

some *easily*
confused
WORDS

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Acute • adverse • advice • advise • affect • affirm • aggravate • allusion
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pallet • peak • pedal • peddle • peek • pique • practicable • practical • practice
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staunch • stationary • stationery • subsequent • suit suite • sympathy
systematic • systemic • **T**heir • there • they're • to • too • trooper • trouper
Uninterested • **W**elch • welsh • we're • were • where • who whom • who's
whose • wreak • wrought • **Y**our • you're

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acute – chronic

The pain was **chronic**, having lasted for over a year, and sometimes was **acute** enough to cause her to double over

acute – short but severe/intense

chronic – lasting for a long time, recurrent

adverse - averse

If they held **adverse** views she was **averse** to talking to them

adverse – against one's interests

averse – (adj) opposed

advice - advise

'I **advise** you to leave him', I said, but she didn't follow my **advice**

advice - (noun) a recommendation or suggestion

advise - (verb) to offer helpful opinions

affect - effect

He hoped his speech would **affect** the result of the vote. In fact, the **effect** was a change in the law

Change the colour scheme until you create the **effect** you prefer

affect - have an influence on

effect - (verb) to bring something about; (noun) a result

affirm – confirm

The MP **affirmed** his commitment to the democratic process, even though the vote is expected to **confirm** his de-selection

affirm – to state emphatically

confirm – to make something definite

aggravate – irritate

The food shortage was **aggravated** by his **irritating** habit of criticising the chef

aggravate – to make a situation worse

irritate – to annoy or anger someone

allusion - delusion - illusion

Luke's presentation made an **allusion** to an unspecified problem

Her **delusion** is that she is an effective manager

Innocent are the **illusions** of childhood

allusion - indirect reference

delusion - a fixed false opinion

illusion - fallacy, fantasy

alternate - alternative

Alternate days are Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Sheena decided to drive as the **alternative**, flying, was expensive

alternate - (adj) every other one

alternative - (noun) one of two

anticipate – expect

David **anticipated** receiving his salary and bought an expensive guitar

Charlie **expected** his salary to be paid on the last day of the month

anticipate - to assume something in advance and act accordingly

expect - to (reasonably) take for granted

appraise - apprise

Louise was asked to **appraise** the cost and value of the project, and then to **apprise** the committee of her findings

appraise - to set a price/value on

apprise - to inform

assure - ensure - insure

He **assured** her that his intentions were honourable

Always double-check to **ensure** accuracy

She **insured** all her valuables in case they were stolen

assure - to make (usually a person) certain

ensure - to be certain of

insure - to protect against financial loss

aural - oral

There was an **oral** exam to test her pronunciation followed by an

aural examination to test her hearing

aural - to do with the ear or hearing

oral - to do with the mouth or speech

avert - avoid

He planned to **avert** a flood by building a wall

Noah **avoided** drowning by building an ark

avert - to deflect/ward off avoid - to keep away from

avoid - to keep away from

bare – bear

Because his back was **bare** he was sunburnt; he could not **bear** the constant irritation and became as bad-tempered as a **bear**

bare - unclothed

bear - to carry; to put up with; an animal

bought - brought

He **bought** it in the shop

He **brought** it into the shop

It was a feeble excuse, but her manager **bought** it

bought - from the verb 'to buy'

brought - from the verb 'to bring'

canvas - canvass

That night they slept under **canvas**

"We must go out and **canvass**", said the candidate

canvas - a tent; a kind of cloth

canvass - to solicit a vote

censer - censor - censure

The altar-boy swung the **censer** with abandon

The prude tried, without success, to **censor** the play As a result of his actions he was **censured**

censer - container for burning incense

censor - (verb) to prevent publication; (noun) person who prevents publication

censure - (noun) severe criticism; (verb) to blame

chord - cord

The story struck a **chord** in his memory

Reaching the high notes stretched his vocal **cords**

chord - musical note; straight line across a curve

cord - any kind of string

circumscribed – circumspect

The sales force were **circumscribed** in who they could deal with, as a result she was very **circumspect** in her choice of clients

circumscribed – to limit, restrict to certain boundaries

circumspect – cautious, averse to risk-taking

(circumcise is something completely different)

