

101 English Homophones You Should Know

English can be a confusing language to learn! Have you ever come across two words that sound the same, but have different meanings? These are called homophones. In this detailed guide, you will learn 101 sets of homophones with real native examples.



What are homophones?

Homophones are two or more words that sound the same (identical pronunciation), but have different meanings. These words are often spelt differently in English too (e.g. pear vs. pair). The term *homophone* comes from Greek '*homo-*' (meaning: same) and '*-phone*' (meaning: sound or voice), so the word literally means: 'same sound'.

101 English homophones with examples

In this list of English homophones, you will find simple, intermediate and more advanced level vocabulary. For each pair or set, there are meanings and examples. Some you will know already, but others will certainly be new! Where possible, these homophones have been put into approximate categories to help you organise and learn them.

NUMBER HOMOPHONES

1. One, won

One (noun): The number that comes after 0 but before 2.

*My son is **one** year old today.*

Won (verb): The past tense of 'win'.

*The football team **won** two games in a row.*

2. Two, to, too

Two (noun): The number that comes after 1 and before 3, a pair.

*He bought **two** packets of crisps.*

To (preposition): In the direction of a particular location.

I am going **to** the shop.

Too (adverb): To a higher degree than desired, also.

*The girl was **too** tired to work. I was tired **too**.*

3. Four, for

Four (noun): The number that comes after 3 and before 5.

*The clock struck **four**.*

For (preposition): If someone receives something, if something is done for a reason.

*I bought John some sweets **for** his birthday (**for** him to eat).*

4. Eight, ate

Eight (noun): The number that comes after 7 and before 9.

*There were only **eight** days left until Christmas.*

Ate (verb): Past tense form of 'eat'.

We *ate* dinner together then went home.

FOOD & DRINK HOMOPHONES

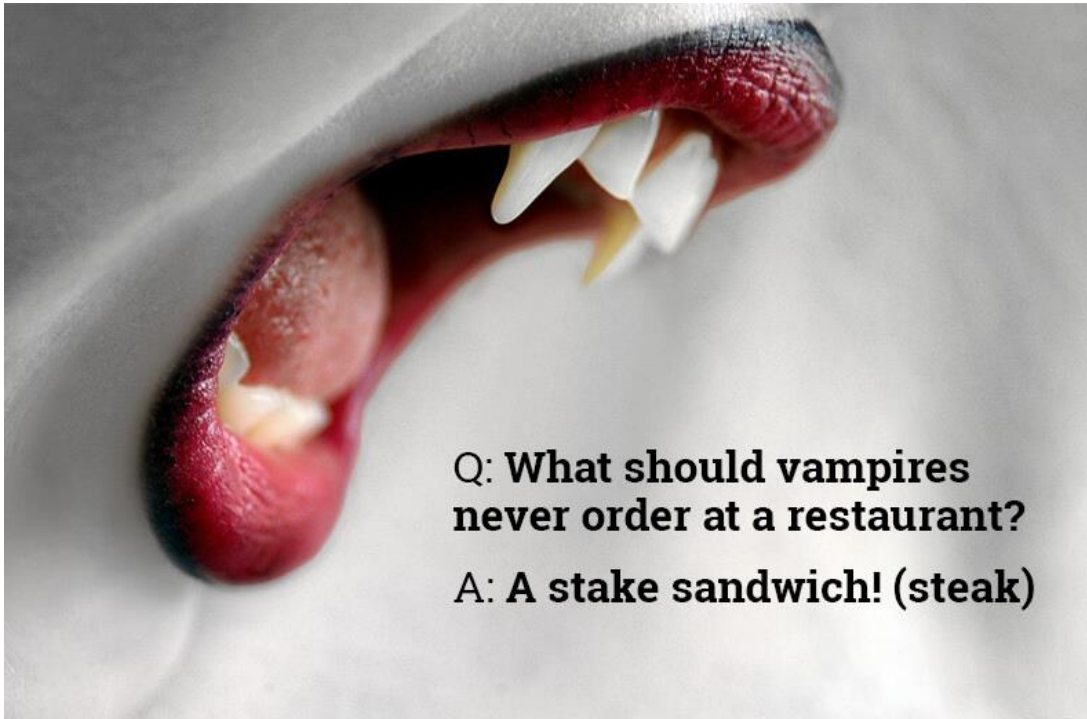
5. Steak, stake

Steak (noun): Prime cut of meat, usually beef.

