

Complement vs. Compliment

Words having similar spelling cause confusion but having identical pronunciation makes things more difficult. This is the case with the terms complement and compliment.

When used as a noun, the term complement denotes “a thing that completes or brings to perfection” or “a number or quantity of something required to make a group complete.”

“Philip’s wireless light is a perfect complement to the company’s popular Hue bulbs”

[Business Insider](#)

“The Best Complement? Completing Each Other”

[Chabad.org](#)

“It’s Not a Complement”

[America Magazine](#)

Complement as a verb means “to add to something in a way that enhances or improves it or makes it perfect.”

“What Does It Take For A COO to Complement an Entrepreneur”

[Entrepreneur.com](#)

“Talented juniors complement seniors”

[NorthJersey](#)

“Fiscal policy needs to complement monetary steps-ECB’s Nowotny”

[Reuters](#)

Meanwhile, compliment, when used as a noun, refers to “a polite expression of praise or admiration.”

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“When Does A Compliment Become Sexual Harassment?”

[Huffington Post UK](#)

“Knicks’ Carmelo Anthony gives Jeremy Lin backhand compliment, says he is ‘excited’ for Nets point guard”

[New York Daily News](#)

“Asking for Money? Compliment the Donor, Not Your Organization”

[New York Times](#)

Compliment may also be used as a verb meaning “to politely congratulate or praise someone for something.”

“What happened when Trump and Clinton were forced to compliment each other”

[Washington Post](#)

“Student racially abused after complimenting woman on her dog”

[Metro](#)

“Tap This: Good meals compliment good beers”

[The Weekender](#)

Another source of confusion is their adjective forms complementary and complimentary. The adjective complementary means “combining in such a way as to enhance or emphasize the qualities of each other or another.”

“After cancer treatment, complementary care calms”

[USA TODAY](#)

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“Steel giants hit by losses see hope in complementary businesses”

[China Daily](#)

“Complementary and Alternative Medicine: What Works?”

[MD Magazine](#)

On the other hand, complimentary refers to “expressing a compliment; praising or approving” or “given or supplied free of charge.”

“Morning Sports Update: Bills aren’t overly complimentary of Rob Gronkowski”

[Boston Daily](#)

“British Airways offers complimentary one-way first class upgrade”

[Business Traveller](#)

“Metquarter is offering complimentary cut throat shaves”

[Liverpool Echo](#)

There is a simple trick to remembering the difference of these two terms: If you are talking about completeness, then you must use complement, but if you are referring to giving praise or approval, you must select compliment.