

Venal vs. Venial

The words venal and venial not only look the same they also have similar sounds, causing writers to get confused when using them. Both terms also, to a certain degree, refer to committing a wrongdoing or a capacity to do so. This post will help you distinguish between the two words so you can use them properly in your writing.

The term venal is used as an adjective which means “showing or motivated by susceptibility to bribery.” It is often used to describe politicians or anyone with power or influence. Its noun form is venality.

“He made no effort to dispel the odour of self-interest, or to rework his image as a venal ruler who doesn’t really care for his country, but only for himself and his cronies.”

[The Conversation UK](#)

Scotland’s cultural scene is becoming vile, venal and parochial

[Spectator.co.uk](#)

“...I would sum up his view of journalists as being motivated only by the venal pursuit of controversial stories and headlines.”

[Burlington Times News](#)

On the other hand, the word venial is also used as an adjective “denoting a sin that is not regarded as depriving the soul of divine grace,” “able to be forgiven or pardoned” or “not seriously wrong, as a sin.”

Mortal and venial sins: The appalling goings-on at the Bronx’s Sin City

[New York Daily News](#)

“It is the diminishment of a man by a thousand nicks, a soul that rationalizes venial sins for the sake of his only child.”

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Los Angeles Times

“...pitching around Madison Bumgarner in the top of the second, committing the venial sin of walking the opposing pitcher.”

NBC Sports

Hopefully, this post has helped you determine whether to use venal or venial in your sentences. Remember that committing venial sins might be forgivable but being venal is not.