*My all-time favourite meal is **steak** and chips.*

Stake (noun): A strong wooden post with a sharp point at one end.

*Vampires can only be killed with a **stake** through the heart!*



6. Bean, been

Bean (noun): Edible seed that grows in pods on leguminous plants.

*Baked **beans** on toast is a traditional British dish!*

Been (verb): Past tense form of 'be'.

*Where have you **been** all night?*

7. Pear, pair

Pear (noun): Common type of fruit.

*Would you like a **pear** from the garden?*

Pair (noun): A set of two things (often used together).

*He couldn't find a matching **pair** of socks.*

8. Bread, bred

Bread (noun): Type of food.

*Our local bakery sells the best wholemeal **bread** for miles!*

Bred (verb): Past tense form of 'breed' – to raise or develop animal stock.

*In the past, many farmers **bred** rabbits for meat and fur.*

9. Cereal, serial

Cereal (noun): Grain used for food (e.g. wheat), type of dried breakfast eaten with milk.

*My favourite **cereal** is cornflakes.*

Serial (noun/adjective): A story or programme delivered in instalments, taking place in series.

*The **serial** killer loved watching **serials** on TV!*

10. Flour, flower

Flour (noun): Ingredient used to make bread and cakes.

*This recipe uses two cups of **flour** and 1/4 cup of sugar.*

Flower (noun): Seed-bearing part of a plant.

*Her husband gave her a nice bunch of **flowers** on her birthday.*

11. Meat, meet

Meat (noun): Food from the flesh of an animal.

*The hotel guests got food poisoning because the **meat** wasn't cooked properly.*

Meet (verb): Arrange or happen to cross paths with somebody.

*I'm going to **meet** my friend at the train station this evening.*

12. Chilli, chilly

Chilli (noun): Small spicy pepper or pod used in cooking.

*I ordered the Mexican Hot Pizza, but couldn't eat the **chilli** on top!*

Chilly (adjective): A bit cold, not warm.

*Don't forget your coat! It's a bit **chilly** out today.*

13. Mussel, muscle

Mussel (noun): Mollusc with purple-brown shell.

*I had the **mussels** as a starter and they were delicious!*

Muscle (noun): Type of human body tissue.

*What do you prefer in a boyfriend – brains or **muscles** ?!*

14. Wine, whine

Wine (noun): Alcoholic drink made from fermented grapes.

*Chilled white **wine** goes well with fish.*

Whine (noun/verb): Long high-pitched cry, complain.

*The little dog shivered by the door and let out a **whine**.*

15. Bite, byte

Bite (noun/verb): Tear something apart with teeth.

*Let's grab a **bite** to eat in town after work!*

Byte (noun): Unit of measurement of digital information.

*How many **bytes** are there in each character in MS Word?*

16. Grate, great

Grate (verb): Shred into small pieces using a food grater.

*The recipe says we need to **grate** the cheese into the sauce.*

Great (adjective): Large, prominent, very good.

*The **Great** White Shark is a **great** hunter!*

17. **Berry, bury**

Berry (noun): Small pulpy fruit.

*Did you know that watermelons are a type of large **berry**?*

Bury (verb): Put or hide underground.

*You shouldn't **bury** your head in the sand each time there's an argument.*

18. **Currant, current**

Currant (noun): Type of berry, also of dried berry variety.

*We have lots of **currant** bushes at the bottom of our garden – both red- and blackcurrants.*

Current (noun/adjective): Strong flow of water, present or up-to-date.

*Surfers should be aware of the strong **currents** along the south coast of England.*

19. **Leek, leak**

Leek (noun): Long white and green stick-like vegetable in the onion family.

*Wales is famous for its rainy weather and its giant **leeks**!*

Leak (noun/verb): Hole through which fluid can escape accidentally, drip out.

*Our roof has got a **leak** so we need to fix it before winter comes.*

20. **Maize, maze**

Maize (noun): Corn.

*It is common for manufacturers to use **maize** as an ingredient in many processed foods.*

Maze (noun): Labyrinth.

*Chatsworth House has a **maze** that is made up of a network of paths and hedges.*

21. **Thyme, time**

Thyme (noun): Type of aromatic herb.

*What goes best with roast chicken – **thyme** or rosemary?*

Time (noun): Period, measure of seconds/minutes/hours/days/etc.

*How much **time** does it take to cook a roast chicken?*

22. Sauce, source

Sauce (noun): Liquid used to add flavour to food.

