

Complacent vs. Complaisant

Not only do the words complacent and complaisant have similar sounds, they also originate from the same Latin word *complacere*, which means “to please or to be pleasant.” These similarities causes confusion among some writers. However, these two terms actually have very different meanings. This post will help you distinguish between the two and enable you to use them correctly in your sentences.

The word complacent is most commonly used as an adjective meaning “marked by self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies” or “showing smug or uncritical satisfaction with oneself or one’s achievements.” Its noun form is complacency.

Britain’s top prosecutor blasted as ‘complacent’ after insisting that nobody has been wrongly jailed in rape trials farce

[Daily Mail](#)

Don’t Be Complacent About Italy’s Elections

[Bloomberg](#)

No Time For Complacency For U.S. Banks

[Forbes](#)

On the other hand, the term complaisant functions as an adjective meaning “marked by an inclination to please or oblige,” “willing to please others,” or “tending to consent to others’ wishes.” Its noun form is *complaisance*.

“If you succeeded in overcoming challenges with perseverance drive and yet you are still an interesting person, congratulations, because the system has been trying to erode you into a bland, complaisant productivity tool.”

[Huffington Post](#)

Complacent vs. Complaisant

“Thus it was rendered to us great honour and complaisance.”

[NIH](#)

The art of complaisance, or, The means to oblige in conversation

[University of Michigan](#)

Now that we've discussed the differences between complacent and complaisant, you should be able to use these words more accurately in your writing. Remember that complacent is being self-satisfied without awareness of deficiencies while complaisant is having the tendency to please others.