

TOP 100 MISSPELT WORDS IN ENGLISH

acceptable	equipment	library	referred
accidentally	exhilarate	lightning	reference
accommodate	exceed	maintenance	relevant
acquire	existence	manoeuvre	religious
acquit	experience	memento	restaurant
a lot	fiery	millennium	ridiculous
amateur	foreign	miniature	rhythm
apparent	fourth	mischievous	sandal
argument	gauge	noticeable	schedule
atheist	generally	occasion	scissors
believe	grammar	occasionally	sensible
calendar	grateful	occur / occurred	separate
category	harass	occurrence	special
cemetery	height	official	success
changeable	hierarchy	parallel	to / too / two
collectible	ignorance	parliament	tomorrow
committed	immediate	pastime	their / they're / there
conscience	independent	pigeon	twelfth
conscientious	indispensable	possession	tyranny
conscious	intelligence	preferable	until
definite(ly)	its / it's	principal / principle	vacuum
disappear	judgement	privilege	vicious
discipline	knowledge	questionnaire	weather
drunkenness	leisure	receive	weird
embarrass		recommend	you're / your

WORD DEMONS

1. accept - to receive
except - to exclude; but
2. affect - to influence
effect - the result
3. a lot - very much (two words)
allot - to allow
4. already - previously
all ready - completely ready, everyone ready
5. all right - entirely correct
alright - no such word. Do not use.
6. altogether - completely or entirely
all together - everyone or everything in the same place
7. brake - device used to stop a machine
break - to fracture or shatter
8. breath - air inhaled and exhaled
breathe - to draw air in and out of lungs
9. dessert - the final course of a meal
desert - to leave; a dry region
10. here - at this place
hear - to listen
11. its - possessive pronoun, showing ownership
it's - it is or it has (contraction)
12. knew - understood
new - fresh, original
13. lead - a metal; graphite in a pencil
led - the past tense of the verb lead

14. passed
past - the past tense of the verb pass
- time that has gone by; beyond in position
15. plain
plane - clear; ordinary; an expanse of level land
- a tool; an airplane
16. principal
principle - head of school; the most important; main
- a basic law or rule of action
17. quiet
quite - silent
- to an extreme
18. right
write - proper, correct
- compose
19. than
then - use for comparisons
- refers to time
20. sight
site - vision, spectacle
- a piece of land or location
21. there
their
they're - in that place
- possessive pronoun showing ownership
- they are (contraction)
22. through
threw - indicates direction
- pitched
23. to
too
two - indicates direction
- also, excessive
- the number 2
24. week
weak - period of seven days
- not strong
25. weather
whether - the climate
- if
26. who's
whose - who is or who has (contraction)
- a possessive pronoun showing ownership

Homophones and Commonly Confused Words

a / an (22)

'A' and 'an' are two forms of the indefinite article. 'A' is used before words that begin with consonants: a dog, a house, a tree.

'An' is used before words that begin with vowels: an ant, an egg, an orange.

If the beginning consonant is silent and is followed by a vowel, 'an' is used: an hour, an honest mistake.

accept / except (9)

'Accept' means 'to agree to receive'. Jim accepted the gift gratefully.

'Except' means 'all but'. Everyone except Jessica got the answer wrong.

ad / add (5)

'Ad' is a shortened slang term for 'advertisement'.

He is best known for his part in the ad for Boffo Dog Food.

'Add' means 'put together'. When you add six to four you get ten.

addition / edition (5)

'Addition' means 'the act of adding'. The addition of spices made the food more tasty.

An 'edition' is one of a number of copies of a book or newspaper.

The story appeared in the morning edition of the newspaper.

air / heir (18)

'Air' means the atmosphere or a gas. The air in the forest was very fresh. An 'heir' is someone entitled to succeed to property or a rank. Prince Charles is the heir to the British throne.

among / amongst (18)

Both forms of this word are correct and interchangeable.

'Among' is most commonly used.

angels / angles (21)

An 'angel' is a spirit. It was as if an angel was protecting him. An 'angle' is a corner. A triangle has three angles.

ate / eight (2)

'Ate' is the past tense of 'eat'. Jazmin ate her crusts today. (Note: 'ate' is also pronounced – correctly – 'ett'.)

'Eight' is a number. A spider has eight legs.

became / become (21)

'Became' stands alone. 'Become' needs a helper (has, have, will). Jim became sick after eating Mrs Chiffle's pie. Jim has become sick.

began / begun (16, 18)

'Began' stands alone. 'Begun' needs a helper. Bill began singing loudly. Bill has begun singing.

beside / besides (10)

'Beside' means 'next to'. The cowboy stood beside his horse.

'Besides' means 'apart from'. Besides being a good reader, Lily is very good at sport.

best / better (10)

We use 'best' when comparing three or more things. Don Bradman has the best record of all batsmen in Test cricket. We use 'better' when comparing two things. Colin's score in the test was better than Bo's.

bight / bite (10)

A 'bight' is a large curved shoreline. The Great Australian Bight is part of the continent's southern coastline. To 'bite' is to 'grip with the teeth'.