*This Chinese cooking **sauce** uses a variety of citrus fruits.*

Source (noun): Origin, cause of something.

*Citrus fruits are a good **source** of vitamin C.*

23. Sweet, suite

Sweet (noun/adjective): Candy, food with a sugary taste.

*If you eat up all your vegetables, I'll let you have one more **sweet**!*

Suite (noun): Set of rooms or technical instruments.

*The journalist interviewed the rock star in his London hotel **suite**.*

24. Mousse, moose

Mousse (noun): Light and fluffy dessert.

*The French restaurant opposite our office sells the best chocolate **mousse** in town!*

Moose (noun): Large animal in the deer family.

*Do people eat **moose** in Canada? They certainly have a lot of them!*

ANIMAL HOMOPHONES

25. Hare, hair

Hare (noun): Animal that looks like a large rabbit.

*The **hare** hopped through the woodland.*

Hair (noun): Growing from the skin of humans and other animals.

*Her **hair** was so long that she had to wear a large hat to work!*

26. Bear, bare

Bear (noun): Type of large hairy animal.

*Our local pub is called *The Brown **Bear***.*

Bare (adjective): Naked, without clothes/covering, plain.

*If you walk around with **bare** feet you might cut yourself!*

NOTE: The word 'bear' is also a verb that literally means 'to carry a load'. This is not often used in modern English, although you will find it in expressions like 'I'll bear that in mind' (remember) or 'I can't bear it!' (tolerate, put up with).

27. Deer, dear

Deer (noun): Large animal with antlers, similar to a small elk or moose.

*Some UK farmers keep **deer** and breed them for their meat (venison).*

Dear (noun/adjective): Beloved person, expensive.

*The wedding ring you've chosen is a bit too **dear**, my **Dear**!*



28. Gorilla, guerrilla

Gorilla (noun): Large ground-dwelling ape.

*African **gorillas** live in mountainous forests in the west of the country.*

Guerrilla (adjective/noun): Unauthorised and irregular (military) action, partisan fighter.

*The Colombian **guerrillas** lived in the jungle and sometimes attacked government troops.*

29. Sole, soul

Sole (noun): Variety of marine flatfish.

*I really love grilled **sole** with a touch of lemon!*

Soul: Spirit, immortal part of a human.

*For my philosophy course, I have to write an essay about the human **soul**.*

NOTE: The word ‘sole’ is also a noun that refers to the underside of a person’s foot or shoe, and the word ‘soul’ can be used as an adjective to describe the musical genre.

30. Flea, flee

Flea (noun): Small jumping parasitic insect that often lives on dogs or cats.

*I caught a **flea** on our cat today so we’ll need to wash him with special shampoo.*

Flee (verb): Run away or escape from danger.

*After 3 months of bombing, the family decided to **flee** the conflict in their war-torn city.*

31. Boar, bore

Boar (noun): Wild pig.

*We saw a **boar** and a tiger when we visited the local zoo.*

Bore (verb/noun): Make someone bored or disinterested, a boring person.

*John’s such a **bore**! All the guy talks about is golf and work!*

NOTE: In technical contexts, the word ‘bore’ can also mean ‘make a hole using a tool’. Therefore, ‘borehole’ would be an engineering word for a drill hole, and not a hole made by a wild pig!

32. Horse, hoarse

Horse (noun): Four-legged animal often used for riding or work.

*When my grandfather was young, he went to school on a **horse** and cart.*

Hoarse (adjective): Describes a rough or husky voice due to a sore throat.

*I was feeling **hoarse** before the concert, but managed to sing when I got up on stage.*

33. Lynx, links

Lynx (noun): Type of medium-sized wild cat.

*In American Indian mythology the **lynx** is considered a ‘keeper of secrets’.*

Links (noun): Plural form of ‘link’, connections or points of contact.

*Our company has **links** to suppliers all over the world.*

34. **Whale, wail**

Whale (noun): Largest (marine) mammal on Earth.

*Thanks to the work of conservationists, most species of **whale** are now protected.*

Wail (noun/verb): High-pitched cry of pain, anger or sadness.

*I heard a patient **wail** in agony from the neighbouring (hospital) ward.*

35. **Mare, mayor**

Mare (noun): Adult female horse.

*Children often came from the village to feed apples to the old **mare**.*

Mayor (noun): Elected leader of regional government.

