



Commonly Confused Words in Conversation

Learning English can be difficult, especially when there are so many words that are very similar to each other. Sometimes words can sound the same, are spelled in similar ways, or have similar meanings. Here is a chart you can use to help identify their differences!

Commonly Confused Words In Casual Conversation	Definition	Examples of How to Use the Word
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen (verb) /'lɪsən/ ⇒ Hear (verb) /'hɪə/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An intentional action—give one’s attention to sound ⇒ Typically an unintentional action. To perceive sound with the ear ⇒ Hear can also be used as a completed action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure to listen to your teacher. ⇒ Did you hear that sound? It sounded like a crash! ⇒ I always hear dogs barking outside my house at night.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fun (adjective/noun) /'fʌn/ ⇒ Funny (adjective) /'fʌnɪ/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Something that provides enjoyment ⇒ Describes something or someone that makes people laugh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ice skating with my friends is so much fun! ⇒ Many people think the comedian Adam Sandler is funny, and I don’t understand why.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel (verb) /'trævəl/ ⇒ Trip (noun) /'trɪp/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The action of going or visiting a different location ⇒ A specific journey or voyage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I love to travel to Italy to visit my family. ⇒ I am going on a trip to Las Vegas!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Win (verb) /'wɪn/ ⇒ Beat (verb)* /'bi:t/ <p>*Please note that this word has many different meanings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be successful or victorious in a contest or conflict ⇒ To defeat someone in a game, competition, or election. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am going to win this game of chess! ⇒ The entire country is eager to see who will beat who in this upcoming presidential election.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yard (noun) /'jɑ:d/ ⇒ Garden (noun) /'gɑ:dən/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lawn or grassy area outside of someone’s home ⇒ An area to grow plants, flowers, fruit or vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am looking forward to decorating my yard for Halloween and Christmas! ⇒ I am growing strawberries in my garden.



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beside (preposition) /bɪ'saɪd/ ⇒ Besides (adverb) /bɪ'saɪdz/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next to ⇒ In addition to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I placed my backpack beside my bed after school. ⇒ Besides pottery, I am very interested in photography.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clock (noun) /'klɒk/ ⇒ Watch (noun/verb) /'wɒtʃ/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A device that measures time indicating hours/minutes/seconds ⇒ A small timepiece usually worn on someone's wrist. ⇒ An action of carefully observing something or someone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once the clock says 4:00, I can leave work. ⇒ My watch says it is 12:30. ⇒ I need to keep a close watch on my little sister or she will try to eat all the cookies before dinner.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lay (verb) /'leɪ/ ⇒ Lie (verb) /'laɪ/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To put down flat ⇒ To be down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You need to lay your pencil down on the desk and listen to the teacher, Johnny. ⇒ I need to lie down, I have had a long day.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lose (verb) /'luːz/ ⇒ Loose (adjective) /'luːs/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To misplace ⇒ Spacious, not tight, lots of room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you don't zip up your purse, you might lose something valuable. ⇒ These pants are too loose on me, they fall off when I walk!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principle (adjective/noun) /'prɪnsəpəl/ ⇒ Principal (noun) /'prɪnsəpəl/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most important ⇒ A person in charge of a school ⇒ A rule/moral belief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principle reason for my decision was the cost. ⇒ Johnny was mean to Cindy, so the teacher sent him to the principal's office. ⇒ Americans hope to choose a president with good principles.

For more help, make an appointment with one of our ELL/ESL Specialists.



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desert (verb) /dɪ'zɜrt/ ◇ Desert (noun) /'dɛzərt/ ⇒ Dessert (noun) /dɪ'zɜrt/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To abandon or leave ◇ Dry, barren, sandy region ⇒ A sweet smaller meal served after dinner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should never desert a friend when they need you. ◇ The largest desert in the world is the Sahara. ⇒ My little sister will always try to eat dessert before dinner.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead (noun) /'led/ ◇ Lead (verb) /lid/ ⇒ Led (verb) /lid/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A heavy, gray metallic chemical element ◇ Present tense, meaning to be in charge or command of, or to show the way ⇒ Past tense of verb “to lead” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead paint has been banned because it was discovered that it caused lead poisoning. ◇ The teacher leads the students through the hallways. ⇒ The commander-in-chief led the soldiers into war.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passed (verb) /'pa:st/ ⇒ Past (noun) /'pa:st/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past tense of the verb “to pass” meaning to move or cause to move in a specified direction ⇒ The time that has gone by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We passed the school, you need to turn the car around. ⇒ I used to be a vegetarian, but that is in the past now, I can't resist a good burger.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell (verb) /'sel/ ⇒ Sale (noun) /seɪl/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To offer something in exchange for something else, typically money ⇒ Something sold at a discounted cost ⇒ The work/department /act of selling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will sell you my bike for \$100. ⇒ My bike is on sale, it was \$100, but I will give it to you for \$80 ⇒ Sales go up around the holiday season as many people are buying gifts for family and friends.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site (noun) /'saɪt/ ⇒ Sight (noun) /'saɪt/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A piece of land considered for a specific purpose ⇒ Something seen, a view, field of vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That corner is a perfect site for a park! ⇒ The jogger was not in sight, I nearly hit them with my car!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quite (adverb) /'kwɑɪt/ ⇒ Quiet (adjective) /'kwaɪət/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather, very, shows significance ⇒ Making little or no noise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This cake is quite delicious! ⇒ Can you speak up? You're very quiet and I can't hear you.

Further Assistance: For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library, or call 815-836-5427