coarse - course

They sat down to a three **course** meal

The napkins were made of **coarse** material

'Of **course** I will change them', he said

The captain set **course** for the open sea

coarse - rough to the touch

course - as is to be expected; planned route

compared to - compared with

She was so beautiful that she was **compared to** a summer's day

Our garden is small **compared with** their enormous one

compared to - stresses the similarity

compared with - stresses the difference

complement - compliment

The ship's **complement** was on parade to hear the guest speaker **compliment** his hosts. **Complimentary** drinks were served

complement - a full quantity

compliment - an expression of admiration; something free

consequence - subsequent

As a **consequence** of the vote, the law was changed

In the **subsequent** three weeks, there was outrage

consequent - as a result of

subsequent - following in time

continual -continuous

His persistent coughing was a **continual** irritation

Fourteen hours of **continuous** flying is very, very boring

continual - keeps recurring

continuous - goes on without a break

councillor - counsellor

He is an elected **councillor** and she is a trained grief **counsellor**

councillor - a member of a council

counsellor - one who gives advice, or counsels

desert - dessert

He enjoyed a **dessert** that was covered in cream

She would rather be stranded in a **desert** than risk being overweight

She **deserted** him and looked for a fitter man

As a result of his over-eating, he got his just **deserts**

desert - a barren strip of land; to get what one deserves; to abandon

dessert - the sweet course (pudding)

discreet - discrete

The picture consisted solely of eight **discrete** spots of colour

Her mother made **discreet** enquiries about the artist's background

discreet - to do something quietly and privately

discrete - a single, separate unit

disinterested - uninterested

A judge, or referee, should be **disinterested** in the outcome

He was a bad speaker and she was **uninterested** in the subject

disinterested - being impartial, not taking sides

uninterested - not care about or be involved with

economic - economical

The **economic** downturn will impact all of us

He was **economical** with the truth

It is wise to be **economical** when working with a small budget

economic - to do with the science of economics

economical - to be thrifty or sparing

eg - ie

Proofamatics includes a wide range of exercises, **eg** punctuation and spelling

She attended a Proofamatics course, **ie** language and proofreading skills, last week

eg - (exempli gratia) for instance, for example

ie - (id est) that is, that is to say

empathy - sympathy

Having been in such a situation, he **empathised** with her condition

She wanted more than **sympathy**, she wanted help

During her labour, he experienced **sympathy** pains

empathy - non-judgemental and personal understanding of others

sympathy - acknowledgement without personal involvement; agreement, loyalty

enquire - inquiry

He decided to **enquire** about the vacancy

This was the third official **inquiry** about the new runway

enquire - (verb) to ask

inquiry - (noun) a (usually) formal investigation

entomology - etymology

While children seem to love **entomology**, it's a pity that most adults show little interest in **etymology**

entomology - the study of insects

etymology - the study of words

envelop - envelope

The sound seemed to **envelop** them; it was like sitting in a vast **envelope** of noise

envelop - (verb) to cover something

envelope - (noun) a cover

evoke - invoke

His playing could **evoke** the early style of Louis Armstrong

The witch-doctor **invoked** the spirits of her ancestors

His high-pitched chanting did not **invoke** a feeling of calmness

evoke - to remind one of something else

invoke - to summon or call on; to bring about

exhaustive – extensive

The investigation was **exhaustive**, nothing was missed

The investigation was **extensive** and took many months

exhaustive - covering all possibilities

extensive - widespread

explicit – implicit

As he disobeyed my detailed and **explicit** instructions, my request for his resignation was **implicit** in my critical report

explicit - clearly stated

implicit - not directly stated, implied

ferment - foment

He used a high-quality yeast in the **fermentation** process

The effect of the alcohol was to **foment** anger and unrest

ferment - a chemical reaction producing bubbles of gas

foment - to create disorder

fewer - less

I earn **fewer** pounds than she does as my salary is **less** than hers

fewer - smaller in number

less - smaller in quantity or volume

flaunt - flout

When Nigel **flaunts** his new Porsche, he **flouts** the rules of polite behaviour

