

# Homophones

Homophones are words that sound the same but are spelled differently. For many writers, homophones are the number one reason for misspelled words. It's not necessarily that we don't know how to spell a certain word, it's that we fell into the auditory trap of using another word that sounds identical. When we write, we use memory and auditory skills and don't necessarily pause to spell words in our heads. That's why we might write *their* when we mean *there*, or *tied* for *tide*.

The thing is that we all make these mistakes. For example, how many times have you written something and only later seen a commonly misspelled word left in your writing? We've all had this experience, and yet these are easily avoided if we pause to review our writing.

Believe it or not, the number one homophone error that plagues many of us is made up of three letters: **i**, **t**, & **s**.

Sometimes the letters combine with an apostrophe (**it's** for **it is**) and other times the letters are combined (**its**) without the apostrophe to indicate the possessive as in "*The package made **its** delivery deadline.*"

Here's the key: we intuit that possessives are illustrated in writing through the apostrophe, as in "*the senator's platform*" or "*the Seahawks' mascot.*"

BUT pronouns **do not** get the apostrophe for possessives. Think about it, we have *my*, *yours*, *ours*, *his*, *hers*, *theirs*, etc. No apostrophe to indicate the possessive, right?

So, keep this takeaway in your handy file: **it's** = **it is**, and **its** shows ownership

Want more fun with homophones?

Say these aloud: *their*, *there*, & *they're*. As you say and see them, you're aware that they mean different things. **Their** is the possessive. **There** is a place. And **they're** is the contraction for they are. However, there's a good chance that you made an error with these words at some point in your writing.

If you know you have difficulty with homophones, this list of common homophones might come in handy.

## An Abridged List of Commonly Confused Homophones

<b>A</b>	
air	heir
aisle	isle
ante	anti
<b>B</b>	

bare	bear
be	bee
break	brake
by	buy
<b>C</b>	
capitol	capital
cereal	serial
cent	scent
course	coarse
complement	compliment
<b>D</b>	
dear	deer
die	dye
<b>F</b>	
fir	fur
flour	flower
for	four
<b>H</b>	
hair	hare
heel	heal
hole	whole
<b>I</b>	
in	inn
idol	idle
<b>M</b>	
maid	made
mail	male
meet	meat
<b>P</b>	
pair	pear
peace	piece
plain	plane
poor	pour
prey	pray
principle	principal
<b>R</b>	
real	real
right	write
root	route
<b>S</b>	
sun	son
sight	site

stationery	stationary
steal	steel
sole	soul
<b>T</b>	
their	there
to	too
<b>W</b>	
waist	waste
weigh	way
wait	weight
weak	week
wear	where