear](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/forebear) | to refrainan ancestor |
| [foreword](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/foreword)[forward](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/forward) | an introduction to a bookonwards, ahead |
| [freeze](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/freeze)[frieze](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/frieze) | to turn to icea decoration along a wall |
| [grisly](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/grisly)[grizzly](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/grizzly) | gruesome, revoltinga type of bear |
| [hoard](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/hoard)[horde](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/horde) | a storea large crowd of people |
| [imply](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/imply)[infer](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/infer) | to suggest indirectlyto draw a conclusion |
| [loath](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/loath)[loathe](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/loathe) | reluctant, unwillingto hate |
| [loose](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/loose)[lose](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/lose) | to unfasten; to set freeto be deprived of; to be unable to find |
| [meter](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/meter#meter-3)[metre](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/metre) | a measuring devicea metric unit; rhythm in verse |
| [militate](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/militate)[mitigate](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/mitigate) | to be a powerful factor againstto make less severe |
| [palate](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/palate)[palette](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/palette) | the roof of the moutha board for mixing colours |
| [pedal](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/pedal)[peddle](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/peddle) | a foot-operated leverto sell goods |
| [pole](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/pole)[poll](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/poll) | a long, slender piece of woodvoting in an election |
| [pour](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/pour)[pore](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/pore) | to flow or cause to flowa tiny opening; to study something closely |
| [practice](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/practice)[practise](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/practise) | the use of an idea or method; the work or business of a doctor, dentist, etc.to do something repeatedly to gain skill; to do something regularly |
| [prescribe](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/prescribe)[proscribe](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/proscribe) | to authorize use of medicine; to order authoritativelyto officially forbid something |
| [principal](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/principal)[principle](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/principle) | most important; the head of a schoola fundamental rule or belief |
| [sceptic](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sceptic)[septic](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/septic) | a person inclined to doubtinfected with bacteria |
| [sight](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sight)[site](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sight) | the ability to seea location |
| [stationary](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/stationary)[stationery](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/stationery) | not movingwriting materials |
| [storey](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/storey)[story](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/story) | a level of a buildinga tale or account |
| [titillate](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/titillate)[titivate](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/titivate) | to arouse interestto make more attractive |
| [tortuous](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/tortuous)[torturous](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/torturous) | full of twists; complexfull of pain or suffering |
| [wreath](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/wreath)[wreathe](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/wreathe) | a ring-shaped arrangement of flowers etc.to surround or encircle |
| [yoke](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/yoke)[yolk](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/yolk) | a wooden crosspiece for harnessing a pair of oxenthe yellow center of an egg |