flaunt - to display arrogantly

flout - to deliberately disobey

flounder - founder

He **floundered** through his acceptance speech as if wading through mud. As a result, the event **foundered** and he never recovered from the embarrassment, despite being a **founder** of the club

flounder - to struggle clumsily, to perform a task badly

founder - to break down or fail; to sink (a ship); to go lame (a horse); a person who creates an organisation

forbear - forebear

He could not **forbear** from interrupting, annoying those present who wondered what his illustrious **forebear** would have made of his behaviour

forbear - to refrain from

forebear - ancestor

forego - forgo

A number of the **foregoing** definitions are open to challenge

To stand for parliament, he had to **forgo** his peerage

forego - precede, go before

forgo - to do without, to renounce

foreword - forward

The author put **forward** his ideas for the introduction but the editor decided to write the **foreword** himself

foreword - introduction to a book

forward - move ahead

hanged - hung

British courts no longer sentence criminals to be **hanged**

The artist insisted that his pictures be **hung** in a random manner

hanged - people

hung - pictures etc.

hoard - horde

The rumour of a treasure **hoard** meant that **hordes** of fortune-hunters arrived

hoard - (noun) a store of goods; (verb) to set aside

horde - a large crowd

imply - infer

Her silence **implied** that she was not happy with his reply

He **inferred** that her silence meant she was not happy with his reply

imply - to hint at, express indirectly

infer - to guess or conclude by reasoning

its – it's

It's now time for the groups to meet and for each group to present **its** findings

Its – belonging to it

It's – abbreviation of 'it is'

libel - slander

She claimed she was **libelled** in the newspaper, although many people thought she had **slandered** the editor in her speech

libel - a written untrue statement

slander - a spoken untrue statement

licence – license

The magistrate had **license** to approve **licences**

licence – a permit

license – to have permission

loathe - loth

She **loathed** the perfume he bought her, but was **loth** to tell him

loathe - detest

loth - reluctant

margarita - margherita

Marguerite sipped her **margarita** whilst tucking into a **margherita**

margarita – a cocktail

margherita – a pizza

(Marguerite is a friend)

meter - metre

Every month, Freddie had to read the gas **meter**

George hoped to make the final of the 100 **metre** race

meter - a measuring instrument

metre - a unit of distance

militate - mitigate

His poor written English **militated** against a career as a proofreader. In **mitigation**, he pointed out that few walruses wrote any English at all

militate - to influence, have an effect, usually against something

mitigate - to make less bad

moral - morale

The **moral** was that he was a **moral** man and could be trusted

The team's **morale** was high after winning the match

moral - standards of conduct; the significance of the story

morale - a state of mind

naught - nought

His court case came to **naught** – the precise sum awarded was **nought**

naught - nothing

nought - the number zero

palate - palette - pallet

The wine felt smooth on his **palate**

The combination of flavours were like a painter's **palette**

He liked it so much that he bought enough to fill a **pallet**

palate - the roof of the mouth

pallet - a platform for storing or moving things

palette - the board on which paints are mixed; the range of colours available

peak - peek - pique

He **peeked** at the results and was **piqued** to see that he did not climb the highest **peak** in the **Peak** District in the fastest time

peak – pointed tip; mountain with a pointed tip; point of greatest achievement

peek – glance quickly

pique – feel resentment from hurt pride

(piqué is a fabric and piquet is a card game)

pedal – peddle

He went to every car-boot sale, hoping to **peddle pedals**

pedal – a lever, on a bicycle or car, used to control

peddle – to sell, usually informally, from place to place

practicable - practical

Timothy's ideas were **practicable** but usually too expensive

Robert's ideas, because they were **practical**, were always put into use

practicable - feasible, possible in theory

practical - sensible, possible in reality

practice - practise

She joined a large **practise** where it was normal **practice** to hold a staff meeting on Monday. Before the meeting, she would **practise** her speech

practice - (noun) a group of (usually) professionals; a regular event

practise - (verb) to rehearse or try out

precede - proceed

Traditionally, the bride should **precede** the bridesmaids

They were told to **proceed** down the street

precede - to go immediately before

proceed - to go ahead; continue in the same direction

prescience – presence – present - presently

He had the **prescience** to understand that the **presence** of Father Christmas suggested that **presents** would **presently** be forthcoming

prescience – knowing something is about to happen

presence – being in a particular place

present – now; a gift

presently – soon

prevaricate - procrastinate

She **prevaricated** so much that the truth was never revealed

His **procrastination** meant that we arrived an hour late

Procrastination is the thief of time

prevaricate - to speak evasively; to avoid the truth

procrastinate - to delay an action

principal - principle

The school **principal** insisted that every student should know the **principles** of physics

