

# Word for Word

## *All ready or already?*



Although very similar in spelling and sound, *all ready* and *already* are distinct terms. They have very different meanings and functions.

Separately, *all* and *ready* can modify countless nouns and pronouns. When used together, however, they have a specific meaning: to be fully prepared. Although *ready* alone will suffice in most cases, *all* is used for emphasis.

### **Examples:**

The mice are all ready for their treatment.

The students smiled, all ready for their group portrait.

Already has a different meaning: before or by a specified or implied time, which may be past, present, or future. Some examples may help clarify its usage.

### Examples:

We already obtained permission to use these figures in our paper. (already = before now)

By the time we found the room, the meeting was already over. (already = before a time in the past)

The study has already met its recruitment goal, even though enrollment is open for another two months. (already = before an expected time in the future)

In U.S. English, *already* is also used in some slang expressions to intensify a statement or convey mild impatience.

### Examples:

All right, already!

Enough, already!

Just give me the bad news, already!

If you are uncertain about whether to use *all ready* or *already*, try saying the sentence without the *all*. If the sentence makes sense without *all*, then *all ready* is the correct choice. If it does not make sense without *all*, *already* is the correct choice.

## Bibliography

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