

# AMONG vs BETWEEN

Many words in the English language are easily confused, and two such words are “among” and “between”. These two words are often used interchangeably, but they have distinct meanings and usage rules that you need to understand to use them correctly. In this guide, we’ll take a look at the difference between “among” and “between” and how to use them correctly in a sentence when speaking or writing.

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## Between

“Between” is a preposition that locates or places something in the middle of two or more distinct and separate things. “Between” is usually followed by two (or more) singular nouns or a plural noun.

How to use “between” in a sentence:

1. The conversation between John and Mary was intense.
2. I had to choose between going to the party and staying home.
3. The sandwich was stuck between the two slices of bread.
4. There was a wall between the two houses.
5. The book was divided into chapters, each of which dealt with a different topic.
6. The decision was between doing nothing, giving him a verbal warning, or firing him right there and then.

## Among

“Among” (commonly “amongst” in British English) is a preposition used to indicate that something is surrounded by, or part of, a larger group. It suggests a sense of being part of a larger whole, rather than being individual and distinct from each other.

How to use "among" in a sentence:

1. The red apple was hidden among the green apples.
2. The professor was highly respected among his colleagues.
3. The discussion was about the differences among the various cultures.
4. We found a rare book among the old collection.
5. The committee members were in disagreement among themselves.
6. The flowers were scattered among the grass.

## Why are "among" and "between" commonly confused?

"Among" and "between" are often confused as they are both prepositions that locate or place things. There is also a common misconception that "between" can only place something in the middle of two things, while "among" places something in the middle of three or more things. However, this is not true. "Between" can be used to indicate that something is in the middle of any number of distinct things, and "among" is used more specifically to show something is surrounded or part of a larger group. This does mean that there are a few situations where both "between" and "among" could be used interchangeably. For example, "The boss divided the work between three members of the team" or "The boss shared the work among three members of the team." In the first sentence, we are considering the three members of the team as separate and distinct. In the second example, the three members of the team are considered not as separate and distinct, but as part of a group.

## Summary

**between** – a preposition used to locate or place something in the middle of two or more distinct and separate things

**among/amongst** – a preposition used to indicate that something is surrounded by, or part of, a larger group

## Do you know the difference between “among” and “between”?

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the word (“among” and “between”):

1. The football was kicked \_\_\_\_\_ the two goalposts.
2. The cake was divided \_\_\_\_\_ the six children at the party.
3. The debate was \_\_\_\_\_ the five candidates.
4. The cat was hiding \_\_\_\_\_ the flowers in the garden.
5. The choice is \_\_\_\_\_ taking the bus or walking.
6. The candy was shared \_\_\_\_\_ the children at the school.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ the three of us, we finished the project.
8. The secret was whispered \_\_\_\_\_ the two friends.
9. The flowers were placed \_\_\_\_\_ the candles on the table.
10. The disagreement was \_\_\_\_\_ the two neighbours.

*Answers: 1. between, 2. between/among, 3. between/among, 4. among, 5. between, 6. among, 7. between, 8. between, 9. between (if placed directly between each candle)/among (if the candles are considered a group), 10. between*