Loath vs. Loathe

Just like other words which are spelled similarly, the words loath and loathe may often confuse writers. Although they look almost exactly alike, these two words are different in both meaning and use. This post will help you determine when and how to use these terms.

The word loath is used as an adjective which means "reluctant" or "unwilling to do something contrary to one's ways of thinking."

Why China is loath to pursue US probe into JPMorgan hiring
Financial Times

British business 'loath to invest in research'
BBC News

Unable or loath to buy, millennials spur apartment trend
Lehigh Valley Business

On the other hand, the term loathe is used as a verb meaning "to dislike greatly and often with disgust or intolerance."

Richard Dreyfuss: 'Bill Murray is a pig..but although I loathe him, he makes me laugh'
The Telegraph

Some Christians love Trump, others loathe him. Can both be right?
Lexington Herald Leader

How Hollywood Came to Fear and Loathe Rotten Tomatoes
Vanity Fair

You may also encounter the term loth, which is just the British English version of loath.

"Lamela would not be sold on the cheap as the Tottenham chairman, Daniel Levy, is loth to take a loss on any player."

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Another difference between the two is their pronunciations. While loath rhymes with both and oath, loathe sounds like clothe. To further help you distinguish between the two terms, remember that loathe is used as a verb because they both have an "e" while loath is used as an adjective.