

There is a group of adjectives that can be very confusing because they **look like verbs**. They often have “ed” or “ing” endings. But they function as adjectives.

Example:

The word “tire” means to need rest or to lose interest in. You say, “Grandmother tires easily.” OR “The long hike tired her.” In both sentences “tire” is the verb. But two adjectives are formed from this word. They are “tiring” and “tired”. “Grandmother was tired after the walk.” In this sentence, “was” is the verb and “tired” is the adjective. OR “I had a tiring day at work.” “Had” is the verb and “tiring” is the adjective.

These adjectives confuse English learners because they are not interchangeable. In other words you can’t use tiring or tired in the same way. You can’t say, “I had a tired day at work.” OR “Grandmother was tiring after the hike.” (In this sentence “was tiring” is actually a past continuous verb.)

In some sentences you can interchange the words, but it changes the meaning of the sentence.

Example: My boyfriend is so **bored**. My boyfriend is so **boring**.

In the first sentence, your boyfriend has lost interest in what is happening. In the second sentence, your boyfriend is causing others to lose interest in him.

Choose the correct word in these sentences.

boring or bored:

This professor has been talking for hours. I am so _____.

This professor has been talking for hours. He is so _____.

satisfied or satisfying

The new employees are very _____ with their jobs.

I got a lot of work done today. It was a _____ day.

alarming or alarmed:

What an _____ noise!

I am _____ by the loud noises coming from my son’s room.

amusing or amused:

He told an _____ story.

Jay was _____ when I told him the joke.

confusing or confused:

I am _____ about which word I should use.

It is a _____ problem.

depressing or depressed:

This rainy weather is _____.

I am _____ about the rainy weather.

exciting or excited:

May was _____ about winning the scholarship.

It was an _____ announcement.

embarrassing or embarrassed:

I was _____ when the teacher called on me.

As I walked to the stage to receive my award, I tripped. It was so _____.

exhausting or exhausted:

I hate cleaning my house. It is _____.

I was _____ after cleaning all day.

We worked hard in the garden from 8 AM until noon. It was an _____ morning.

frightening or frightened:

I am _____ of bees.

That was a _____ film.

Removing the honey from the bees nest was a _____ experience.

frustrating or frustrated:

Algebra is very difficult for me. It is _____ to work so hard on solving just one problem.

I am _____ because I can't solve this problem.

interesting or interested:

Dan is _____ in animals.

There are many _____ animals in the zoo.

Discuss with your class:

1. What school subject was boring to you?
2. What is an exciting thing you would like to do?
3. What is something relaxing you do when you are stressed?
4. What is a disgusting food that you would never eat?
5. What is something you are confused about?
6. Tell an embarrassing story about yourself.
7. What were you frightened of as a child?
8. What are you frightened of now?
9. What is the most exhausting chore you do?
10. Are you interested in having a pet?