'Rover will only bite if you breathe within fifty metres of him,' said the proud owner.

blew / blue (9)

'Blew' is the past tense of 'blow'. The wind blew from the south. 'Blue' is a colour. The policeman's uniform is blue.

bought / brought (1, 2, 14, 21, 23)

'Bought' is the past tense of 'buy'. Tanita bought a beautiful dress at the sale. 'Brought' is the past tense of 'bring'. Jaimee brought her pet tortoise to school. To help students remember this, point of the 'br' beginnings for 'bring' and 'brought'.

brake / break (23)

A 'brake' is a device which slows or stops a vehicle. The driver put his foot on the brake as he came to the red light. To 'break' means to make inoperable or crack into a number of pieces. It only took Leonardo two minutes to break his new toy.

brought / brung (16)

'Brought' is the past tense of 'bring'. Jaimee brought her pet tortoise to school. 'Brung' is often incorrectly used instead of 'brought'. There is no such word!

came/ come (4)

'Came' is the past tense of 'come'. 'Came' never has a helper. Hayley came first in her race. Sometimes 'come' has a helper (has, have, had, will).

caught / court (9)

'Caught' is the past tense of 'catch'. Jessica threw the ball and Emma caught it. Legal trials are held in a 'court'. Some games are played on a 'court'. 'Silence in court!' shouted Judge Pepper. The tennis final is played on the centre court.

chased / chaste (16)

'Chased' is the past tense of 'chase'. The hounds chased the fox. 'Chaste' mean 'pure' or 'decent'. The knight was chaste of thought and deed.

cause / course (11)

A 'cause' is a reason. Eating three family-sized pies was the cause of Bruce's indigestion. A 'course' is the path or direction taken. The river followed a winding course.

desert / dessert (10, 18)

The 'desert' is a wasteland. The explorers were lost in the hot, dry desert. 'Dessert' is a sweet course in a meal. We finished our meal with a dessert of peaches and cream.

did / done (16)

'Did' and 'done' are past tense forms of the verb 'to do'. 'Did' stands alone, while 'done' requires a helper (has, have).

Genna did her homework. Genna has done her homework.

draw / drawer (1)

'Draw' means 'to sketch'. Did you draw that lovely picture, Tamara? A 'drawer' is a sliding compartment in a chest. He kept his pencils in a drawer.

eight / ate (see 'ate')

except / accept (see 'accept')

fair / fare (3)

When we say something is 'fair', we mean it is just (it serves justice). Good King Wenceslaus was loved by his people because he was a fair king. 'Fare' is a fee paid for travelling on a bus, train etc. Loren lost her bus fare.

farther / further (1)

Both words have the same meaning ('a greater distance'). In contemporary English 'further' (or 'furthest') is used. Jack hit his golf shot further than Mark.

find / fined (23)

'Find' means to discover by chance. I was lucky to find my watch when it fell in the sand. 'Fined' is the past tense of the verb, 'to fine'. This means 'to impose a penalty (usually money) for some wrongdoing'. Vince was fined \$100 for stealing cotton wool out of pill bottles.

for / fore / four (5, 23)

'Fore' means 'the front part'. 'Four' is a number. 'For' is used in other cases. It is beautiful on the foreshore of the harbour. Becky has four fluffy budgies. This piece of pie is for you. We're bound for South Australia.

forth / fourth (14)

'Forth' is an old word meaning 'forward'. 'Go forth and explore the world', said Mother Pig. 'Fourth means 'in position four'. When written 4th, it is called an ordinal number. Kelly came fourth in her swimming final.

fought / fort (21)

'Fought' is the past tense of 'fight'. The Kilkenny cats fought whenever they saw each other. A 'fort' means a stockade. Robinson Crusoe built a fort to protect himself from intruders.

grate / great (21)

A 'grate' is a framework of metal bars especially in a fireplace. The grate was full of glowing coals. 'Great' is an adjective meaning large. The astronauts of Apollo 11 could see the Great Wall of China from space.

hear / here (4, 23)

You 'hear' sounds with your 'ear'. Did you hear that noise? 'Here' means in this place'. Put your books here.

heard / herd (16)

'Heard' is the past tense of 'hear'. I heard a strange sound. 'Herd' is a name for a group of animals. A herd of cattle grazed peacefully on Jim's lawn.

heir / air (See 'air')**hole / whole (19)**

A 'hole' is an opening. The mouse escaped through a hole in the wall. 'Whole' means 'complete' or 'containing all the parts'. Clarence ate the whole pie.

hours / ours (11)

Time is measured in 'hours'. The plane was four hours late. 'Ours' means 'belonging to us'. It is a possessive pronoun. That new car in the driveway is ours.

ion / iron

An 'ion' is an atom which has gained or lost some electrons. The machine released positively-charged ions into the air.

