

ENGLISH CONFUSING WORDS

1. Advice / Advise

Advice is a noun, and **advise** is a verb:

- (a) She gave me some good advice.
- (b) She advised me to get some rest.

There's also a pronunciation difference: advice has an "S" sound, and advise has a "Z" sound.

Don't make the common error of saying "advices" – **the word advice is uncountable.**

However, you can say "pieces of advice":

2. Appraise / Apprise

The verb **appraise** means to evaluate, especially in an official way in which a grade will be given or the value of something determined:

- (a) A car dealership appraises the value of used cars.

The noun form is appraisal, meaning an evaluation:

- (a) Please give me your honest appraisal of the book I've written.

The verb **apprise** means to inform or notify. You can apprise (someone) of (some news).

- (a) Please keep me apprised of this situation

3. As long as / As soon as / As far as

Use as long as for:

1- Time – when talking about a long period:

"I'll stay with you as long as you want."

2- A condition that is a requirement:

- (a) "You can go to the party as long as you're back by 11 PM."

Use as soon as for:

Time – when one thing happens at the same time as another, or immediately after another:

- (a) "The phone rang as soon as I walked into my apartment."



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Use as far as for:

1- Degree or distance

(a) "I'll walk with you as far as the corner."

2- Opinion (in the expression "as far as I'm concerned")

"As far as I'm concerned, he owes me an apology."

4. Assure / Ensure / Insure

Assure means to tell another person something to remove doubt or anxiety.

(a) I assure you that the water here is perfectly safe to drink.

After assure, we always have a person: assure you, assure him/her, etc.

Ensure is something you do to guarantee a specific result.

(a) Please send the document by express mail to ensure that it arrives on time.

Insure is used when you get a financial plan to pay for any damage or loss to a person or thing.

This is related to the word insurance, such as health insurance, car insurance, etc.

(a) Our house is insured against fires, floods, and theft

5. Begin / Start

You can use both start and begin for an activity. **"Begin" is more formal than "start":**

(a) I started playing the piano when I was 8 years old.

(b) He's beginning to read more advanced books in English.

When you turn on a car or vehicle, use "start":

(a) I had to call a mechanic because my car wouldn't start.

In general, begin is used for more formal and more abstract ideas:

(a) Scientists are studying how life began on earth.

6. Opportunity/ Possibility / Chance /

With the verb have, always use opportunity. The word possibility is more often used with "there is":

(a) There's a possibility I might move to America next year.

(b) I have the opportunity to work in a reputed company.



Also, **possibility is neutral** - it means maybe the event will happen, and maybe it will not happen. The word **opportunity is a little more positive**, it expresses the possibility for something good. So we can use possibility with good or bad things, but opportunity is usually used only for good things:

- (a) I'm worried about the possibility of losing my job.
- (b) You should take that job. It's a great opportunity for your career.

The word chance is more informal, and it can be used for possibilities or opportunities!

- (a) Is there any chance of rain this weekend? = any possibility that it will rain

7. Continuously/ Continually

Continuously means something happens without stopping, without interruption:

- (a) A waterfall has water continuously falling over the edge of a cliff.

Continually means something happens frequently/repeatedly.

- (a) If you have an old car, it might continually break down - it breaks down very frequently.

8. Decent/Descent/Dissent

The adjective decent describes something good, satisfactory, or civilized:

- (a) My job's not very glamorous, but I earn a decent salary.

The noun descent has a few different meanings:

The action of going down:

After reaching the top of the mountain, the hikers began their descent.

Describing family origin:

- (a) He is of Spanish descent.

The word dissent can be a noun or a verb, and it means a difference of opinion; to disagree:

- (a) After the government's decision to raise taxes, large groups of protestors expressed their dissent.

9. Distinct / Distinctive

The word distinct means:

1- that something is clearly and noticeably different or separate from other things

- (a) Three distinct languages are spoken in this region.

2- that something is strong and obvious:

- (a) There is a distinct possibility that the flight will be canceled.

The word distinctive means that something has qualities that make it noticeably different and easy to be identified or recognized. While distinct is neutral,



(a) His thoughtful and poetic lyrics are a distinctive characteristic of his music.

10. Enough / Too

Enough means you have what is sufficient/necessary; **too** means you have more than what is sufficient/necessary. There are a few important details about their word order in the sentence:

(a) too + adjective

This shirt is too expensive.

(b) verb + too much

He complains too much. He has such a negative attitude.

(a) enough + noun (countable or uncountable)

We don't have enough people for a soccer team

(b) verb + enough

I don't exercise enough.

(c) Adjective + enough

you're not old enough to buy alcohol.

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