

Allusion vs. Illusion vs. Elusion

Despite the obvious differences in spelling, people still misuse the words allusion, illusion, and elusion. This may be attributed to their phonetic similarity. Below are simple tips to avoid mix-ups in the use of these words.

Allusion is word used to refer to “an expression designed to call something to mind without mentioning it explicitly” or “an indirect or passing reference”.

“At the 2016 Olympics Opening Ceremony, the IOC’s Bach made no allusion to Russia”

[The Independent](#)

“A birdcage lamp used to rest on a piano that sat in the corner, an allusion to Angelou’s 1969 autobiographical work, ‘I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.’”

[Forbes](#)

“The allusion did not sit well in a city where lawmakers are often distinguished by being progressive or moderate Democrats, leading at least one supporter of the measure to hold back tears of anger.”

[Fortune](#)

On the other hand, an illusion is “something that deceives by producing a false or misleading impression of reality” or “the state or condition of being deceived”. Since illusion is a relatively common word, most people are familiar with it and rarely misuse it.

“Tony Oursler’s Grand Illusions, Science Left at the Door”

[New York Times](#)

“This Optical Illusion Hugging Photo Will Make Your Brain Melt”

[Huffington Post](#)

“Fish Spawning Aggregations: an illusion of plenty”

[National Geographic](#)

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Lastly, elusion is a noun which refers to “the act or an instance of eluding or escaping”.

“‘Elusion’ Charges Dropped Against Portsmouth Mayor”

[The New Journal and Guide](#)

“They might also be considered victims, for having been given the elusion of competency and then asked to keep up with the complex problems around them.”

[Huffington Post](#)

“Perhaps Atlanta found inspiration in the Houston Rockets’ elusion of a sweep in Game 4 of the Western Conference Finals”

[Bleacher Report](#)

This is an allusion to those who give in to the illusion that these three words are interchangeable. Elusion of this mistake is easy as long as you remember their meanings and uses.