

# The Difference Between Medical Students & Residents

*Can you tell apart a **medical student** and a **resident**?*

A **medical student** is often mistaken for a small, furry animal due to their undeniable cuteness. They are cute and shy because they are tremendously clueless and forgivable. Unlike small, furry animals, they do not have tails. A **medical student** is [motivated](#) by the quest for knowledge and a hope for a better tomorrow. A



**resident** is always angry and bitter. A **resident** isn't clueless, just indifferent and [jaded](#). There is no hope for anyone. The world is an oyster: a poisonous, ugly, diseased oyster. A **resident** is motivated only by [coffee](#) and [sleep](#).

A **medical student** loves to ask and be asked questions: why? where? what? when? how? A **resident** asks only two questions: (1) can the patient go home? and (2) can I go home? A **medical student** knows anatomy, biochemistry, microbiology, pathophysiology, and pharmacology, but knows nothing about clinical medicine. A **resident** knows clinical medicine and is only too happy to have forgotten everything else.

A **medical student** is healthy appearing, but carries a lot of weight in his or her [white coat](#): journal articles, index cards, a review book, medical tuning forks, reflex hammers, ophthalmoscope, microscope, colonoscope, and [calipers](#). A **resident** is chronically-ill appearing. A **resident's** white coat carries the bare minimum of a [stethoscope](#) and patient list but he or she will have a bigger belly and larger love handles compared to four years ago in medical school.

A **medical student** can spend eight hours with a patient and feel like he or she was rushed. A **medical student** will never know the diagnosis, but will definitely give you a family history involving no fewer than fifty family members. A sexual history is deferred. A **resident** hears everything that he or she wants to hear within two minutes of entering a patient's room and starts fidgeting after five.

“Hurry up!” is all a **resident** thinks. “Slow down!” is what a **medical student** thinks.

A **medical student** struggles with an oral presentation despite having everything written down on several disorganized sheets of paper. A **resident** cuts to the chase in [five words or less](#). A **medical student** has all the time in the world, but a **resident** lives or dies by his or her efficiency or lack thereof. A **medical student's** note is a neverending thesis; a **resident's** note is shorthand haiku.

A **medical student** occasionally gets flustered and forgets to examine the patient. But when a **medical student** performs the physical exam, it is either significant for [a murmur that doesn't exist or negative for a murmur that does exist](#). A **resident's** physical exam is always unremarkable even when it is completely remarkable.

A **medical student** is always awkward. A **resident** is always “over it.”

A **medical student** goes home to reflect upon that great case or incredible pearl of wisdom. A **medical student** studies and studies, looking for ways to improve and [impress their residents and attendings the next day](#). A **medical student** strives to be great.

A **resident** heads straight to the closest [alcoholic beverage](#) before passing out in bed without changing scrubs. A **resident** is a blubbering, tired mess and proud of it. A **resident** is always on the tireless pursuit for rest and relaxation. A **resident** strives to survive.

A **medical student** wishes to be like his or her residents: “I sure wish I can be as smart and efficient one day.” A **medical student** has big dreams. A **resident** struggles with self-doubt and wonders why he or she went to medical school: “Why oh why, what on earth did I get myself into?!” A **resident** is sleep-deprived. A **resident** no longer [dreams](#); he or she daydreams.

A **medical student** often can't sleep because he or she is nervous, perhaps over something quite insignificant in the grand scheme of things. As for a **resident**, he or she can fall asleep anywhere at any time. A **resident** always has a great story about falling asleep at a ridiculous moment or in an absurd place. Narcolepsy is a **resident's** greatest strength.

*Now, do you know the difference between...*

... [a medical student and a deer in headlights?](#)

... [a medicine service and a garbage dump?](#)

... [arthropods & orthopods?](#)

... [RICE & rice?](#)

... [white clouds & black clouds?](#)