

Awhile vs. A while

Distinguishing the terms awhile and a while can be tricky. This may be due to the fact that both these terms are used to express time and commonly used.

Here's how to avoid the confusion:

While they sound and look very similarly, these terms actually represent different parts of speech. The word awhile is an adverb used to denote "for a short time".

"It clearly will take awhile for Bears offense to take shape"

[Chicago Tribune](#)

"Interview: UFC SLC's Jason Novelli: UFC call 'took awhile to actually set in'"

[Bloody Elbow](#)

"What Is The Joker's Real Name? You Might Have To Wait Awhile To Find Out"

[Bustle](#)

In all three examples, awhile is used to refer to the amount of time it took or people waited for a certain condition or event to happen.

On the other hand, a while is a two-word expression used as a noun phrase consisting of the article a and the noun while. The phrase a while generally means "a period, length or interval of time".

"Bowled in a T20 tie at Chepauk after quite a while and it felt nice: Balaji"

[Times of India](#)

"Trump and Clinton Will Go Down in History — For a While"

[Wall Street Journal](#)

Awhile vs. A while

“Apple iPhone estimates raised for the ‘first time in a while’ at UBS”

MarketWatch

It is important for you to remember that a while can and often follows a preposition such as for and in as you can see from the examples above. Meanwhile, awhile can never follow a preposition since it functions as an adverb.

We waited awhile before the food was served.

We waited for a short time before the food was served.

His heart stopped for a while before he was resuscitated.

His heart stopped for a period of time before he was resuscitated.

Now, can you come up with your own sentences using a while and awhile?