

## 'Diffuse' Versus 'Defuse'



And "convince" versus "persuade."

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Grammar Girl here.

Some pairs of words are used interchangeably, even indiscriminately. Often the words in question sound similar, and that creates confusion. Other times they are simply misused so frequently—owing to their similarity of meaning, despite a nuanced difference—that the misuse becomes commonplace.

Today, we'll look at two pairs.

### Convince Versus Persuade

First, consider the verbs "convince" and "persuade." Even though the adjective forms—"convincing" and "persuasive"—are synonyms, the verbs "convince" and "persuade" should be used in different contexts.

Frequently, you might hear someone say something like, "I convinced Melvin to make his presentation less tedious." Well, you may have succeeded in getting Melvin to spice things up, slide-wise, but what you actually did is "persuade" him to do so. (You may also have "convinced" him that it would be a splendid idea for his

audience not to be lulled into a vapid stupor.)