

# Homonyms and Other Often Confused Words

## A

accept (to receive), except (to exclude)  
 advice (noun), advise (verb)  
 affect (influence), effect (bring to pass)  
 aid (to help); aide (an assistant)  
 air; heir (one who inherits)  
 aisle (passageway); isle (island); I'll (contraction for I will)  
 all (entirety); awl (tool)  
 all ready (all are ready), already (previously)  
 all right (there is no such word as alright)  
 all together (everyone together), altogether (entirely)  
 alley (back street), ally (to confederate)  
 allusion (a reference), illusion (deceiving appearance)  
 aloud; allowed (permitted)  
 alter (to change), altar (for worship)  
 angel, angle  
 arc (part of a circle); ark (Noah's boat)  
 ascent (act of rising); assent (agreement)  
 ate, eight

## B

bail; bale (large, closely pressed package)  
 bald (lacking hair); bawled (past tense of bawl)  
 ball (round toy); bawl (to cry loudly)  
 baring (making bare), barring (obstructing), bearing (carrying)  
 bare (endure, empty), bear (animal)  
 bares, bears (animal)  
 baron (nobleman); barren (incapable of producing offspring;  
 lacking vegetation)  
 base (foundation); bass (deep sound or tone)  
 beach (shore of ocean); beech (kind of tree)  
 beat (to hit repeatedly); beet (a vegetable)  
 berry (fruit); bury (to place under earth)  
 berth (job or position); birth (act of being born)  
 billed (past tense of bill); build (to make, establish)  
 blew (past tense of blow); blue (color)  
 bloc (a group); block (rectangular solid; a city square; to  
 obstruct; to shape)  
 boar (male pig); bore (to drill a hole)  
 board (piece of wood, meals provided with rent, persons  
 managing a firm, being on ship or train); bored (uninterested)  
 boarder (one who rents a room); border (dividing line, an edge)  
 bolder (more forward, more courageous); boulder (a large rock)  
 born (given birth), borne (carried)  
 bough (branch of tree); bow (to bend at waist, front part of ship)  
 brake (device for stopping a machine), break (shatter, fracture,  
 rest)  
 breath (noun), breathe (verb)  
 bred (past tense of breed); bread (food made from flour)  
 bridal (pertaining to a bride or wedding); bridle (part of a horse's  
 harness)  
 by (next to); buy (to purchase); bye (leaving)

## C

cannon (large weapon); canon (church law)  
 canvas (a cloth), canvass (to solicit)  
 capital (a city), capitol (a building)  
 carrot (vegetable); caret (proofreading symbol); carat (weight of  
 precious stones)

ceiling (top of a room); sealing (fastening or closing tightly)  
 cell (small, bare room); sell (to exchange for money)  
 cellar (underground room); seller (one who transfers property)  
 censor (an incense burner); censor (a person who examines  
 material for portions deemed objectionable or harmful)  
 cent (penny coin); scent (an odor); sent (past tense of send)  
 cents (plural of cent); sense (functions of hearing sight, smell,  
 taste, and touch, point or meaning, ability to think soundly)  
 cereal (grain used as food); serial (story published or broadcast  
 one part at a time)  
 chased (past tense of chase); chaste (virtuous, modest)  
 cheap (not expensive); cheep (bird sound)  
 choir (group of singers); quire (set of twenty-four or twenty-five  
 sheets of paper the same size and stock)  
 choose, chose  
 chute (an inclined passage to slide things down), shoot (to let fly,  
 to photograph, a young outgrowth of a shrub, an exclamation)  
 clause (separate section of a formal document, a group of words  
 containing a subject and verb); claws (sharp curved nails on an  
 animal)  
 clothes (garments), cloths (pieces of cloth)  
 coarse (rough, crude), course (route, part of a meal, series of  
 studies)  
 coin; quion  
 colonel (a high army officer); kernel (a grain or seed)  
 complement (something that completes); compliment (remark  
 that is kind)  
 confidant (one to whom secrets are entrusted); confident  
 (assured, certain)  
 conscious (aware); conscience (an inner moral sense)  
 consul (country's representative); council (a group); counsel  
 (advise, giving of advice)  
 cord (thick string); chord (musical note)  
 core (central or most important part); corps (a group of people  
 having common activity)  
 correspondence (communication by letters); correspondents  
 (plural of correspondent, one who communicates by letter)  
 cot; caught  
 councilor (council member); counselor (gives advice)  
 creak (to move with a harsh, squeaky, grating noise); creek (small  
 stream)  
 cue (a stick used in playing pool or billiards); queue (a waiting line)  
 currant (berry); current (now in progress, flowing in a definite  
 direction, electric force)  
 cymbals (musical instrument); symbols (graphic signs/marks)  
 Czech; check

## D

dairy (place for milk cows), diary (a book)  
 days (plural of day); daze (to dazzle or stupefy)  
 dear (beloved, costly, polite form of address); deer (an animal)  
 decent (adjective), descent (downward slope or motion), dissent  
 (a disagreement)  
 dependence (the quality or state of being supported, reliance and  
 trust); dependents (those who rely on another for support)  
 desert (a barren country or to leave), dessert (food)  
 device (noun); devise (verb)  
 die (to stop living, tool or device for stamping, singular of dice);  
 dye (to change the color through saturation)