*The **mayor** cut the ribbon at the museum opening ceremony.*

36. **Toad, towed, toed**

Toad (noun): Type of large brown frog.

*There's a **toad** living in our garden pond and my daughter has named it 'Freddy'!*

Towed (verb): Past tense of 'tow', when one vehicle pulls another.

*When our car broke down, a neighbour kindly **towed** it home for us.*

Toed (adjective): Having toes.

*The three-**toed** sloth lives in the jungles of Borneo.*

PRONOUN HOMOPHONES (+ contractions & determiners)

37. **I, eye**

I (pronoun): Used by a speaker to refer to himself/herself.

***I** did not enjoy the film.*

Eye (noun): The pair of organs that allow us to see.

*He is blind in one **eye**.*

38. **I'll, isle, aisle**

I'll (contraction): Short form of 'I will'.

***I'll** get to school on time if there is no traffic today.*

Isle (noun): A small island.

*We go on holiday every year to the **Isle** of Wight.*

Aisle (noun): Passage between two rows of seats.

*Passengers must not leave their bags in the **aisle** at any time.*

NOTE: While ‘isle’ and ‘aisle’ are always homophones in British English, the contracted form ‘I’ll’ is pronounced differently in many regional accents (isle vs. aal). The same is true for similar contractions like ‘you’ll’ (yule vs. yorl) and ‘we’ll’ (wheel vs. wirl).

39. **You, ewe, yew**

You (pronoun): Used to refer to the person or people being addressed.

*Would **you** like to come round for dinner sometime next week?*

Ewe (noun): Female sheep.

*The little lamb followed its mother as the **ewe** crossed the field.*

Yew (noun): Type of evergreen tree.

*Traditional English longbows were often made from **yew** (wood).*

40. **You’ll, Yule**

You’ll (contraction): Short form of ‘you will’.

*I think **you’ll** improve your piano playing with practice.*

Yule (noun): Old word for Christmas.

*The word ‘**Yule**’ is still used in old Christmas songs and religious hymns.*

41. **You’re, your**

You’re (contraction): Short form of ‘you are’.

***You’re** my best friend.*

Your (determiner): Belonging to the person the speaker is addressing.

*Hi, I’m Jack! What’s **your** name?*

42. **Our, hour**

Our (determiner): Belonging to the speaker and one or more other person.

*We both got **our** hair cut at the same place!*

Hour (noun): Period of 60 minutes.

*The queue for the roller coaster was over an **hour** so we didn't go on it.*

NOTE: In many regional accents of British English, 'our' and 'are' will be homophones. For example, in the sentence '**Our (ar)** friends **are (ar)** coming to stay' the words 'our' and 'are' can be pronounced in exactly the same way.

43. **They're, their, there**

They're (contraction): Short form of 'they are'.

*My brother and his girlfriend got engaged because **they're** really in love.*

Their (determiner): Belonging to a person or thing being mentioned.

*Parents are often keen to help **their** children with **their** homework.*

There (adverb): In, at, or to a given place.

*I threw the ball and now it's over **there**.*

44. **Theirs, there's**

Theirs (pronoun): Refers to something that belongs to two or more people.

*I think that white football is **theirs**.*

There's (contraction): Short form of 'there is'.

***There's** a good film on at the cinema tonight. Fancy it?*

45. **We've, weave**

We've (contraction): Short form of 'we have'.

***We've** been digging all day and we haven't found any treasure!*

Weave (verb): Make fabric/baskets by crossing threads over and under.

*My grandmother taught me how to **weave** cloth and make my own clothes.*

46. **We'd, weed**

We'd (contraction): Short form of 'we would/had'.

*If **we'd** got the bus, then **we'd** be home by now!*

Weed (noun): A wild plant that is not wanted.

*The gardener pulled up all the **weeds** in the flowerbed.*

47. **We'll, wheel**

We'll (contraction): Short form of 'we will'.

*We'll have to run; otherwise **we'll** miss the bus!*

Wheel (noun): A circular object used to move things over the ground.

*The back **wheel** of my bike is bent and needs to be replaced.*

48. **We're, weir**

We're (contraction): Short form of 'we are'.

*When do you think **we're** going to get our exam results?*

Weir (noun): Low barrier to control the flow of water in a river.

*I saw some boys fishing down by the **weir**.*

49. **Him, hymn**

Him (pronoun): Refers to a male object in a sentence.

*His face looks familiar, but I don't really know **him**.*

Hymn (noun): Religious song to praise God.

