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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Vocabulary

### Easily confused words



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Catherine**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary. I'm Catherine...

**Neil**

And I'm Neil.

**Catherine**

Neil, like your hat!

**Neil**

Thank you very much. It's cold outside, so I thought it would be **sensible** to wear a woolly hat.

**Catherine**

Yes.

**Neil**

My ears are very **sensitive** to the cold.

**Catherine**

I've noticed your ears looking a little bit red of a morning, occasionally, Neil. And the words **sensible** and **sensitive** are good examples of today's topic. The two words look and sound similar, but they have very different meanings. And in this programme we're going to talk about more pairs of words that people sometimes get mixed up.

**Neil**

Now let's now hear about Mike. He was in a shop yesterday when he made a mistake.

**Catherine**

Think about this question while you listen: What mistake did Mike make in the shop?

**INSERT**

Mike felt **bored**. He was watching a **boring** film about plants in the **desert**. 'I know – I'll make a cake', he thought. 'We'll have it for **dessert**'. The **recipe** looked easy – just a few **ingredients**. But when Mike checked the **contents** of his cupboard, there wasn't any sugar.

He went to the shop and bought some. The cake looked great. But it tasted horrible. Mike checked the **receipt**. He'd bought salt by mistake!

**Catherine**

So we asked you: What mistake did Mike make in the shop?

**Neil**

And the answer is: He bought salt instead of sugar.

**Catherine**

Yes, the **receipt** said 'salt' but the **recipe**, of course, said 'sugar'.

**Neil**

The nouns **receipt** and **recipe** look very similar, but they have different meanings. A **receipt**, r – e – c – e – i – p – t, is a document that shows you have paid money for something.

**Catherine**

Yes, and a **recipe**, r – e – c – i – p – e, is a set of cooking instructions.

**Neil**

Listen to a clip from Mike's story. Can you spot two more confusing words?

**INSERT CLIP 1**

He was watching a boring film about plants in the **desert**. 'I know – I'll make a cake', he thought. 'We'll have it for **dessert**'.

**Neil**

So that's **desert** and **dessert**.

**Catherine**

Yep. Now a **desert** is an area of land where very little can grow and there's very little water. **Desert**, d – e – s – e – r – t, has one 's', but **dessert**, d – e – s – s – e – r – t, has two 's'. A **dessert** is a sweet food course that we eat at the end of a meal. Right. Moving on. Neil, what do you do when you are **bored**?

**Neil**

Well I find making cakes **boring**.

**Catherine**

Really?

**Neil**

Yeah. When I'm **bored**, I knit.

**Catherine**

You knit?

**Neil**

Yeah.

**Catherine**

Of course - the hat! The woolly hat!

**Neil**

Yes, I knitted this woolly hat.

**Catherine**

It's fantastic!

**Neil**

**Bored** and **boring** – both adjectives, but with very different meanings.

**Catherine**

**Bored**, b – o – r – e – d, describes how someone is feeling, when they are not interested in something. **Boring**, b – o – r – i – n – g, describes a thing that is not very interesting. Right. Let's have another clip.

## **INSERT 1 CLIP 2**

The recipe looked easy – just a few **ingredients**. But when Mike checked the **contents** of his cupboard, there wasn't any sugar.

**Neil**

The words **ingredients** and **contents** both mean things that are a part of something else. Individual **ingredients** are things that we put together to make something, usually food – a cake for example. **Contents** are all the separate items inside something like a box or a cupboard.

## **IDENT**

6 Minute Vocabulary, from [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com).

**Catherine**

And we're talking about confusing words.

**Neil**

And it's time for a quiz. Choose the correct word. Number one: I can't eat ice cream. My teeth are too... Is it a) sensible or b) sensitive?

**Catherine**

And it's b) **sensitive**.

**Neil**

Well done if you got that right. Number two: Very little rain falls in the... Is it a) desert or b) dessert?

**Catherine**

And the answer is a) **desert**.

**Neil**

And number three: I had to wait an hour for my appointment – I got really .... Is it a) boring or b) bored?

**Catherine**

And the answer is b) **bored**.

**Neil**

And that's the end of the quiz – well done if you got them right.

**Catherine**

And it's almost the end of the programme.

**Neil**

But before we go, here's today's top tip for learning vocabulary: say new words out loud as you learn them - the word stress will help you to remember which is the correct word to use if you are not so sure.

**Catherine**

There's more about this at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

**Both**

Bye.

## Vocabulary points to take away

**sensible:** acting with good judgement

My youngest daughter is the most sensible of all my children. She's very reliable and trustworthy.

**sensitive:** easily upset

My husband is only 25 and he's losing his hair. He's very upset about it and is very sensitive to jokes and comments about baldness

**boring:** not interesting at all

Work is really boring at the moment as I'm doing the same thing every day.

**bored:** feeling uninterested or with nothing to do

Peter was ill all day yesterday and was in bed all day. He couldn't read or watch TV, so he got very bored.

**desert:** an area of land with sand and rock where very little grows and there is little rain

Camels can survive in the hot dry conditions of the desert because they don't have to drink for several days.

**dessert:** a sweet dish at the end of a meal

I was still hungry after the main dish, so I had ice cream for dessert.

**recipe:** instructions for making or preparing food

The recipe said to fry the onions first before adding the meat.

**receipt:** a small document, either paper or electronic, that shows you have paid money for something

The shop won't give you your money back for the dress if you don't have the receipt.

**contents:** all the things that are inside something else

Joanne couldn't find her house key, so she emptied the contents of her bag onto the table. There was her purse, her pen and her phone – but no key.

**ingredients:** individual parts that are combined to make something else, often food

To make pancakes, you only need a few ingredients – flour, milk and eggs.