



Common Homonyms

Homonyms are words that sound just like other words, but each has a very different meaning.

Some common examples include read/reed, hour/our, acts/axe, ant/aunt, be/bee, and blue/blew. Some homonyms are a bit trickier. Here are some of the most frequently misused and their correct meanings:

Aid/aide	<i>aid</i> to help (verb) or assistance (noun); <i>aide</i> someone in a supporting role	Lead/led	<i>lead</i> found in pencils; <i>led</i> past tense of <i>lead</i> (that rhymes with greed)
Altar/alter	<i>altar</i> a place of offering; <i>alter</i> to change	Passed/past	<i>passed</i> approved, moved by; <i>past</i> what happened yesterday
Assent/ascent	<i>assent</i> giving permission; <i>ascent</i> to rise	Pealed/peeled	<i>pealed</i> rang with sound; <i>peeled</i> skinned
Aural/oral	<i>aural</i> pertains to hearing; <i>oral</i> pertains to the mouth	Pray/prey	<i>pray</i> worship; <i>prey</i> to hunt, the hunted
Basis/bases	<i>basis</i> is a foundation; <i>bases</i> are what players tag on the way to home plate	Principal/Principle	<i>principal</i> head of school; <i>principle</i> an ideal or ethic
Cite/site/sight	<i>cite</i> to quote (verb); <i>site</i> a location; <i>sight</i> vision	Stationery/Stationary	<i>stationery</i> paper and envelopes; <i>stationary</i> to remain in one place
Compliment/Complement	<i>compliment</i> a flattering remark; <i>complement</i> (adjective) to enhance	Their/there/they're	<i>their</i> belonging to them; <i>there</i> a location; <i>they're</i> a contraction of "they are"
Elicit/illicit	<i>elicit</i> to draw out; <i>illicit</i> unlawful	Your/You're	<i>your</i> indicating ownership; <i>you're</i> a contraction of "you"
Flare/flair	<i>flare</i> a blaze of light, to shoot up (verb); <i>flair</i> a talent		

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