*The church congregation stood up to sing a **hymn**.*

50. **He'll, heel, heal**

He'll (contraction): Short for 'he will'.

***He'll** win the tennis match if he scores the next point.*

Heel (noun): Back part of a foot or shoe below the ankle.

*He stood on a nail and cut his **heel**.*

Heal (verb): (Cause to) become healthy again.

*The cut on your foot will **heal** by itself, but you must keep it clean.*

51. **He'd, heed**

He'd (contraction): Short for 'he would/had'.

***He'd** better not be late or I'll kill him!*

Heed (verb): Pay attention to.

*He should have **heeded** the warnings. Now he's in trouble!*

52. It's, its

It's (contraction): Short form of 'it is'.

***It's** not my fault. **It's** yours!*

Its (possessive determiner): Belonging to a thing being mentioned.

*Lay the baby on **its** side if it starts crying.*

53. Who's, whose

Who's (contraction): Short form of 'who is'.

***Who's** coming to your birthday party tomorrow?*

Whose (pronoun): Belonging to or associated with which person.

*Let's get on with the game! **Whose** turn is it to roll the dice?*

54. What's, watts

What's (contraction): Short form of 'what is'.

***What's** the capital of France?*

Watts (noun): Unit of power in electrical items (plural form).

*How many **watts** are in an amp?*

55. Which, witch

Which (pronoun/determiner): Used when asking for information about people or things.

***Which** of these shirts do you like best?*

Witch (noun): Woman with magic powers, usually evil ones.

*I'm dressing up as a **witch** for Halloween this year.*

COLOUR HOMOPHONES

56. Blue, blew

Blue (adjective): Colour between green and violet (e.g. like the sky).

*Elvis was a fan of **blue** suede shoes!*

Blew (verb): Past tense form of 'blow'.

*The storm **blew** down several trees on our street!*

57. Red, read

Red (adjective): Colour at the end of the spectrum (e.g. like blood).

*Little **Red** Riding Hood is a popular children's fairytale.*

Read (verb): Past tense form of 'read'.

*How many Harry Potter books have you **read**?*



58. Greys, graze

Greys (noun): Two or more shades of the colour grey.

*I really like how the artist has used the **greys** in this painting.*

Graze (verb): Eat grass in a field (of cows, sheep, etc.).

*Early each morning, the farmer took his cattle out to **graze**.*

FAMILY HOMOPHONES

59. Son, sun

Son (noun): A boy or man in relation to his parents.

*My **son** is only eight years old, but he thinks he is 18!*

Sun (noun): Star round which the Earth orbits, light/warmth from this star.

*The **sun** rises in the morning and sets in the evening.*

60. Aunt, aren't

Aunt (noun): The sister of someone's father or mother.

*My mum's sister is my **aunt**.*

Aren't (contraction): Short form of 'are not'.

*We **aren't** going on holiday this year.*

NOTE: In American English and many UK regional accents, the words 'aunt' and 'ant' are homophones. In Britain, 'ant' (aunt) would be the usual pronunciation in the north of the country.

61. Father, farther

Father (noun): Dad.

*My **father** used to play rugby for England.*

Farther (adverb): Comparative form of 'far'.

*How much **farther** do we have to walk?*

NATURE HOMOPHONES

62. Root, route

Root (noun): Underground part of a plant or tree, source or origin.

*A weed may grow again if you don't remove the **root**.*

Route (noun): Way, course or path.

*Our **route** took us through the Alps and then on to Italy.*

63. Wood, would

Wood (noun): Small forest, material from trees.

*There used to be badgers in the **wood**, but they are gone now.*

Would (verb): Past tense form of 'will', expresses conditional.

*Where **would** you like to spend the summer holidays?*

64. **Sea, see**

Sea (noun): Expanse of salt water that covers most of our planet.

*Julie's hometown is by the **sea**.*

See (verb): Action of perceiving with the eyes.

*If you climb to the top of that hill, you can **see** for miles!*

65. **Tide, tied**

Tide (noun): Alternate rising and falling of the sea.

*When it's low **tide** you have to walk a long way before you can swim.*

Tied (verb): Past tense form of 'tie'.

*She **tied** the hook to the end of the fishing line.*

66. **Shore, sure**

Shore (noun): The land along the edge of the sea or a body of water.

*We walked along the **shore** and found some pretty shells.*

Sure (adjective): Confident that one is right.

