

Compliment vs. Complement -Know the Difference

Created: Tuesday, 10 May 2016 13:14 | Published: Sunday, 22 May 2016 10:51 | Written by [namita](#) | [Print](#)

The Oxford Dictionary defines homophones as:

“Each of two or more words having the same pronunciation but different meanings, origins, or spelling.”

In English language, there are a large number of homophones that often confuse us on the right word to use. One such commonly confused homophone is compliment and complement. The words sound similar but differ in their meanings.

Compliment – Complement

Compl-**I**-ment → **I** like
compliments!

Compl-**E**-ment → You
compl-**E**-t-**E** me!

Compliment means praise

When you compliment someone, you are showering admiration on them or praising them for something you admire. Let us look at some examples to learn its use in different context.

I would like to extend my compliments to the chef for such tasty pasta.
I must compliment all of you for your undying support and dedication.
Your sister gave me a nice compliment on my new hairstyle the last time we met.
Your feedback is like a compliment that makes me content.
I tried to give him a compliment on his performance but he got too busy backstage.

Compliment and praise – both have ‘i’ – and this is one way to remember the right usage of the word.

Complement means an enhancement

When you complement you are talking about two things that completes one another or brings out the best when together. One thing complements other when it looks good side by side. In short, when one thing enhances the beauty of the other and improves the overall effect, then the word complement is used. Let us look at some examples to learn its use in different contexts.

The salad was delicious and the dressing complemented it beautifully.
The addition of strawberry was a complement to the overall taste of the cake.
You are wearing a beautiful dress that is complementing your complexion.
This shirt perfectly complements your trousers.
The new couple complemented each other in every way. It was truly a match made in heaven.

Complement and enhancement – both contain ‘e’ – and this is one way you can remember when and how to use this word.

To conclude

Compliment vs. complement depends upon the context of your sentence as both the words have its own purpose and meaning. Remember, to express a compliment is to praise or admire something, and a complement is to express completion or perfection of something. [Learning English](#) will become easy if you do it with the help of examples, as shown above. Join our online spoken English class and learn the nuances of English.

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-By Chander Madan

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