

# Proportional vs. Proportionate

Some words have the similar meanings and origin but are used in different contexts, causing confusion to some people. This is the case with the terms proportional and proportionate. While both of these words deal with the proportion in terms of size, degree, or any measure, they are actually used in different contexts. This post will help you distinguish when to use these two and allow you to incorporate them properly in your writing.

The word proportional is used as an adjective meaning “corresponding in size, degree, or intensity,” “having the same or a constant ratio,” or “corresponding in size or amount to something else.” It is often used for specific mathematical meaning or quantity.

Douglas Todd: Five reasons opponents of proportional representation are wrong  
[Vancouver Sun](#)

China defends defence spending rise as low, proportional  
[TODAY Online](#)

Proportional northern shrimp distribution approach continuation requested  
[FIS](#)

On the other hand, the term proportionate also means corresponding in size, degree, or intensity” but is usually chosen for quantities that are difficult to measure. It is also used to describe something that is made that way by an active agent.

Fatal shooting ‘proportionate to the imminent threat’ – police watchdog  
[Radio New Zealand](#)

Britain wants ‘proportionate’ response to Russia after spy poisoning  
[The Straits Times](#)

China ready for proportionate response to US tariffs: envoy

# Proportional vs. Proportionate

Reuters

Now that we've discussed how the words proportional and proportionate are appropriately used in a sentence, you should be able to use them more accurately in your sentences. Remember that proportional is used to describe things with specific measures while proportionate is applicable to things that are difficult to measure.