## Spelling Power ☹ Homonyms & Other Often Confused Words

discreet (showing good judgment); discrete (separate and distinct)  
do (to carry out, perform); due (owed as a debt, owing to)  
does (past tense of do), dose (a portion of medicine)  
dual (having or composed of two parts), duel (a contest between two persons)

### F

fain; fane  
faint (not clear, feeble, without strength, to lose consciousness temporarily); feint (a movement intended to deceive)  
fair (impartial, reasonable, light, clear, beautiful, festival); fare (sum of money paid for travel, range of food, to dine, to get along)  
fate (destiny); fete (a festival)  
feat (an act or accomplishment showing great daring skill or ingenuity); feet (plural of foot)  
find (to discover); fined (past tense of fine)  
fir (type of tree); fur (skin and hair of an animal)  
first born (used as noun), first-born (used as an adjective)  
fisher (a fisherman); fissure (crack in a wall or rock)  
flair (a natural talent); flare (to burn unsteadily, to express strongly)  
flee (to run away); flea (a small parasitic insect)  
flew (past tense of fly, pass through the air); flue (a pipe for conveying smoke); flu (short for influenza, a virus disease)  
flower (the bloom of a plant); flour (ground grain)  
for (preposition); four (the number 4); fore (the front, toward the beginning)  
forbear (to hold back, refrain); forebear (ancestor)  
foreword (an introduction or preface); forward (at or near the front)  
formally (in a formal way), formerly (in time past)  
fort (a fortified building); forte (that in which one excels)  
forth (forward, onward); fourth (preceded by three others)  
foul (disgusting, unfair, out of bounds in ball games); fowl (bird used for food)

### G

gait (manner of walking or running), gate (a movable structure across an entrance or exit)  
gamble (to bet, wager); gambol (to skip about in play)  
gorilla; guerilla  
grate; great

### H

hay (dried grass), hey (expression of surprise)  
here, hear  
hoarse, horse  
hole, whole  
holy, wholly  
hour, our  
Hungary; hungry

### I

instance (an example), instants (periods of time)  
isle (an island); aisle (a narrow passage)  
its (possessive pronoun); it's (contraction of it is)

### J

Job (Bible character); job (work)

### K

knew, new  
know, no

### L

later (more late); latter (the second of two)  
lead (to go first; or a heavy metal), led (past tense of lead)

lessen, lesson  
loose (free), lose (loss)

### M

maid; made  
mail (letters or parcels, armor), male (man)  
main (principal, chief part), mane (hair on back of a horse's neck)  
meat, meet  
miner (worker in a mine), minor (under legal age; less important)  
moral (good, a lesson in conduct); morale (mental condition, spirit)

### N

need, knead  
nice (kind); Nice (city) [Nice is pronounced 'neese']  
Nice (city); niece (relative)

### P

pair (two), pare (cut or prune), pear (fruit)  
past, passed  
patience; patients  
peace, piece  
peaked; piqued; peek  
peer (to look closely), pier (dock)  
personal, personnel  
Pilate (biblical character); pilot (flies airplanes)  
plain (clear), plain (flat region), plane (flat), plane (geometrical term), and plane (airplane)  
planed (past tense of plane); planned (past tense of plan)  
plum; plumb  
populous (lots of people); populace (the people)  
pore; pour; poor  
praise; prays; preys  
pray; prey  
precedence (act or right of preceding), precedents (things said or done before, now used as authority or model)  
presence (state of being); presents (gifts)  
pries; prize  
principle, principal  
proceed, precede  
prophecy; prophecy

### Q

quay; key  
quit (stop), quite (completely, wholly, to great extent or degree), and quiet (still, silent)

### R

rain, reign, rein  
read; red  
real; reel  
right, write, rite (ceremony)  
ring, wring  
road, rode, rowed

### S

sail; sale  
seam; seem  
see, sea  
seen, scene  
sense, cents, since  
sew (combine fabrics with thread), so, sow (plant seed)  
sheer; shear  
shone, shown  
sight (one of the five senses, something worth seeing); site (the seat or scene of any specific thing, location of a building); cite (to quote as an authority)

## Spelling Power ⌚ Homonyms & Other Often Confused Words

stare, stair

stationary (in a fixed position), stationery (writing paper)

statue, stature, statute

steal (to take), steel (metal)

surplus (extra), surplice (religious garment)

### T

tail; tale

than, then

there, their, they're

therefor (to that end); therefore (for that reason)

threw (pitch, cast through the air), through (finished), thru

to, too, two

toe; tow

tract (of land), tract (a treatise on religion), track (imprint or road)

### V

very; vary

### W

waist, waste

wait; weight

way, weigh

weak (faint, feeble, helpless), week (seven days)

weather, whether

which, witch

whole, hole

whose, who's

wood; would

### Y

yews; ewes

yoke; yolk

you're, your