

some *easily*  
confused  
**WORDS**

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**W**ait - weight - welch - welsh - we're - were - where - who's - whose  
wreak - wrought

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## SOME EASILY CONFUSED WORDS

### advice - advise

He did not always follow the **advice** he gave to others

Her friends **advised** her to leave him

**advice** - a recommendation or suggestion

**advise** - to offer helpful opinions

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### affect - effect

He hoped his speech would **affect** the result of the vote

His speech was so powerful it **effected** a change in the law

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

**affect** - to have an influence on

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

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### 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

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### 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

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## 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  
'I **expect** you'd like a drink'

**anticipate** - to assume something in advance and act accordingly  
**expect** - to (reasonably) take for granted

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## appraise - apprise

Milena 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

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## aural - oral

His poor hearing meant that the doctor gave him a thorough **aural** examination  
There was an **oral** exam to test her French pronunciation

**aural** - to do with the ear or hearing  
**oral** - to do with the mouth or speech

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## avert - avoid - evade

He planned to **avert** a flood by building a wall  
Noah **avoided** drowning in the flood by building an ark  
To **evade** tax is illegal, to **avoid** it is not

**avert** - to deflect/ward off  
**avoid** - to keep away from  
**evade** - to escape (artfully)

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## 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

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## bare - bear

Because his back was **bare** he was sunburnt and could not **bear** the constant irritation

He became as bad-tempered as a **bear**

**bare** - unclothed

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

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## born - borne

He was **born** under a wanderin' star

She had **borne** three children, he had **borne** the cost of their education - and the neighbours had **borne** the noise

**born** - giving birth (passive voice)

**borne** - giving birth (active voice); to support; to put up with

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## bought - brought

He **bought** it in the shop, then **brought** it into the office

**bought** - to purchase, buy

**brought** - to bring

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## canvas - canvass

That night they slept under **canvas**

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

**canvas** - a tent; a painting; a kind of cloth

**canvass** - to solicit a vote

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## cencer - censor - censure

The altar-boy swung the **cencer** with abandon  
The prude tried, without success, to **censor** the play  
As a result of his actions he was **censured**

**cencer** - container for burning incense

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

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

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## 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

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## coarse - course

They realised that the napkins were made of **coarse** material  
'Of **course** I will change them', said the waiter and set **course** for the linen cupboard

**coarse** - rough to the touch

**course** - as is to be expected; planned route

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## 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

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## complement - compliment

The ship's **complement** served the **complimentary** drinks  
The guest speaker **complimented** his hosts

**complement** - a full quantity

**compliment** - an expression of admiration; something that is free

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## 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

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## comprise - compose - consists of - constitute

The English alphabet **comprises/consists of** twenty-six characters  
Twenty-one consonants and five vowels **compose/constitute** the English alphabet

**comprises/consists of** - made up of, relates to the whole  
**compose/constitute** - make up, relates to the items

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## continual - continuous

His constant coughing was a **continual** irritation  
Fourteen hours of **continuous** flying will get you to SE Asia

**continual** - keeps recurring  
**continuous** - goes on without a break

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## councillor - counsellor

Wendy was proud of being an elected **councillor**  
Jane prided herself on being a trained marriage-guidance **counsellor**

**councillor** - a member of a council  
**counsellor** - one who gives advice, or counsels

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## dependant - dependent

Helmut has many **dependants** who were all **dependent** on him to pay their mortgages

**dependant** - one who relies on others  
**dependent** - to rely on

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## desert - dessert

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

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

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)

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## discomfit - discomfort

Krisi's grand plan for world domination was **discomfited** by a Mr J Bond

He, strangely, felt **discomfort** at upsetting her

**discomfit** - to frustrate or thwart; to make uneasy or confused

**discomfort** - (verb) to make uneasy; (noun) distress, mild pain

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## discreet - discrete

Her mother made **discreet** enquiries about his background

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

**discreet** - to do something quietly and privately

**discrete** - a single, separate unit

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## disinterested - uninterested

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

Not only was he a bad speaker, but she was **uninterested** in the subject

**disinterested** - being impartial, not taking sides

**uninterested** - not care about or be involved with

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## 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

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## 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

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## empathy - sympathy

Having been in such a situation, he easily **empathised** with her condition  
She wanted more than **sympathy**, she wanted help  
During her labour, he experienced **sympathy** pains

**empathy** - non-judgemental and (often) personal understanding of others

**sympathy** - acknowledgement without personal involvement; agreement, loyalty

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## enquire - inquiry

He decided to **enquire** about the vacancy  
This was the third **inquiry** about the new runway

**enquire** - to ask

**inquiry** - a (usually) formal investigation

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## entomology - etymology

While all small children seem to be potential **entomologists**, it's a pity that most adults show little interest in **etymology**

**entomology** - the study of insects

**etymology** - the study of words

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## envelop - envelope

The sound seemed to **envelop** them  
It was like sitting in a vast **envelope** of sound

**envelop** - to cover something

**envelope** - a cover

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## evoke - invoke

His playing **evoked** 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

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## exhaustive - extensive

The investigation was **exhaustive**, nothing was missed  
The investigation was **extensive** and took many months to complete

**exhaustive** - covering all possibilities

**extensive** - widespread

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## explicit - implicit

He disobeyed my **explicit** instructions  
The need for his resignation was **implicit** in the critical report