At 5% per annum, the **principal** of £8,000 will pay £400

principal - person in authority; original sum of money

principle - universal law, rules of conduct

Proofamatics

A unique one-day course for improving the productivity, efficiency and accuracy of document-producing staff at all levels by:

- providing grammar, spelling and punctuation revision
- teaching a simple 3-phase system of proofreading
- showing how to break up text to avoid reading for comprehension
- incorporating exercises to increase eye span whilst reducing eye fatigue

prostate – prostrate

He **prostrated** himself while the specialist made an uncomfortable exploration of the **prostate** area

prostate – a gland in male mammals

prostrate – lie face downwards

rebut - refute

His speech did not merely **rebut** the allegation, but powerfully **refuted** the claims made by his accuser

rebut - to repel or meet (in argument)

refute - to disprove

reluctant - reticent

Alison was **reluctant** to accept his advances, but her shyness meant she was **reticent** to say so

reluctant - unwilling to act

reticent - unwilling to speak

rout - route

The police planned to **rout** the protesters who, secretly, decided to take a different **route**

root - the cause of; the part of a plant under the ground

rout - defeat and put to flight; disorderly retreat

stanch - staunch

When he left, we all had to **stanch** our tears

He was a slightly overweight **staunch** man and a **staunch** friend

stanch - to block the flow

staunch - solid; stout; loyal

stationary - stationery

During the tremor, all the furniture moved except the **stationery** cupboard, which was **stationary**

stationary - not moving

stationery - paper, envelopes etc.

suit - suite

Hearts, clubs, diamonds and spades are the four **suits** in a pack of cards

They decided to buy a three-piece **suite** for the living room

suit - a set of clothes, playing cards; things that go together; a lawsuit

suite - a set of furniture, rooms; a musical composition

systematic - systemic

There was no **systematic** way of checking documents in the department and poor proofreading seemed to be **systemic**. They need Proofamatics

systematic - methodical; intentional

systemic - relating to a system or body

their - there - they're

They're all going on a summer holiday, so they packed **their** bags and set off. When they got **there** it rained all week

their - possessive, belongs to them

there - a place

they're - abbreviation of 'they are'

to – too

She gave the report **to** her manager who said it was **too** long and was badly proofread, **too**

to - direction of

too - excessive; as well as

trooper – trouper

The old soldier had performed his duties so well and for so long that he was a **trooper** as much as a **trouper**

trooper - a soldier, police officer (eg state trooper)

trouper - a member of a troupe (a group of performers, actors); someone who works hard, is reliable, and does not complain

welch - welsh

The only thing he could be relied on to do was to **welch** on any agreement

Welsh rarebit, or expensive cheese on toast, is thought to be named after a traditional liking of cheese in Wales

welch - fail to keep a promise

welsh - relating to the Principality of Wales; rarebit; dresser

were - we're - where

Where is the treasure hidden?

We **were** told that it is in a hidden cavern

If **we're** right, I will be a happy man

were - past tense of the verb 'to be'

we're - abbreviation of 'we are'

where - at what place; to what place

who - whom

Nigel Lloyd-Jones is a writer **whom** I admire

I was speaking to the man **who** will be my new manager

who - the subject of the verb

whom - the object of the verb

who's - whose

Whose suitcase is this?

The suitcase belongs to a lady **who's** arriving this afternoon

who's - abbreviation of 'who is' or 'who has'

whose - belongs to, the possessive form of 'who'

wreak - wrought

He watched his runaway car **wreak** havoc, demolishing many fine examples of **wrought**-iron railings

wreak - inflict

wrought - something that has been worked on

your – you're

If it's **your** handwriting, then **you're** going to be in trouble

your - belonging to you

you're - abbreviation of 'you are'