



Zombie and Dead - Different meanings and uses

Before we look at all the idioms, let's begin with some basic definitions and different uses of the words ZOMBIE and DEAD.

Zombie is a noun that has two basic meanings.

① a dead body that has been made alive again by magic

"In the movie, the small town was attacked by hundreds of hungry **zombies**."

② (informal) a person who seems only partly alive, without any feeling or interest in what is happening

"On Monday mornings, the office is full of people walking around like **zombies**."

[Oxford Learner's Dictionaries zombie](#)

The word **dead** can be an adjective, a noun, and an adverb.

Dead adjective - Oxford Learner's Dictionaries lists 14 ways to use the adjective dead. Here are 4 common uses that I often hear.

① no longer alive

"It's sad to see **dead** animals lying at the side of the road."

② (of machines or equipment) not working because of a lack of power

"I couldn't call home because the battery on my phone was **dead**."

③ [not usually before noun] (informal) extremely tired; not well

"I woke up at 4:00 AM this morning. By 13:30 I was **dead** on my feet."

*Dead on my feet is a common English expression. Someone is awake but they have almost no energy.

④ complete/exact

“George is a great archer. He shot the arrow 40 meters from the target and hit the bullseye **dead** center!”

⑤ Of a place (informal, disapproving) very quiet, without activity or interest

“Let’s go to another bar with a better crowd. This place is **dead**.”

[Oxford Learner's Dictionaries Dead adjective](#)

Dead noun - people who have died

“After the battle, the armies gathered their **dead** to bring them home for a proper burial.”

*The adjective DEAD becomes a noun to talk about of group of people who have died. Learn how to turn other adjectives into nouns at my post - [How to use Adjectives as Nouns \(20 real examples + video\)](#)

[Oxford Learner's Dictionaries Dead noun](#)

Dead adverb

① completely; exactly *This meaning is similar to the adjective DEAD, but remember that adjectives are used with nouns and adverbs are used with verbs and adjectives.

“Winston had some ideas for the company’s new direction, but the president is **dead** set against change.”

“After the game, we were all **dead** tired.”

② very

“I’m sure I aced the class final. I thought the exam was **dead** easy.”

[Oxford Learner's Dictionaries Dead adverb](#)

Zombies are sometimes called THE UNDEAD.

Undead adjective (in stories) dead, but still able to move, act, and (in some cases) think and speak.

“Vampires and zombies are undead.”

The adjective undead can also become a noun by putting the article THE in front.

“Lock the doors! The streets are crawling with **the undead!**”

[Oxford Learner's Dictionaries Undead adjective](#)

Idioms with Zombie and Dead

The informal use of the noun ZOMBIE (a person who seems only partly alive) is the most common way zombie is used as an expression.

“I feel like such a **zombie** today. There was a loud thunderstorm last night and it woke me up at 3:30 AM. After that, I couldn’t get back to sleep.”

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I have heard the expression **zombie out** once or twice.

Zombie out

To become like a zombie, meaning you will not move or be active at all. It's a colorful way to say I don't want to do anything, I want to just relax and be very lazy. You might say this after a very hard time at school or work.

"Last week I had to write our company year-end reports. I worked overtime every day. This weekend I want to turn off my brain and just **zombie out**."

DID YOU KNOW?

There are **zombie companies** in Japan. (These are not companies that make zombies!) A **zombie company** is a company that needs bailouts in order to operate. (A bailout is when financial assistance is given to a failing business to keep it from collapsing.)

The term "zombie company" was applied to Japanese firms supported by Japanese banks during the period known as the "Lost Decade" after the collapse of the Japanese asset price bubble in c.1990. Japanese banks continued to support weak or failing firms.

[Zombie company - Wikipedia](#)

According to [Zombie Firms Rise Again in Japan with Aid of Pandemic Loans](#) there are *more than 160,000 zombie companies* in Japan right now!

Idioms with DEAD

I found many more idioms and expressions that use DEAD. Here is a list of some common expressions and collocations that use the word DEAD.

Back from the dead

To start working or be popular again after a period of time when it was not.

"Winamp is **back from the dead**. One of the most popular MP3 players of all time is back after development stopped back in 2013. In 2022 Winamp is back, version 5.9 is now available."

Beat a dead horse

To waste time and effort trying to do something that will not be successful.

"I've asked my boss for a raise 4 times already. I want to ask him again but I feel like I'm just **beating a dead horse**."

Come to a dead stop

This means to stop completely. To stop moving entirely.

"Marsha entered her bedroom and set her books on her desk. There was a spider on the wall above the desk. She **came to a dead stop** as soon as she saw it."

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Dead air

An unintended period of silence that interrupts a broadcast during which no audio or video program material is transmitted. [Wikipedia](#)

“After the news ended, there were five seconds of **dead air** before the network started the next program.”

Dead (set) against

The example from the DEAD adverb definition uses this expression. To be dead against something means to be totally against it. Very opposed to it.

“I suggested that we watch the new Frankenstein movie on Netflix but my wife hates horrors. She was **dead against** it. We watched a comedy instead.”

Dead ahead

Directly in front of your position.

