

Commonly Confused Words

Part 2



When do you use ‘boarder’? And ‘border’? If you don’t know, you’ve come to the right place. We’ll discuss 10 pairs of words people often mix up.

- Access/excess
- Aspire/inspire
- Boarder/border
- Bought/brought
- Brake/break
- Elicit/illicit
- Lead/led
- Loose/lose
- Pole/poll
- Pore/pour

What? You haven’t seen **Commonly Confused Words Part 1**? It’s a useful free resource you don’t want to miss.

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Access/excess

Access



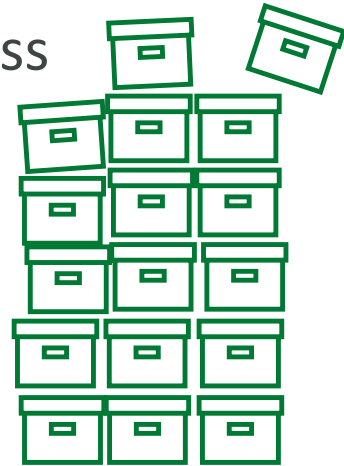
Use 'access' when you mean 'permission to use' or 'ability to use'.

The analysts have access to the financial data.

'Access' can also mean 'get into'.

We need a ramp so that people in wheelchairs can access the building easily.

Excess



Use 'excess' when you mean 'extra'. 'Excess' and 'extra' both begin with E.

We printed too many brochures. What shall we do with the excess?

The shop is having a sale for its excess stock.

In insurance, 'excess' is your 'upfront contribution' when you make a claim.

The damage will cost \$500 to repair. My excess is \$200, so I'll only get \$300 from the insurance company.

Aspire/inspire

Aspire

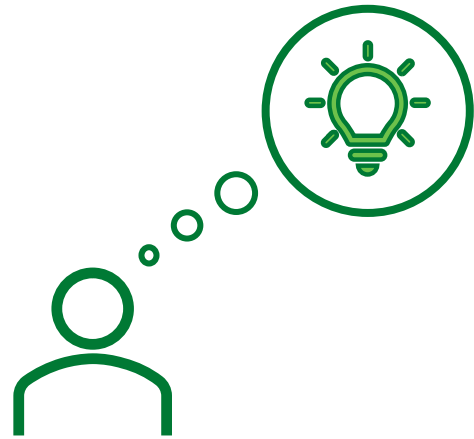


Use 'aspire' when you mean 'hope'. 'Aspire' happens inside you — you aspire to something.

New Zealanders love rugby, so it's no surprise that some children aspire to be All Blacks.

The health and safety plan aspires to have zero workplace accidents within 6 months.

Inspire



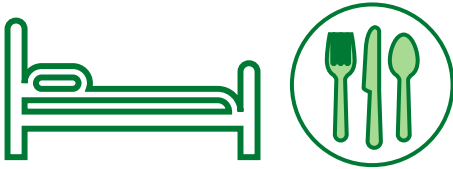
Use 'inspire' when you mean 'motivate' positively. We usually say someone or something inspires a person.

A well-designed, user-friendly website inspires confidence.

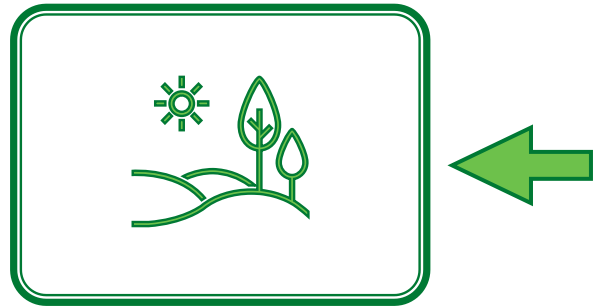
We're sorry she has retired. She was an amazing manager who inspired all her staff to excellence.

Boarder/Border

Boarder



Border



Use 'boarder' when you mean 'person who pays for accommodation and food'.

'Boarder' is spelt with an A, just like accommodation.

My neighbours have taken on a boarder.

I attended that school as a boarder and only went home during school holidays.

Use 'border' when you mean 'edge'.

Many soldiers patrol the border between the two countries.

The pattern bordering the cover is stunning.

Bought/brought

Bought



Use 'bought' when you mean 'purchased'. 'Bought' is the past tense of 'buy'.

The company bought me a laptop that's twice as fast as my old one.

The chair we bought last week has collapsed.

