

# People vs. Persons

In the modern sense, the word people has slowly been adopted by some writers as the de facto plural form of person in place of its traditional plural form persons. However, persons as a term is still used in legal and some formal writing. This post will help you distinguish between these two words so you can properly use them in your writing.

The word people is most commonly used as a noun denoting “human beings in general or considered collectively” or “the men, women, and children of a particular nation, community, or ethnic group.”

The people of Kiribati could become the world’s first climate refugees

[CBS News](#)

People Are Loving This Boy’s Reaction Every Time His Sister Picks Him Up

[BuzzFeed News](#)

A lot of people are betting Conor McGregor is going to knock out Floyd Mayweather

[Quartz](#)

On the other hand, the term persons serves as the original plural form of the word person which is a noun referring to “a human being regarded as an individual” and is usually used in legal and formal setting.

Federal Funding Cuts Put Missing Persons and John Doe Cases on the Back Burner

[TIME](#)

3 persons missing in Douglas County

[KCBY](#)

Persons with disabilities must insist on inclusion

[Barbados Advocate](#)

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Now that we've discussed their definitions, let's try to examine a traditional distinction between these two words. People is usually used for uncountable groups of individuals while persons is used for groups that are easily countable.

The Number of People on Food Stamps Is Falling. Here's Why  
[Newsweek](#)

Aadhaar reunites 3 missing persons with families in Bengaluru  
[Times of India](#)

Local law enforcement opens up on missing persons cases  
[Winchester Sun](#)

Whether you want to stick to the traditional distinctions between the words people and persons is up to you. What's important is you use them properly in your sentences.