

Continual vs. Continuous

In the English language, you may encounter words that sometimes overlap in meaning and are frequently interchanged even by native speakers and writers. This is the case with the words continual and continuous. Both terms originate from the word continue and are very closely related when it comes to meaning and use. This post will discuss the differences between the two so you may avoid confusion with using these words in the future.

The term continual is used as an adjective meaning “recurring in steady usually rapid succession,” “frequently recurring,” or “always happening.” The action does not occur ceaselessly but there is a regularity to it.

Cable Management System: Continual Infrastructure Investments Escalate Growth
[Edition Truth](#)

Conquering Embarrassment is a Continual Process
[Migraine.com](#)

Farmers fed up with continual power cuts
[Stuff.co.nz](#)

On the other hand, the word continuous is used as an adjective meaning “marked by uninterrupted extension in space, time, or sequence” or “forming an unbroken whole; without interruption.” This is usually used to refer to actions like the beating of a person’s heart, the movement of planets in the solar system, and the flow of water in a river.

Continuous trauma: Khadija forced to take exam alongside attacker
[Geo News Pakistan](#)

Grattan on Friday: Budget-making is undermined by the continuous election campaign
[The Conversation AU](#)

Veeam aims for continuous availability with Availability Suite v10
[Network World](#)

The confusion also extends to the words’ adverb forms continually and continuously, which are often

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mixed up by writers. The adverb continually means “repeated frequently in the same way.”

Irish language sector needs to ‘reinvent itself’, says academic
[Irish Times](#)

Meanwhile, continuously as an adverb means “repeatedly without exceptions or reversals” or “without interruption or gaps.”

Indian chef creates world record, cooks continuously for 53 hours
[Hindustan Times](#)

Now that you have learned the differences between continual and continuous, it would be easier for you to determine which term to use in your sentence. Hopefully, this post helped you distinguish between these words and avoid further confusion in the future.