Brought



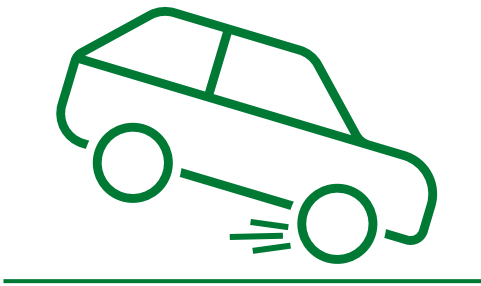
Use 'brought' when you mean 'took'. 'Brought' is the past tense of 'bring'. Both 'brought' and 'bring' begin with BR.

Our manager brought her dog to work.

He brought them some home-made muffins to say 'thank you'.

Brake/break

Brake



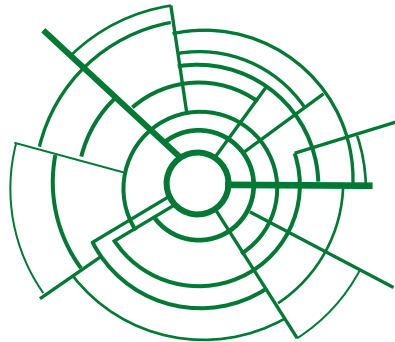
Use 'brake' when you mean 'slow down' or 'stop'.

Try not to brake unnecessarily. Braking often uses more petrol than driving smoothly.

'Brake' can also be something that enables you to slow down or stop.

Saving for a house meant putting a brake on our spending.

Break



Use 'break' when you mean 'shatter'.

Our new business development manager keeps breaking sales records.

You can also use 'break' to mean 'pause' or 'interruption'.

Let's have a coffee break to recharge.

Elicit/illicit

Elicit



Use 'elicit' when you mean 'get'. 'Elicit' is often used for information or reactions.

The politician was so non-committal that the journalist could not elicit a satisfactory answer.

We will have no trouble eliciting their agreement.

Illicit



Use 'illicit' when you mean 'illegal'. Both 'illicit' and 'illegal' begin with ILL. And yes, both illicit and illegal things can make you ill!

The government is cracking down on illicit drugs.

The minister could not say how much illicit trade happened.

Lead/led

Lead

Today she says,
'Let's go!'



Use 'lead' when you mean 'direct'. 'Lead' rhymes with 'seed'.

We're looking for a manager to lead the team to new heights.

'Lead' can also refer to a heavy grey metal. In this case, 'lead' rhymes with 'red'.

We say 'pencil lead', but it's not actually lead — it's graphite.

Led

Yesterday she said,
'Let's go!'



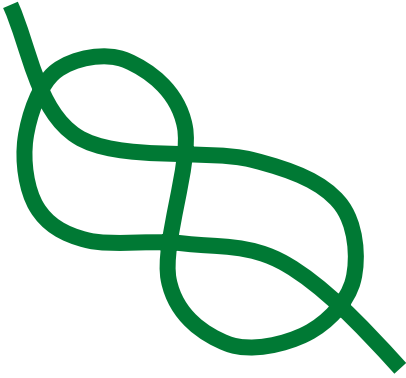
Use 'led' when you mean the past tense of 'lead', as in 'directed'. 'Led' rhymes with 'red'.

The teacher led the children to the playground.

Their hard work and innovation led to great success.

Loose/lose

Loose



Use 'loose' when you mean 'not tight'.

We need to tie up those loose cables, so no one trips over them.

The board did not approve the business case because the arguments were too loose.

'Loose' looks like what it means. It has two Os, as if it is not tight.

Lose



Use 'lose' when you mean 'misplace' or 'no longer have'.

If you don't mend that hole in your pocket, you'll lose money through it.

'Lose' can also mean 'be defeated'.

She hates to lose arguments.

Pole/poll

Pole



Use 'pole' when you mean 'long stick'.

The flag on the pole is waving in the breeze.

'Pole' can also refer to the places at the very north and very south of the Earth.

Use a capital P when you're referring to the North Pole, the South Pole, and a Polish person (Pole).

Poll



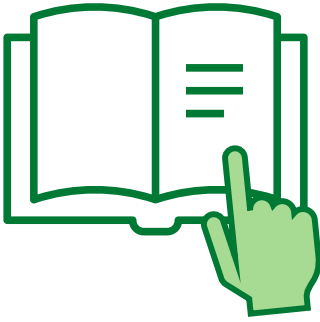
Use 'poll' when you mean 'survey'.

The organisation conducted a poll to get feedback.

Most people who were polled disagreed with the decision.

Pore/pour

Pore



Use 'pore' when you mean 'read carefully'.

The architect pored over the plans.

'Pore' can also mean 'small opening'.

We have countless pores on our skin.

Pour



Use 'pour' when you mean 'tip' or 'put into'.

He poured himself a drink when he arrived.

Investors have poured millions of dollars into the project.