

Comprise vs. Compose

The words comprise and compose are two of the most commonly misused terms in the English language. Some even avoid using them to avoid committing mistakes. Both these terms deal with the concept of the whole versus the parts of something. This post will help you understand the meaning and uses of these words so you can use them properly.

The term comprise is used as a verb meaning “to consist of or be made up of.” Hence, in the sentence The class comprises 25 students, it means the class is made up of 25 students. Below are some examples:

“Pell-eligible students comprise 21 percent of Princeton’s freshman class”

[Princeton University](#)

“Young adults comprise largest group of suspended voters”

[The Collegian](#)

“Boom: Older Renters Comprise Largest Share of Market”

[Forbes](#)

Meanwhile, the term compose is a verb meaning “to constitute or make up a whole.” Using the sentence above, it will now become Twenty five students compose the class, denoting that the students combined make up the whole class. Below are some examples of the usage of compose:

“Students compose song about buddy bench”

[CBC.ca](#)

“Lee University’s John Wykoff Commissioned To Compose 2 Choral Arrangements For Presidential Inauguration”

[The Chattanooga](#)

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“How do you compose a showpiece for the Proms? Start by listening to Mozart ...”

[The Guardian](#)

The confusion around the two words even gave rise to the term comprised of which can be considered illogical given the definitions aforementioned above. If you take in consideration the definition of comprise, it means that the sentence The class is comprised of 25 students would mean The class is consist of 25 students which not only sounds awkward but also be nonsensical. However, this type of misuse can be easily committed by some. Below are some examples:

“Bill Clinton suggests Donald Trump’s support base is comprised of ‘rednecks’”

[AOL News](#)

“WWE Discussing New Stable For SmackDown Comprised Of Accomplished Collegiate Wrestlers, Maybe Angle”

[Forbes](#)

“Meet the man ridding Wikipedia of ‘comprised of,’ one edit at a time”

[Geekwire](#)

A trick to determining the proper term to use is to remember that the whole comprises the parts while the parts composes the whole.