

# Confusing words & false friends

## CONFUSING WORDS

*Confusing words* are two or more words which have a similar meaning to each other but are used in a different way.

OR

Are related to the same topic, but have a different meaning.

OR

Look similar, but have a different meaning.

## FALSE FRIENDS

*False friends* are words in English which have a similar-looking word in another language but which have a different meaning.

Complete the following sentences with the appropriate word.

1. **action / activity**

The police took immediate \_\_\_\_\_ when they realised the situation was getting out of hand.

Economic \_\_\_\_\_ stagnated as the recession took hold.

2. **advice / advise**

Can you \_\_\_\_\_ me on the best course of action to take?

He offered me some excellent \_\_\_\_\_.

3. **affect / effect**

Cuts in spending will have a serious \_\_\_\_\_ on the National Health Service.

The strike will seriously \_\_\_\_\_ train services.

4. **appreciable / appreciative**

There is an \_\_\_\_\_ difference between manslaughter and murder.

She was very \_\_\_\_\_ of our efforts to help.

5. **assumption / presumption**

They raised taxes on the \_\_\_\_\_ that it would help control spending.

It's sheer \_\_\_\_\_ for the government to suggest things have improved since they came to power.

6. **avoid / prevent**

Rapid government reforms managed to \_\_\_\_\_ a revolution taking place.

He's always trying to \_\_\_\_\_ taking a decision if he can help it.

7. **beside / besides**

The office is just \_\_\_\_\_ the railway station.

\_\_\_\_\_ their regular daytime job, many people do extra work in the evening.

# Confusing words & false friends

## 8. *briefly / shortly*

\_\_\_\_\_ before the conflict began, the army pulled down the border posts.  
The minister spoke \_\_\_\_\_ about the need for political reform.

## 9. *channel / canal*

The television \_\_\_\_\_ received a formal complaint about the programme.  
The Suez \_\_\_\_\_ was built in the second half of the nineteenth century.

## 10. *conscientious / conscious*

Most people are \_\_\_\_\_ of the need to protect the environment.  
\_\_\_\_\_ workers should be rewarded for their hard work.

## 11. *continual / continuous*

A \_\_\_\_\_ trade embargo has badly affected the economic infrastructure.  
The computer has given us \_\_\_\_\_ problems ever since we installed it.

## 12. *control / inspect*

Environmental health officers regularly \_\_\_\_\_ kitchens and other food preparation areas.  
The government plans to \_\_\_\_\_ the price of meat to make sure it doesn't go up too much.

## 13. *criticism(s) / objection(s)*

They didn't raise any \_\_\_\_\_ when we insisted on inspecting the figures.  
The government's plan was met with severe \_\_\_\_\_.

## 14. *damage / injury / harm*

It was a severe \_\_\_\_\_ which needed immediate hospital treatment.  
A lot of \_\_\_\_\_ was caused to buildings along the coast during the storm.  
There's no \_\_\_\_\_ in taking a break from your job now and then.

## 15. *discover / invent*

When did he \_\_\_\_\_ the telephone?  
Did Alexander Fleming \_\_\_\_\_ penicillin?

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16. *during / for / while*

Shops were closed \_\_\_\_\_ the duration of the conflict.

\_\_\_\_\_ the transition from a dictatorship to democracy, the country experienced severe strikes and riots.

The bomb went off \_\_\_\_\_ the President was making his speech.

17. *however / moreover*

The plan was good in theory. \_\_\_\_\_, in practice it was extremely difficult to implement.

The plan was excellent. \_\_\_\_\_, it was clear from the beginning that it was going to be a success.

18. *inconsiderate / inconsiderable*

An \_\_\_\_\_ amount of money was wasted.

\_\_\_\_\_ behaviour makes life unpleasant for everybody.

19. *intolerable / intolerant*

I consider his behaviour to be quite \_\_\_\_\_.

The government is \_\_\_\_\_ of other political parties.

20. *job / work*

Everybody has the right to a decent \_\_\_\_\_ with good pay.

Following the recession, many people are still looking for \_\_\_\_\_.

21. *lay(s) / lie(s)*

The city of Quito \_\_\_\_\_ near the equator.

The manager made it clear he intended to \_\_\_\_\_ down some strict rules.

22. *look at / watch*

We must \_\_\_\_\_ the situation in Lugumba carefully, and be prepared to act if violence flares again.

We need to \_\_\_\_\_ the problem carefully and decide if there is anything we can do about it.

23. *permission / permit*

I'm afraid we can't \_\_\_\_\_ photography in here.

They received \_\_\_\_\_ to attend the sessions as long as they didn't interrupt.

# Confusing words & false friends

24. **possibility / chance**

There is always the \_\_\_\_\_ that the government will reverse its decision.  
If we act now, we have a good \_\_\_\_\_ of finding a cure for the disease.

25. **practice / practise**

It's important to \_\_\_\_\_ your English whenever possible.  
You need more \_\_\_\_\_ before you take the exam.

26. **priceless / worthless**

\_\_\_\_\_ paintings by artists like Van Gogh should not be in the hands of private collectors.  
As inflation spiralled out of control, paper money suddenly became \_\_\_\_\_.

27. **principal(s) / principle(s)**

Many people refuse to eat meat on \_\_\_\_\_.  
The \_\_\_\_\_ of the college is an ardent non-smoker.  
The country's \_\_\_\_\_ products are paper and wood.  
Not many people are familiar with the \_\_\_\_\_ of nuclear physics.

28. **process / procession**

The \_\_\_\_\_ made its way down the avenue.  
Applying for a visa can be a long and frustrating \_\_\_\_\_.

29. **raise / rise**

As prices \_\_\_\_\_, demand usually drops.  
In response to the current oil shortage, most airlines plan to \_\_\_\_\_ their fares.

30. **respectable / respectful**

The delegates listened in \_\_\_\_\_ silence as the chairman spoke.  
They want to bring up their children in an area which is considered to be \_\_\_\_\_.

31. **treat / cure**

Hospitals are so understaffed that they find it almost impossible to \_\_\_\_\_ patients with minor injuries.  
They were unable to \_\_\_\_\_ the disease, and hundreds died as a result.