

Sometimes, words with similar sounds cause confusion among writers, especially when their spellings are also similar. This is the case with the terms tortuous and torturous. Set apart by a single extra letter *r*, their meanings are very different from each other. This post will help you determine the difference between these two words so you can properly use them in your sentences.

The word tortuous is used as an adjective which means “marked by repeated twists, bends, or turns” or “excessively lengthy and complex.”

Angela Merkel’s Tortuous Path Toward a German Coalition
[New York Times](#)

The tortuous relationship between hipsters and stick-and-ball sports
[San Diego Reader](#)

Canucks can’t recover from tortuous five minutes in loss to Bruins
[Sportsnet](#)

On the other hand, the term torturous functions as an adjective which means “characterized by, involving, or causing excruciating pain or suffering.”

Cold case no more: Police arrest 5 in ‘torturous’ 1983 slaying
[Q13FOX](#)

“The demands being made by the people inside, including ending the torturous practice of solitary confinement, are appeals to be afforded basic human rights and dignity.”
[KTVU San Francisco](#)

“Responding to torturous treatment of innocent people ... to whatever small degree

is not unreasonable to me.”

[Bendigo Advertiser](#)

It may also pertain to figurative pain and suffering.

Hard part begins for Cubs after a torturous end to the season

[Chicago Tribune](#)

Widow's 'torturous' wait for ex-Dundee man's funeral four months after Thailand holiday tragedy

[Evening Telegraph](#)

STEVE DeSHAZO: Bizarre loss by Nationals is torturous finale for Werth

[Fredericksburg](#)

Now that we have discussed the difference between the words tortuous and torturous, you may be able to properly utilize them in your writing. Remember that tortuous is about complexity and twists while the term torturous pertains to pain and suffering. Despite the tortuous nature of writing, there is no need for it to be torturous.