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ENGLISH

HOMOPHONES AND HOMONYMS

What are homophones and homonyms?

Quite often, a word can have multiple meanings despite holding the same sound or spelling. If one does not have a sound knowledge of such words, understanding English can be a daunting task. Therefore, it is very important to know the difference between homonyms, homophones and homographs.

HOMONYMS:

- Words that have the same spelling and pronunciation but different meanings are known as **Homonyms**.

I can go to the library only after noon. (Can=verb (ability))

The can was opened by a knife. (Can=noun (container))

HOMOPHONES:

- Words that have the same pronunciation but different spellings and meanings are known as **Homophones**.

Mother served us chocolate dessert. (Dessert=eatable)

The boy was stranded alone on the desert. (Desert=land mass)

Homo (same) + Nym (name)

=

Homonym (same name)

Homo (same) + Phone (sound)

=

Homophone (same sound)

Let us now look at some homophones.

aye, censor, cite, buy, braze, eye, sight, braise, sensor, bye

- "Aye Aye Captain!" said the sailor as he pulled the sails. (old English for 'yes')
The stone hit the worker in the eye while he was working in the quarry. (part of the body)
- The censor board decided to ban the play in the communally sensitive regions of the country. (a group)
The motion sensor detection lights failed to operate in time. (a mechanism)
- The student should cite at least two examples for each occurrence. (to quote from a source)
No one was in sight when I reached the charity ball. (to be seen)
- The Wilsons are going to buy the old mansion next month. (to purchase)
"Bye, Aunt Kathy!" Cindy said as the car pulled out of the lane. (a greeting)
- The two pieces of metal were brazed together at a high melting point. (soldered)
The vegetables were braised using little water. (cooked in a pan)

Look at the words printed in bold in the sentences below. The table that follows explains each word's pronunciation and meaning.

1. All the expenses of the tour were **billed** to the company.
2. We **ate** heartily last night at the graduation party.
3. Privileges should be given based on merit rather than **caste**.
4. Nathan decided to **build** a room upstairs for his long lost brother.
5. Soldiers are trained to survive without food and water for **days** together.
6. Like Cinderella, Isabelle also wished for a **fairy** godmother to arrive and rescue her out of her foster home.
7. We were **not** prepared to face such a devastating storm.
8. The FIR report stated that the family had employed Jaggu despite knowing that he was a **minor**.
9. The **ferry** to Mandva jetty leaves in 10 minutes so we better hurry up.
10. The **fir** trees in the woods were covered with snow.
11. She was groomed to become a **nun** one day.
12. The witch **cast** an ominous spell over Andalusia and every baby that would be born in the country.
13. The wife of the victim was in a **daze** after the revelations of the murder.
14. Polar bears have thick **fur** on their body to protect them from extreme cold.
15. Felix liked to have **eight** pencils in his pencil box.
16. Kevin's father was a **miner** during the day and a bouncer at night.
17. The **main** switch needs to be disconnected immediately in case the red light starts beeping continuously.
18. The **knot** was too tight for little Kevin to loosen it in time.
19. Simba stood at the edge of Pride Rock and looked magnificent as the wind breezed through his luscious **mane**.
20. **None** of the designs sent by the architect are impressive.

Word	Pronunciation and Meaning
billed	\ˈbɪld\ : to charge someone
build	\ˈbɪld\ : to make something
ate	\ā-tē\ : past tense of eat
eight	\ˈāt\ : the eighth number in a set
caste	\ˈkast\ : division based on wealth, rank, or occupation
cast	\ˈkast\ : to send something in a direction
days	\ˈdāz\ : on any day
daze	\ˈdāz\ : to stupefy
fairy	\ˈfer-ē\ : a mythical being
ferry	\ˈfer-ē, ˈfe-rē\ : to carry by boat
fur	\ˈfər\ : a hairy coat of an animal
fir	\ˈfər\ : a tall evergreen tree
minor	\ˈmī-nər\ : below 18 years of age
miner	\ˈmī-nər\ : a person who digs in a mine
main	\ˈmān\ : the chief part
mane	\ˈmān\ : thick hair around the top and sides of the neck of a horse or a lion
knot	\ˈnāt\ : an interlacement of parts
not	\ˈnāt\ : a negative word
none	\ˈnən\ : not any
nun	\ˈnən\ : a woman from a religious order

Examine the underlined words in the sentences below to understand how homonyms can be tricky yet interesting!

1. It took 12 hours for the crane to shift the trailer off the highway. (a machine)
The crane kept staring at the fish in the water, as if meditating into oblivion. (a bird)
 2. The file that went missing today from the office had confidential information. (set of papers)
The residents are going to file a case against the builder pressing criminal charges against him. (record legally)
 3. The brass vessels were no match to the silver chairs placed in the royal dining hall. (to be equal to)
The match was well played by both the teams. (a game)
 4. The left hand side of the page has to remain blank. (one side of your body)
The survivors were left with just a few supplies in the middle of the ocean. (remaining)
 5. He visits his grandfather's grave every year on his birthday. (final resting place)
It was a grave mistake that killed many innocent children. (serious)
 6. The chief guest addressed the audience and the teachers in his speech. (officially spoke)
The address you have written on the form is incomplete. (a place where you live)
 7. I will not support any criminal activity in this village. (to approve of)
The NGO had the support of 500 villagers and several government schemes. (assistance)
 8. The duck swam in the pond with the four ducklings as the snake glided into the water. (a bird)
Suraj had to duck to avoid getting hit by the ball. (to lower the head suddenly)
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