

Homophones and Easily Confused Words



Writing Center

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Homophones are words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings. Here are some of the most commonly confused words:

1. Its & it's

Its: a pronoun that refers to something it possesses

Example: Its fur is wet.

It's: a contraction for *it is*

Example: It's going to rain tonight.

2. Whose & who's

Whose: a pronoun that refers to something who possesses

Example: Whose bag is this?

Who's: a contraction for *who is*

Example: Who's going to the store?

3. Your & you're

Your: a pronoun that refers to something you possess.

Example: Is that your car?

You're: a contraction for *you are*

Example: You're going to the store.

4. There, their & they're

There: an adverb that refers to a place

Example: I was there when the class began.

Their: a pronoun that refers to something they possess

Example: It's their car.

They're: a contraction for *they are*

Example: They're going out.

5. Where, were & we're

Where: an adverb that refers to location

Example: Where are you going?

Were: a verb that is past tense of *to be*

Example: We were going to the store.

We're: a contraction for *we are*

Example: We're going to the mall instead.

6. Two, too & to

Two: a word for the number 2

Example: I have two dogs.

Too: an adverb that means excessively or also

Examples: I have too many dogs

Do you want to go too?

To: a preposition or part of an infinitive (i.e., to rain, to run)

Examples: Yuka walked to the store.

“To be or not to be: that is the question...”

7. Then & than

Then: an adverb that signifies *at that time*

Example: What were you doing then?

Than: a conjunction that shows comparison.

Example: It is hotter than boiling water in here.

8. Quiet & quite

Quiet: an adjective that means silent

Example: Let's see how quiet we can be.

Quite: an adverb that means truly or entirely

Example: I'm quite fed up with everything.

9. Loose & lose

Loose: an adjective that means free or not tight

Examples: My zipper is loose.

Lose: a verb that means to misplace

Example: I lose my keys every day.

10. Since & sense

Since: a conjunction similar in meaning to because

Example: Since I went to the store for you, you owe me money.

Sense: a verb meaning to feel or perceive

or a noun that signifies the faculties with which we feel or perceive.

Examples: I sense something is going on.

That numbs my senses.

11. Affect & effect

Affect: a verb that means to have an influence on

Example: His friends affect his decisions.

Effect: a noun that means result

or a verb that means to bring about

Examples: The experiment had many effects.

His decision effected change.

12. Desert & dessert

Desert: a noun for a dry barren place

Example: Cacti grow in the desert.

Dessert: a noun for sweet food at the end of a meal

Example: I want a banana split for dessert.

13. Forth & fourth

Forth: an adverb for forward or onward

Example: Go forth, young man!

Fourth: a noun or adjective indicating a position of 4 in a countable series.

Example: He won the fourth place prize for the marathon.

14. Whether & weather

Whether: a pronoun or conjunction indicating alternative possibilities

Example: Whether or not I go to college, I will have a job.

Weather: a noun referring to the state of the atmosphere

Example: The weather has been so rainy this week.

15. Threw, through & thorough

Threw: the past tense of throw

Example: The man threw a stick to the dog.

Through: a preposition, adverb or adjective indicating movement or a state of completion

Examples: I walked through the cafeteria.

The shirt was completely soaked through.

I am through with this exam.

Thorough: an adjective indicating completion or mastery

Example: He did a thorough job completing the assignment.