

English Words Commonly Confused by Swedes

incorrect items are in red text

- ❖ **to** = *att, till* (I'm going to California. Do you want to?)
too = *för, också* (That's too much. I'd like a Volvo too.)
- ❖ **witch** = *häxa*
which = *vilken*
Example: Which witch did you see flying through the sky last night?
- ❖ **with** = *med*
whit [somewhat rare] = *dugg*
Example: I don't care a whit who *you* go to the dance with—I'm going with Fred!
- ❖ **were** (rhymes with *fur, her, sir*) = past tense and subjunctive form of *to be*.
where (rhymes with *hair, fair, care*) = at/in what place (rhymes with *hair, fair, care*).
Examples: Where were they? They were at the store.
- ❖ **fun and funny.** *Funny* can mean *strange, bizarre*, or it can describe something that makes you laugh. (Sometimes a question is asked when the meaning is unclear: "Haha funny or weird funny?") *Fun* is a noun and adjective for things that are fun to do. So you go on a fun trip and have a lot of fun, but the trip would only be funny if you laughed all the time, or (in a less common usage) if something weird happened.
- ❖ **he's** (rhymes with *bees, freeze*) = he is; *han är*.
his (rhymes with *fizz, biz*) = belonging to him; *hans, sin*.
Example: He's going to take his mother to Turkey for her birthday.
- ❖ **it's** = it is; *det är*.
its = belonging to it; *dess, sin*.
- ❖ **hear** = *höra*
here = *här*
- ❖ **prize** = an award that you win
price = the amount that you pay for something
- ❖ **should** most often means *borde, bör*
would most often means *skulle*
Examples: If I won a million dollars, I would buy my family a big house. I would like to travel to Antarctica someday.
If he bought you a new car, then you should at least send him a thank you note. I really should go to class more often.
- ❖ **choose and chose.** "choose" is the infinitive form (to choose) and a present tense form; "chose" is the past tense.
Examples: I always like to choose for myself. Yesterday I chose to eat two gallons of ice cream, but now I wish I had chosen the salad.
- ❖ **lose** = *förlora*. You lose a game, a match, your keys, your temper, etc.
loose = *lös*. You tell someone if you notice their shoelaces are loose. Young, hip boys like to wear loose pants.
loosen = *lossa*. A bear may refuse to loosen its grip on a hunter.
- ❖ Don't confuse **off** and **of**.

Wrong: Turn the lights of. The table was made off wood.

- ❖ **less vs. fewer** Use *fewer* with things that can be divided and counted as individuals (fewer people, bills, days, soldiers, etc.) Use *less* with things that can't be divided this way (less time, sand, food, pain, joy, etc.)
- ❖ **through** = *genom*
threw = *kastade*
Example: I really got in trouble when I threw the ball through the classroom window.
- ❖ **imagination** = the ability to imagine, to think up new things, to dream and create in the mind.
fantasy = a fantastic idea, a dream of something unlikely or incredible.
Wrong: I can't come up with anything because I don't have any fantasy today.
Right: In my imagination I'm a sea captain sailing the Indian Ocean. I had a fantasy about a romantic rendezvous with Göran Persson.
- ❖ **diary** = *dagbok*. Related to the Spanish *día*, day.
dairy = *mejeri*. From the Old English *dæge*, "bread kneader," because bread kneaders also worked in the dairy. (*Dæge* is related to the Swedish *deg*.)
Example: I kept a diary when I worked at the dairy milking cows.
- ❖ **excited** = *upphetsad; uppjagad; ivrig*.
exited = left, gone.
Example: She was able to become excited about the gift only after her uncle had exited the room.
- ❖ **maybe** = *kanske*
may be = *kan vara*
maby is a common misspelling.
Examples: Maybe I'll go to the Louvre while I'm in Paris, but we couldn't stay very long. It may be closed by the time we get there.
- ❖ **borrow** = *låna*
loan = *lån, låna ut*
Example: I borrowed some money from him. = He gave me a loan.
"Neither a borrower nor a lender be" — *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. iii.
- ❖ **disease** = *sjukdom*
deceased = dead (but "to de cease" is *not* normally used to mean "to die")
Example: She's dead, deceased, she's dead. — *Romeo and Juliet*, Act IV. Sc. v.
- ❖ **economy, economic, economics, economical.** What's the difference? Here's the answer, adapted from dictionary.com:
economy, noun.
 - The system of economic activity in a country, region, or community: *Effects of inflation were felt at every level of the economy.*
 - Careful, thrifty management of money, materials, or labor: *learned to practice economy in making the household budget.***economic**, adjective.
 - Of or relating to the production, development, and management of money.
 - Of or relating to an economy: *a period of sustained economic growth.*
 - Of or relating to the science of economics

economics, noun.

- The science that deals with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services and with the theory and management of economies.

economical, adjective.

- Prudent and thrifty in management; not wasteful or extravagant.

Wrong: If I won the lottery it would be good for my economy. I'm taking a class in industrial economy.

Right: If I won the lottery it would be good for my economic situation. I'm taking a class in industrial economics. It's cheaper if you buy the larger economy size—that is to say, it's very economical.

❖ **customer** = *kund*

costumer = someone who makes costumes

Wrong: Yesterday the grocery store in Lillpite only had two costumers.

❖ Be careful with **during** and **under**.

Wrong: Under the summer I was in Ireland.

Right: During the summer I spent a lot of time under my cousin's Volvo, helping him install a new fuel line.

❖ **though** = fast, fastän

tough = hård, rå, tuff, osv.

tow = bogsera, släpa, dra

thaw = tina

dough = deg

Wrong: She came to the party even tough she had wrecked her car that night.