*I'm **sure** that I locked the door.*

67. **Weather, whether**

Weather (noun): Relates to sunshine, rain, wind etc.

*The **weather** in April is usually showery.*

Whether (conjunction): Expressing a doubt or choice between alternatives.

*I don't know **whether** to go to work or call in sick.*

Whether the weather is cold
or whether the weather is hot,
we'll weather the weather,
whatever the weather,
whether we like it or not.

68. Mist, missed

Mist (noun): Light fog.

*The morning **mist** covered the fields.*

Missed (verb): Past tense form of 'miss'.

*We **missed** the train so had to get to London by coach.*

69. Dew, due

Dew (noun): Tiny drops of water that form on cool surfaces at night.

*The grass was wet with **dew**.*

Due (adjective): Expected at a certain time.

*My sister's baby is **due** in 3 weeks!*

70. Reed, read

Reed (noun): A tall plant which grows in water or marshy ground.

*There were **reeds** growing along the side of the canal.*

Read (verb): Look at and comprehend the meaning of words.

*She loved books so much that she would **read** them all day long.*

71. Air, heir

Air (noun): Mix of gases that we breathe.

*The **air** was moist after the storm.*

Heir (noun): A person entitled to the property or rank of another after death.

*He was the King's only son, and so was **heir** to the throne.*

72. Night, knight

Night (noun): The period from sunset to sunrise.

*The stars come out at **night**.*

Knight (noun): An old term for a mounted soldier in armour.

*He was my **knight** in shining armour.*

VERB HOMOPHONES

73. Sew, sow, so

Sew (verb): Join or repair with needle and thread.

*There's a hole in my sock, but I don't know how to **sew**.*

Sow (verb): Plant by scattering seeds on the ground.

*Each year the local farmers **sow** wheat in their fields.*

So (adverb/conjunction): To the same or greater extent, therefore, in order that.

*I'd never seen **so** many people in the shop, **so** I decided to come back later.*

74. Pause, paws, pours, pores

Pause (verb): Interrupt an action briefly.

*I think we should **pause** the meeting for a short break at 12.00.*

Paws (noun): Plural form of 'paw', animal foot with pads and claws.

*The cat got its **paws** trapped under the carpet.*

Pours (verb): 3rd person form of 'pour', flow quickly in a steady stream.

*If John **pours** the tea, then you can offer our guests a biscuit.*

Pores (noun): Plural form of 'pore', tiny holes in the skin.

*When you do physical exercise, sweat comes out through the **pores** in your skin.*

75. Wrap, rap

Wrap (verb): Cover in paper or soft material.

*My mum likes to use colourful paper to **wrap** the Xmas presents.*

Rap (noun/verb): Hip-hop music, singing style involving quick rhymes.

*When I was in my teens I used to love **rap**, but now I'm more into rock.*



76. Wear, where, ware

Wear (verb/noun): Have clothing on one's body, damage over time through use/friction.

Where (adverb): In, to, or in which place or situation.

*I have no idea **where** the nearest petrol station is.*

Ware (noun): Manufactured items of a certain type.

*John Lewis is a good department store if you want to buy kitchen**ware**.*

77. Steal, steel

Steal (verb): Take (illegally) without permission.

*If you **steal** goods from a shop, this is called 'shoplifting'.*

Steel (noun): Common type of metal use in construction.

*The new art museum is made entirely from glass and **steel**.*

78. Write, right, rite

Write (verb): Mark letters, words or symbols on paper with a pen or pencil.

*Please remember to **write** to Santa Claus before Xmas!*

Right (adjective): Correct, just, opposite of left.

*I answered all the test questions, but only got half **right**.*

Rite (noun): Ritual.

*In many cultures, older boys must complete a **rite** of passage to become 'men'.*

79. Buy, by, bye

Buy (verb): Get something in exchange for payment.

*I am going to **buy** some food from the Supermarket.*

By (preposition): Identifying who performed an action, near to, using.

*My homework gets checked **by** my teacher.*

Bye (exclamation): Informal way of saying 'goodbye'.

*"**Bye** mum! I'll see you when I get home from school."*

80. Sell, cell

Sell (verb): Give or hand over something for money.

*I want to **sell** my car and buy a new one.*

Cell (noun): Small room for a prisoner.

*The police kept the thief in a **cell** overnight.*

81. Hear, here

Hear (verb): Perceive sound with the ears.

*I could **hear** people laughing in the next room.*

Here (adverb): In, at, or to this place or position.

