Homophones list by grade: the pairs kids mix up, 1st to 5th

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A homophones list by grade, 1st to 5th, with a memory trick for each pair that children mix up most, such as there, their and they're, and free practice.

Homophones are words that sound the same but are spelled differently and mean different things, and about 50 pairs and sets cover what children meet through 5th grade. The list below is sorted by grade, easiest first, with what each word means. Peabody's homophones page has a definition, examples and three questions with answers, free through the end of 2026, with no sign-up and no ads.

A child does not need to learn all of them at once. Pick the five that your child writes wrong most often and work on those.

The list, by grade

1st grade

- Words: to, too, two · What each means: toward; also or too much; the number 2
- Words: see, sea · What each means: to look with your eyes; a large body of salt water
- Words: no, know · What each means: the opposite of yes; to have something in your mind
- Words: be, bee · What each means: to exist; an insect that makes honey
- Words: by, buy · What each means: near or past; to get something with money
- Words: for, four · What each means: on behalf of; the number 4
- Words: one, won · What each means: the number 1; came first
- Words: ate, eight · What each means: had a meal; the number 8
- Words: hi, high · What each means: a greeting; far up
- Words: sun, son · What each means: the star we orbit; a boy or man in a family

2nd grade

- Words: here, hear · What each means: in this place; to take in sound with your ears
- Words: right, write · What each means: correct, or the opposite of left; to put words on paper
- Words: red, read · What each means: a color; the past tense of read, said like red
- Words: blue, blew · What each means: a color; moved air with your mouth
- Words: tail, tale · What each means: the back part of an animal; a story
- Words: pair, pear · What each means: two of something; a fruit

- Words: bear, bare · What each means: a large animal; not covered
- Words: deer, dear · What each means: a forest animal; loved, or a word to start a letter
- Words: flour, flower · What each means: ground grain for baking; the part of a plant that blooms
- Words: meet, meat · What each means: to come together; food from an animal

3rd grade

- Words: there, their, they're · What each means: in that place; belonging to them; they are
- Words: your, you're · What each means: belonging to you; you are
- Words: its, it's · What each means: belonging to it; it is
- Words: where, wear · What each means: in what place; to have clothes on
- Words: which, witch · What each means: asks about a choice; a character in stories with a pointy hat
- Words: whole, hole · What each means: all of something; an opening
- Words: wait, weight · What each means: to stay until something happens; how heavy something is
- Words: sail, sale · What each means: to travel on water in a boat; selling at a lower price
- Words: road, rode · What each means: a path for cars; past tense of ride
- Words: plane, plain · What each means: an aircraft; simple, or a flat stretch of land

4th grade

- Words: weather, whether · What each means: rain, wind and sun; if
- Words: peace, piece · What each means: calm; a part of something
- Words: allowed, aloud · What each means: permitted; out loud
- Words: heard, herd · What each means: took in a sound; a group of animals
- Words: break, brake · What each means: to snap apart; the part that stops a bike
- Words: threw, through · What each means: tossed; from one side to the other
- Words: knight, night · What each means: a soldier in armor in old stories; the dark part of the day
- Words: steel, steal · What each means: a strong metal; to take what is not yours
- Words: waist, waste · What each means: the middle of your body; to use badly, or trash
- Words: scene, seen · What each means: a part of a story or a view; looked at

5th grade

- Words: principal, principle · What each means: the head of a school; a rule or belief
- Words: stationary, stationery · What each means: not moving; paper and envelopes
- Words: course, coarse · What each means: a class or a path; rough
- Words: bored, board · What each means: not interested; a flat piece of wood
- Words: cent, scent, sent · What each means: a coin; a smell; past tense of send

- Words: cereal, serial · What each means: a breakfast food; one after another in a series
- Words: groan, grown · What each means: a low sound of complaint; got bigger
- Words: patience, patients · What each means: staying calm while you wait; people being cared for by a doctor
- Words: presence, presents · What each means: being there; gifts
- Words: council, counsel · What each means: a group that makes decisions; advice

Memory tricks for the ten that cause the most mistakes

- Pair: to, too, two · Trick: Too has an extra o, so it means also or too much. Two is the number, and it has a w like twin.
- Pair: there, their, they're · Trick: There is a place, and it hides here inside it. They're has an apostrophe for the missing a in they are. Their is the one left, for belonging.
- Pair: your, you're · Trick: Say you are. If it fits, use you're.
- Pair: its, it's · Trick: Say it is. If it fits, use it's. Its with no apostrophe shows that something belongs to it.
- Pair: here, hear · Trick: You hear with your ear.
- Pair: piece, peace · Trick: A piece of pie.
- Pair: write, right · Trick: Write has a w, like words, and you write words.
- Pair: where, wear · Trick: Where is about place, and it hides here, like there.
- Pair: whether, weather · Trick: Weather has an ea, like sea, wind and rain.
- Pair: principal, principle · Trick: The principal is your pal.

Homophone, homonym, homograph

These three words are easy to mix up too.

- Word: Homophone · What it means: Sounds the same, spelled differently · Example: to, too, two
- Word: Homonym · What it means: Spelled and sounded the same, with different meanings · Example: a bat that flies and a bat for baseball
- Word: Homograph · What it means: Spelled the same, and the sound may be different · Example: tear in your eye and tear a page

How to practise

1. Use the swap test. For it's and you're, say the long form. If "it is" or "you are" fits the sentence, use the word with the apostrophe.
2. Try a sentence with a gap. Write "I have (to, too, two) cats" and let your child choose, then say why.
3. Do three ready questions. The homophones page has three questions with the answers one tap away.

4. Spell them. Open the Spelling Bee and pick the homophones list to hear each word and spell it.
5. Hunt in a story. Read a page of a story from the library and find one homophone pair. Ask which one the author used and how you know.

Peabody does not have a homophones game. What it has is a page for the skill, flashcards linked from that page, and the grammar hub for the other skills.

Questions grown-ups ask

What is a homophone?

A homophone is one of two or more words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings, such as sea and see.

What grade do kids learn homophones?

Children meet the first pairs in 1st grade, such as to, too and two, and the Common Core standard that names correctly using them is in 4th grade (L.4.1g). The words keep coming through middle school.

Are there, their and they're homophones?

Yes. They sound exactly alike, and they are among the most commonly mixed-up words in children's writing. Use the memory trick table above.

How many homophones are there in English?

There are hundreds of sets, so no exact number is worth quoting. A child needs the common ones, and the list above covers those through 5th grade.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/homophones-list-by-grade