“The captain saw the iceberg **dead ahead** and immediately changed course.”

Deadbeat

A person who is irresponsible and careless.

“Lucy’s first husband is a **deadbeat**. He doesn’t work and he doesn’t pay any child support for his two children. Her mother warned her.”

Dead drunk

Completely drunk

“I took Kirk’s car keys so he couldn’t drive home from the party. He was **dead drunk**.”

Dead easy

The adverb DEAD gave us another example of a common expression. Dead easy.

“The software looks complicated at first, but if you follow the instructions it’s actually **dead easy** to use.”

Dead end

This describes a road or a path that doesn’t lead anywhere. It suddenly stops with nowhere to go.

“When you get to the intersection turn left. Don’t turn right, that road is a dead end.”

Dead end job

Just like a dead end describes a road that doesn’t lead anywhere, a dead end job is a job where there is no chance of promotion and opportunities to advance in the future.

“When my wife decided to quit her job I supported her decision. It was a **dead end job** so there was no reason to stay.”

Dead heat

We can say that competitors in a competition (especially a race) are in a DEAD HEAT if they are in exactly the same position. Neither contestant is ahead or behind.

“As they headed for the finish line the runners were in a **dead heat**.”

This is also commonly used to talk about political races where votes are counted to determine the winner of an election.

“With only 3 hours left to vote the two candidates were in a **dead heat**.”

Dead giveaway

A sign that shows something to be clearly true

“They were not from around here. The maps and the confused look on their faces was a **dead giveaway**.”

Dead on

Exactly right.

“Hector thought that there would be less than 10 people at the show. He was **dead on**.”

Dead right

We learned that DEAD can mean exact or exactly. You can imagine this expression means “exactly right.”

“Clifford predicted that the company would need to lay off some staff this Spring. I hoped it wasn't true but he was **dead right**.”

Dead serious

Extremely serious

“I told you that if Theodore is at the party I will leave. I'm **dead serious** about that.”

Dead tired

Completely exhausted.

“I'm **dead tired** after exam week. I can't wait to zombie out during summer vacation.”

Dead to the world

Sleeping very deeply; Sound asleep

“It was only 9:30 and I was already in bed and **dead to the world**.”

Dead silence

Complete and total quiet. There is no sound.

“After the company management announced the layoffs there was **dead silence** in the room. Everyone was shocked.”

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Dead weight

This describes something that is heavy and quite difficult to lift.

“My daughter is small but she is hard to carry when she is asleep. Her body is totally relaxed and she is **dead weight**.”

Dead weight can also be used to describe someone who is part of a group but does not contribute. This person may even hold the group back.

“It’s time to kick Jason out of the group. He has become **dead weight**.”

Zombies In the NEWS

["Like a Zombie Apocalypse" - Chaotic Scenes in Shanghai as People Flee Building after Abnormal Test Result](#)

[Salt Lake City nearly the best city to survive a Zombie Apocalypse](#)

The top Zombie Movies

Here are the Top 10 Zombie movies according to Rotten Tomatoes. Rotten Tomatoes is a popular American website that rates film and television shows based on reviews from the general public and professional movie critics.

- Movie list
- #10. The Return of the Living Dead (1985)
- #9. Dead Alive (1992)
- #8. Re-Animator (1985)
- #7. Rec (2007)
- #6. 28 Days Later (2002)
- #5. Zombieland (2009)
- #4. Night of the Living Dead (1968)
- #3. Train to Busan (2016)
- #2. Shaun of the Dead (2004)
- #1. Dawn of the Dead (1978)

You can see the Rotten Tomatoes full list of the top 30 Zombie movies [here](#).

What’s your favorite zombie movie? Tell me in the **comments**.

MORE FUN ZOMBIE LINKS!

The videos linked below are fun ways to improve your listening skills by listening to real English.

How to Survive a Zombie Apocalypse

Apocalypse noun the destruction of the world

“If a zombie **apocalypse** happens, do you know what to do?”

[Oxford Learner's Dictionaries Apocalypse noun](#)

Where people come to learn real English - www.WorldEnglishBlog.com - [Helpful Resources](#)

Do you know how to kill a zombie? Maybe *'kill'* isn't the right word because zombies are already dead. Do you know how to stop a zombie?

According to Central Canvas...

"Decapitation: It's an old method but a good one. To kill zombies, you need to destroy their brains."

Do you know what decapitation means?

decapitation noun the action of cutting off somebody's head; the fact of somebody's head being cut off

"**Decapitation** is the best way to kill a zombie."

[Oxford Learner's Dictionaries Decapitation noun](#)

Watch the video below and learn how to survive when the undead come back to take over the world!!!

 [How to Survive a Zombie Apocalypse](#)

How to Do Zombie Makeup

Do need some ideas for a Halloween costume this year? Will you go to a Halloween party? Will you go trick or treating? The video below will teach you how to do easy Zombie makeup this year to scare your friends!

 [Easy Zombie Makeup Tutorial](#)

Thanks for reading and learning about zombies with me. Now you have some fun idioms with DEAD to use in your own English conversations. Stay safe and don't get bitten!