*We've lived **here** for most of our lives.*

82. Break, brake

Break (verb): Smash or separate into pieces.

*Be careful not to **break** a window with that football!*

Brake (noun): A device used to slow down a moving vehicle.

*When you want to slow the car down, remember to use the **brake**.*

83. Affect, effect

Affect (verb): Influence, cause to change.

*The Brexit vote will certainly **affect** the UK economy.*

Effect (noun): A change which is a result of an action or other cause.

*No one knows what the **effects** of this political decision will be.*

84. Die, dye

Die (verb): Stop living.

*When sailors **die** they are sometimes 'buried' at sea.*

Dye (verb/noun): To colour something, substance that adds colour.

*My sister would like to **dye** her hair pink, but I think green would look better!*



85. Waste, waist

Waste (verb/noun): Use or expend carelessly, rubbish or unwanted material.

*Let's go. I don't want to **waste** any more time!*

Waist (noun): Part of the body or measurement around the hips.

*I need a pair of jeans with a 36-inch **waist**.*

86. Know, no

Know (verb): Be aware of.

*Most men **know** how to boil an egg, but some don't!*

No (exclamation and determiner): A negative response, not any.

***No**, I don't want to mow the lawn today.*

87. **Accept, except**

Accept (verb): Agree to receive or undertake something.

*I said the dog had eaten my homework, but the teacher didn't **accept** my excuse!*

Except (preposition): Not including, other than.

*I invited everyone to my birthday party **except** Jamie.*

88. **Wait, weight**

Wait (verb): Stay where you are until a particular time or event.

*I didn't want to **wait** any longer, so I left the cafe.*

Weight (noun): The heaviness of a person or thing.

*My wife often worries about her **weight**, but she's actually quite slim!*

89. **Weigh, way, whey**

Weigh (verb): Use scales to determine the weight of something.

*Match officials have to **weigh** each boxer before a professional fight.*

Way (noun): Method of doing something, road or route.

*We got lost and I had to admit that I didn't know the **way** home.*

Whey (noun): Watery component of milk after the formation of curds.

***Whey** is produced as part of the cheese-making process.*

90. **Flew, flu, flue**

Flew (verb): Past tense form of 'fly'.

*The beautiful eagle **flew** high above the trees.*

Flu (noun): Influenza.

*Many people suffer from **flu** during autumn and winter.*

Flue (noun): Duct or pipe for smoke.

*When we got a wood-burning stove, we had a **flue** and liner installed in the chimney.*

A flea and a fly flew up in a flue.

Said the flea, "Let us fly!"

Said the fly, "Let us flee!"
So they flew through a flaw in the flue.

91. Threw, through

Threw (verb): Past tense form of 'throw'.

*He **threw** his dirty clothes into the laundry basket and put on a clean t-shirt.*

Through (preposition): Moving in one side and out of the other.

*He walked **through** the door and went straight upstairs.*

ADJECTIVE & ADVERB HOMOPHONES

92. Male, mail

Male (adjective): A man.

*The survey was conducted with equal numbers of **male** and female participants.*

Mail (noun): Letters and parcels sent by post.

*The postman put the **mail** through the letterbox.*

93. Vain, vein, vane

Vain (adjective): Inflated sense of self or appearance, producing no result.

*I think a lot of fashion models are **vain**.*

Vein (noun): Type of blood vessel.

*The patient needed an injection, but the trainee nurse couldn't find a **vein**.*

Vane (noun): Weathervane, broad blade attached to rotating wheel/axis.

*The weatherv**ane** moved from side to side in the wind.*

94. Weak, week

Weak (adjective): Opposite of strong.

*I like my tea **weak**, with milk and one sugar.*

Week (noun): 7 days.

*I can meet tomorrow, but I'm around all next **week**.*

95. Whole, hole

Whole (adjective): Full, entire.

*I can't eat a **whole** pizza to myself. Would you like to share?*

Hole (noun): Gap or space in the ground or a surface.

*There's a **hole** in my pocket. That's how I lost my key!*

96. Bored, board

Bored (adjective): Lacking interest or engagement.

*The girl looked **bored** and half-asleep in class.*

Board (noun/verb): Long and flat piece of wood, get onto transport (plane, ship, etc.).

*The window was broken and a **board** had been nailed across it.*

97. Coarse, course

Coarse (adjective): Rough, rude.

*The surface of the stone was **coarse** and scratched his fingers.*

Course (noun): Study programme.

