

Confusing Verb Pairs

make (to bring into existence/ produce i.e. where it hadn't existed before)	do (perform an action)
Make a trip. Make a decision. Make an offer.	Do homework. Do harm. Do research. Do badly.
lay (to describe an action)	lie (to describe a state)
They laid out the papers for signing.	The papers were lying on the table.
talk (in general)	speak (a language, a formal speech)
He talked to him.	He spoke to the Board of Directors.
say (focus on words, to express opinions, quotes, receiver isn't mentioned)	tell (focus on message, addressed to a person)
"Good morning," said the woman.	Has he told you the good news? Tell me story!
steal (a thing)	rob (a place)
He stole a chewing gum.	He robbed the gas station.
lend (you give the item)	borrow (you take the item)
Can you lend me your pen?	Can I borrow your pen?
listen to (controlled , pay attention)	hear (not controlled , you notice it)
We listened carefully to the speech.	I heard a noise outside.
watch (intensely, something is moving)	see (no intention, just happened)
I watch TV. I watched the car passing by.	I just saw you. I can see you.
wear (to have something on your body)	carry (to take something to another place)
I wear glasses.	He is carrying a briefcase.
win (a game, competition, an award)	earn (to get something in exchange for work)
John won a prize in the competition.	I earn a decent salary.
bring (move it to us, our way)	take (move it away from us, to where we go)
Bring your homework to me.	Take your dog away from me.
look for (try to find)	find (the goal of looking for, stop looking)
I am looking for my cat.	I found my cat in my room.
lose (object, game)	miss (transportation, event, feeling)
I lost my watch.	I miss you. I missed my flight.
look (see, verb)	look like (comparison)
He looks good.	He looks like a monster.
hope (something to happen)	wait (pass time until something happens)
I hope I will not be late.	He waited for his friend to arrive.
know (to be familiar, to be informed)	meet (first time, an arrangement)
I've known him for 15 years.	I met my husband in New Zealand.
close (more formal, before a noun, signs, roads)	shut (less formal, noisy)
There is a closed door.	He shut the car door.
begin (more formal)	start (with machines, creating a business)
He began to play the piano.	He started the engine. He started a new shop.
end (stop of something, termination)	finish (overall completion , finish the task)
The contest ended after four minutes.	The golfer didn't finish the course.
Allow (more formal)	Let
I would not allow a child to have a in their room.	Let me show you how to open it.