**explicit** - clearly stated

**implicit** - not directly stated, implied

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## 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

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## 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

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## flaunt - flout

By **flaunting** his new Porsche, Nigel **flouted** the rules of polite behaviour

**flaunt** - to display arrogantly

**flout** - to deliberately disobey

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## flounder - founder

He **floundered** through his acceptance speech as if wading through thick mud

As a result, the event **foundered** and he never recovered from the embarrassment

**flounder** - to struggle clumsily, to perform a task badly

**founder** - to break down or fail; to sink (a ship); to go lame (a horse)

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## forbear - forebear

He could not **forbear** from interrupting, to the annoyance of those present who wondered what his **forebears** would have made of his behaviour

**forbear** - to refrain from

**forebear** - ancestor

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## 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

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## hanged - hung

It has been many years since the UK courts sentenced a criminal to be **hanged**

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

**hanged** - people

**hung** - pictures etc.

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## 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

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## 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

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## libel - slander

She was **libelled** in the newspaper

The contents of the speech were **slanderous**

**libel** - a written untrue statement

**slander** - a spoken untrue statement

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## loathe - loth

She **loathed** the perfume he bought her, but was **loth** to upset him by telling him

**loathe** - detest

**loth** - reluctant

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## loose - loosen - lose

Let **loose** the dogs of war

Before a good lunch, he would always **loosen** his belt

This was no way to **lose** weight

**loose** - to set free

**loosen** - to make less tight

**lose** - fail to find, be deprived of

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## may - might

She **may** have gone home, as no-one has seen her recently

He **might** have drowned, but a ship rescued him

**may** - a possibility; perhaps

**might** - a probability

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## 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

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## moral - morale

He was a man of high **morals** so could be trusted

There was a **moral** to the story

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

**moral** - standards of conduct; the significance of the story

**morale** - a state of mind

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## naught - nought

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

**naught** - nothing

**nought** - the number zero

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## palate - palette - pallet

The wine felt smooth on his **palate**

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

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

**palate** - the roof of the mouth

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

**pallet** - a platform for storing or moving things

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## practicable - practical

Timothy's ideas were **practicable** but usually too expensive, while Robert's ideas, because they were **practical**, were always used

**practicable** - feasible, possible in theory

**practical** - sensible, possible in reality

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## practice - practise

Dr Lancaster joined the largest **practice** in the area

It was normal **practice** to hold a staff meeting on Monday

Before the meeting, he would **practise** his speech

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

**practise** - to rehearse or try out

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## 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

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## prevaricate - procrastinate

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

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

**prevaricate** - to speak evasively; to avoid the truth

**procrastinate** - to delay an action

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## principal - principle

Penny became the school **principal**

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

Every science student should know the **principles** of physics

**principal** - person in authority; original sum of money

**principle** - universal law, rules of conduct

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## raddled - ridden - riddled

Bruce's **raddled** appearance, and his living in a crime-**ridden** area, highlighted the fact that his alibi was **riddled** with holes.

**raddled** - untidy or run-down appearance

**ridden** - afflicted by

**riddled** - full of

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## 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

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## reluctant - reticent

Alison was **reluctant** to accept his advances, but was too shy and **reticent** to say so

**reluctant** - unwilling to act

**reticent** - unwilling to speak

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## root - rout - route

Magaly got to the **root** of the problem

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

**route** - the direction or course taken

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## stationary - stationery

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

**stationary** - not moving

**stationery** - paper, envelopes etc.

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## suit - suite

Hearts, clubs, diamonds and spades are the **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

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## systematic - systemic

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

They needed Proofamatics

**systematic** - methodical; intentional; according to the system

**systemic** - relating to a system or body

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## their - there - they're

As soon as **their** bags were packed they set off

When they got **there** it rained all week

**They're** not going **there** again

**their** - possessive, belongs to them

**there** - a place

**they're** - abbreviation of 'they are'

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## to - too

She gave the report **to** her manager who said it was **too** long

**to** - direction of

**too** - excessive; as well as

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## wait - weight

Penny hated having to **wait** for lunch but never seemed to put on **weight**

**wait** - to be delayed

**weight** - heaviness

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## 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

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## we're - were - where

If **we're** to be good at proofreading, and we **were** told our job requires it, then **where** and when is the next Proofamatics workshop?

**we're** - abbreviation of 'we are'

**were** - past tense of 'to be'

**where** - at what place; to what place

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## who's - whose

**Who's** been eating my porridge?

**Whose** suitcase is this?

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

**who's** - short for 'who is' or 'who has'

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

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## wreak - wrought

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

**wreak** - inflict

**wrought** - a form of work



# PROOFAMATICS

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**Proofamatics** is a unique course for improving the productivity, efficiency and accuracy of document-producing staff at all levels.

**Proofamatics** measurably reduces proofreading errors by:

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

A one-day workshop which can be delivered by your in-house trainers or by our qualified trainers.

The workshop, for up to twelve participants, includes an assessment instrument to measure skills improvement. On average, participants reduce proofreading errors by over 30%.

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## Proofamatics On-line

The e-learning version of **Proofamatics** consists of eight modules, each of 10-12 minutes. Each module is highly interactive and includes proofreading, grammar and eye exercises.

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**For further information, e-mail [info@proofamatics.com](mailto:info@proofamatics.com)  
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# PROOFAMATICS

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**. . . because accuracy matters and errors cost**