*A friend of mine is doing an online English **course**.*

98. Higher, hire

Higher (adjective): Comparative form of 'high'.

*Our company sales figures are **higher** this year.*

Hire (verb): Rent, borrow for money.

*There's no need to take bicycles because we can **hire** them at the park.*

99. Plain, plane

Plain (adjective/noun): Simple, without flavour, large flat area of land with few trees.

*I usually have **plain** yoghurt and muesli for breakfast.*

Plane (noun): Aeroplane.

*Our **plane** landed at 2 o'clock sharp.*

100. **Aloud, allowed**

Aloud (adverb): Not silently.

*He read the letter **aloud** so that everyone could hear.*

Allowed (verb): Past tense form of 'allow'.

*The museum staff **allowed** us to take several photographs.*

101. **Principal, principle**

Principal (adjective): Main, number one.

*The government's **principal** concern is immigration.*

Principle (noun): Fundamental truth or proposition.

*You can trust Rob. He's a man of **principle**.*

How to learn homophones in English

There is no secret formula when it comes to learning homophones. Try several different approaches and see what works best for you! To get you started, check out the 5 study tips below:

1) Always learn homophones in context

This is basically a fancy way of saying “in a real sentence or situation”. Context helps us understand the intended meaning behind the usage of a word. This becomes even more important when learning homophones because words like pause/paws/pours/pores all have identical pronunciation! You can only work out which meaning is intended by looking at the context.

2) Have a laugh with English homophones!

Many English jokes use homophones to confuse the listener and create puns. You have already seen several jokes in this study guide, but you can find more on Homophonelist.com. At higher levels, exploring English humour can be a really good way of developing your understanding of vocabulary and culture.

3) Use mobile apps anytime, anywhere

The best way to learn vocabulary is to repeat it regularly. Mobile apps offer a quick solution for learning homophones on the move! You can download apps like [Homophones Free](#) or go online to play the [BBC's homophone game](#).

4) Write nonsense sentences with homophones

Another good way to learn homophones is to practise them in your writing. Take a set of homophones and write one sentence that includes ALL of them. It does not matter if the sentence is nonsense! The main aim of the exercise is to compare the different meanings of the homophones. For example: I said “**bye**” to my friend and went to **buy** a coat in a shop **by** the river.

5) Play spelling games with homophones

Native speakers often make spelling mistakes because of homophones! This shows the importance of learning the correct meanings AND spellings of words that have the same pronunciation. Try this game: Make flashcards with x1 homophone on each side and the translation in your language in brackets. Ask a friend to choose random cards and read out the homophones and/or translations. Try to write down the correct spelling of the word, and then check to see if you are right!

Quiz: Test your understanding of English homophones

Now that you have been through the homophone list, it is time to test your knowledge! Try each of the exercises in this quiz and then check your answers at the end.

EXERCISE A

Put the follow homophones into the sentences: pause, paws, pours, pores.

- Whenever it rains, the water _____ off the roof into the drain.
- If you feel nervous during the presentation, then just _____ for a moment.
- A facial scrub helps clean the _____ and prevent spots.
- Could you please keep your dirty _____ off the biscuits!

EXERCISE B

Write down the correct homophone for each of the jokes.

Q: Why was the mortgage sad?

A: Because it was a loan!

Q: Why will you never starve to death in a desert?

A: Because of all the sandwiches there!

Q: Why does a milking stool only have three legs?

A: Because the cow's got the udder!

EXERCISE C

Choose the correct homophone in each of the following sentences.

- Our company's guiding **principal/principle** is trust.
- **Its/it's** forecast to rain all next week.

- If you're going swimming in the sea, be careful of the **current/current!**
- I've decided to **except/accept** the new job at Google.

EXERCISE D

Find the errors in the following text and correct the spelling of the homophones.

I went to see the doctor on Thursday because I thought I'd caught flue. When I arrived, I wasn't shore wear the waiting room was sow I asked at reception. They told me witch doctor to see and ware to go. Their were few patients sew I went straight in. The doctor took a pencil to rite down my symptoms. He said I didn't have flew, but that stress could be the sauce of my headaches. He gave me some aspirin, which soon took affect. I was pleased that my visit had not been in vein.

Answers:

A = pours, pause, pores, paws

B = alone, sand which is there, other (regional pronunciation)

C = principle, it's, current, accept

D = see, flu, sure, where, which, where, there, so, write, flu, source, effect, vain