

# Fortuitous vs. Fortunate

The words fortuitous and fortunate are two terms that are often mixed up by writers. This may be because their meanings have something to do with luck and chance. This post will guide you through determining the differences between these two terms and hopefully help you to use them accurately in your writing.

The word fortuitous is commonly used as an adjective that means “happening by accident or chance rather than design.” Its synonyms include accidental, unplanned, and coincidental.

Arsenal news: We're conceding too many fortuitous goals, admits Petr Cech  
[The Independent](#)

Episcopal finally gets a fortuitous bounce and knocks off Bullis on senior night  
[Washington Post](#)

Fortuitous chat pays off in exemption into this week's AT&T Byron Nelson Classic  
[Sacramento Bee](#)

However, it may sometimes be used informally to mean “happening by a lucky chance” or as a synonym to fortunate.

A fortuitous find  
[Dalhousie University News](#)

West Ham thanking their lucky stars after fortuitous home win over Hull  
[ESPN FC](#)

Lucky bamboo: A fortuitous plant for Chinese New Year  
[Chicago Tribune](#)

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On the other hand, the term fortunate is used as an adjective meaning “favored by or involving good luck or fortune” or “bringing some good thing not foreseen as certain.” Its synonyms include lucky, auspicious, and favorable.

Singapore fortunate to have an equal, multiracial society

[The Straits Times](#)

Kids read to provide sheep and goats to less fortunate

[Port Townsend Leader](#)

Rescue crews say Prius driver fortunate after San Rafael bus accident

[KGO-TV](#)

Despite this original distinction, current writers use fortuitous and fortunate interchangeably. If you want to retain the traditional meanings of the words, remember that anything that happened by chance or accident is fortuitous, while people or events that are favored by good luck are fortunate.