

# COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS PART 3

## Improving your Style

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT



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### ONE WORD VS. TWO

In addition to words that are spelt similarly or that sound alike, there are also a number of words whose meanings differ depending on whether they are written as one word or broken into two separate words.

**Tip:** When in doubt, use *any time* since it is always correct.

### AWHILE VS. A WHILE:

- **Awhile:** *Adverb*—For a short period of time

She staid in France *awhile* before returning home.

- **A while:** *Noun phrase*—A short period of time

It has been *a while* since the company has hired new personnel.

Like *any time*, *a while* can follow a preposition, while *awhile* (like *anytime*), cannot.

**Incorrect:** I haven't seen you in *awhile*.

**Correct:** I haven't seen you in *a while*.

### ANYWAY VS. ANYWAY VS. ANY WAY:

- **Anyway:** *Adverb*—Nevertheless, anyhow

I can drop the book off at the library; I am going that way *anyway*.

- **Anyways:** *Adverb*—Means the same as *anyway*, but is much more informal and should not be used in formal or academic writing

- **Any way:** *Adjective-noun phrase*—In any manner

You can write the essay *any way* you see fit.

### ANYTIME VS. ANY TIME:

- **Anytime:** *Adverb*—At any time, whenever

You can stop by *anytime*.  
*Anytime* she felt bored, she would begin to draw.

- **Any time:** *Noun phrase*—Used in the same contexts as *anytime*

You can stop by *any time*.  
*Any time* she felt bored, she would begin to draw.

AND unlike *anytime*, *any time* can be used with prepositions:

**Incorrect:** Assistance is available at *anytime* of the day.

**Correct:** Assistance is available at *any time* of the day.



## EVERYDAY VS. EVERY DAY:

- Everyday:** *Adjective*—Ordinary, unexceptional, regular; *Adjective*—Used each day
  - Musical and theatrical performances were an *everyday* occurrence at the creative arts school.
  - We need some *everyday* items from the store: soap, milk, salt, and paper towel.
- Every day:** *Noun phrase*—Each day
  - I pass by the store *every day*.
  - Every day*, her boss sends out an email to the staff.



### Sources

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## SOMETIME VS. SOME TIME:

- Sometime:** *Adverb*—At an indefinite time in the future
  - You should stop by for a visit *sometime* after work.
- Some time:** *Noun phrase*—An indefinite amount of time
  - It has been quite *some time* since he started working here.

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