

# Words About CONFUSION

## **baffle** (verb)

The odd behavior of the bear **baffles** the park rangers, who wonder if the animal may be sick or injured.



To **baffle** means to confuse or to puzzle, sometimes on purpose to block understanding. When one is baffled, that person is bewildered and confused and may not be able to continue.

### **Did You Know?**

A **baffle** (as a noun) is a material, such as foam or insulation, used to deaden sound. Maybe the **baffle** confuses and blocks sound as it travels from place to place!

### **WordWork**

Does anything about school **baffle** you? About friendship? About life?

## **nonplussed** (adjective)

Dad was so **nonplussed** by the new VCR that he gave up and asked Mom to set it for him.

**Nonplussed** means totally puzzled. If you are **nonplussed**, you are unable to say or do anything further.

### **Synonyms**

thwarted, frustrated, foiled, confounded

### **WordWork**

The word **nonplussed** is formed with the prefix *non-*, which means not, and the root word *plus*, which means more. In your own words, explain why **nonplussed** means what it means.

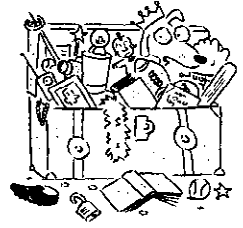


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## **hodgepodge (noun)**

*The box in the attic holds a hodgepodge of toys.*

A hodgepodge is a jumble, a mess, or a disorganized mix.



### **Did You Know?**

There are different versions of the word **hodgepodge**, depending on where you live. In some regions, people say *hotchpotch*; others say *hotchpot*. Originally, it came from an Old French word for stew.

### **WordWork**

Most people have a **hodgepodge** of something somewhere—in a “junk” drawer, in an old trunk, or in a storage shed. Describe a **hodgepodge** you know about. Where is it? What’s in it? How did it get that way? Who uses it? What surprises might be hidden in it?

## **flummoxed (adjective)**

*Ben got so flummoxed by the surprise quiz, he just handed in a blank paper.*

Flummoxed means totally confused or puzzled.

### **Synonyms**

bewildered, mystified, perplexed, stumped

### **WordWork**

Word scholars think that **flummoxed** came from Old English slang. What slang words do you use to mean **flummoxed**, confused, or puzzled? List them.

