

Taken Aback vs. Taken Back

Idioms, defined as a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words, often cause confusion. Among these idioms is taken aback, which is often confused with taken back. Although a single -a separates the two phrases, these two are actually different from each other in terms of meaning. This post will help you distinguish between these two for you to be able use them properly in your sentences.

The idiom taken aback is used when something is startling enough to make us jump back in surprise. It was originally used to describe how the wind blows the sails of a ship flat against the masts and spars that support them.

Report: Teams 'taken aback' by Suns' asking price for Eric Bledsoe

[Yahoo Sports](#)

Storm Ophelia: Tourists and locals taken aback by Belfast's dead zone

[News Letter](#)

Ex-Leeds Carnegie chief Lancaster taken aback by Andrew's attack

[Yorkshire Post](#)

On the other hand, taken back can either be a corrupted version of taken aback or the past participle form of the verb phrase take back, which may mean "to solemnly or formally reject or go back on something formerly adhered to."

'I've taken back what cancer took' Cancer survivor has flowers tattooed across chest to reclaim body after double mastectomy

[Mirror](#)

Government set to be taken back to court over air pollution plans

[The Guardian](#)

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It may also be used to mean “to remind someone of something in the past.”

Kim Jong Nam murder suspects taken back to crime scene

[Reuters](#)

Pupils taken back in time

[Peterborough Telegraph](#)

Now that we've discussed the differences between taken aback and taken back, you should be able to use them more accurately in your sentences. Bear in mind that taken aback is about being very surprised or startled while taken back is about recovering something or bringing back to the past.