Its / it's (10, 11, 21)

'Its' means 'belonging to it'. It is a possessive pronoun. The puppy chased its tail. 'It's is the contracted form of 'it is'. Do you think it's going to rain?

knew / new (3, 8, 9)

'Knew' is the past tense of 'know'. Sarah knew all of her multiplication tables. 'New' means freshly made and not used by anyone before. Shaun has some new boots.

knight / night (10)

A 'knight' is a high ranking person who has the title 'Sir'. Sir Lancelot was one of King Arthur's knights. 'Night' is the period of darkness between sundown and sunrise. We sleep during the night.

know / no (2, 3, 21)

'Know' means

To be aware of something'. Most people know it is bad manners to eat with your elbows on the table. 'No' means 'not any' or can be used to deny something.

There are no jellybeans left in the jar. Did you see who took them? No!

known / no-one (11)

If something is 'known' people are aware of it. James is well known at school. 'No-one' means 'nobody'. No-one knows what happened to the sailors on the *Marie Celeste*.

laid / lain / lied (14)

'Laid' is the past participle of 'lay'. It means 'put down'. The bricklayer laid 500 bricks today. 'Lain' is the past participle of 'lie' meaning 'to be in a horizontal position'. It needs a helper. (has, have)

Mary has lain on her bed. (Note that the past tense of 'lie' is also 'lay'. She lay on the bed.) 'Lied' is the past tense of 'lie', meaning 'to be untruthful'.

During World War 1 many soldiers lied about their ages so they could join the army.

lay / lie (10,14)

'Lay' means 'to put down or place'. Lay your pens on the desk. 'Lie' means 'to be in a horizontal position' or 'to rest or recline'. I'm going to lie on my bed. Confusion often arises because 'lay' is also the past tense of 'lie'. The sick child lay in bed groaning.

learn / teach (10)

'Learn' means 'to study'. I am going to learn the five times table over the weekend. 'Teach' means 'instruct'. Today our teacher is going to teach us the five times table.

made / maid (4)

'Made' means 'produced'. That camera was made in Japan. A 'maid' is a female servant. The maid scrubbed the floor.

meter / metre (11)

A 'meter' is a device for measuring something. The man read the electricity meter. A 'metre' is a measurement of length. A metre is made up of one hundred centimetres. (In the USA both words are spelt 'meter'.)

must of / must have (18)

'Must have' is correct usage. Many children say, incorrectly, 'must of'. This is probably as a result of mis-hearing the contracted form, 'must've'.

new / knew (See 'knew')**night / knight (See 'knight')****no-one / known (See 'known')****of / off (4,5, 9, 16)**

'Of' is a preposition that indicates ownership. She is a relation of mine. 'Off' is a preposition that tells us that something has been removed. He took off his shoes.

Peace / piece (2, 21)

'Peace' means 'calm, quiet or the cessation of war'.

The warring tribes decided to make peace.

A 'piece' is a 'part or portion'. May I have a piece of pie please.

picture / pitcher (10)

A 'picture' is a drawing, painting or photograph. A picture hung on the wall. A 'pitcher' is a jug. Joan filled the pitcher with milk.

poor / pour (4)

'Poor' means lacking enough money to live at a normal standard. The family was so poor that the children's clothes were ragged. 'Pour' means 'to cause a liquid to flow from a container'. I am going to pour myself a drink.

quick / quickly (5)

'Quick' is an adjective meaning 'fast'. John is a quick thinker. 'Quickly' is an adverb meaning 'rapidly'. John thinks quickly. Sometimes people incorrectly use the adjective as an adverb and vice versa.

quiet / quite (4, 8, 10)

'Quiet' means making little or no noise. The classroom was quiet when the children left. 'Quite' means 'to a certain extent'. Scott's work is quite good but it could improve.

rain / reign / rein (9)

'Rain' is water that falls from the sky. The rain fell heavily. The 'reign' of a king or queen is the period of their rule. Shakespeare lived during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. A 'rein' is used to steer a horse. The jockey pulled the rein so his horse took the corner.

rote / wrote (8)

If you learn something by 'rote' you memorise it by constant repetition without necessarily understanding it. He learnt the poem 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' by rote. 'Wrote' is the past tense of the verb 'to write'. He sat down and wrote a long letter.

sauce / source (22)

'Sauce' is a thick, savoury flavour additive. Amy always puts lots of tomato sauce on pies. The 'source' of something is where it originates. The source of the river is the mountains.

saw / seen (8, 16, 21)

'Saw' stands alone while 'seen' needs a helper (has, have, had). I saw a flying saucer last night. I have seen a flying saucer once before.

saw / sore (22)

'Saw' is the past tense of 'see'. Tell me what you saw when you looked through the window. A 'sore' is a wound. After falling the boy had a sore on his knee. 'Sore' also means 'painful'. Pauls back was sore after working in the garden all day.

sea / see (8)

The 'sea' is a large body of water. The sailor went to sea. 'See' is a verb meaning 'to view with the eyes'. Did you see that film?

shore / sure (1)

The land along the edge of a sea or lake is the 'shore'. Robinson Crusoe swam to shore. 'Sure' means 'certain'. I am sure I've seen that man before.

some / sum (5, 10)

'Some' means 'an unspecified number'. Some visitors came to our house yesterday. The 'sum' is the 'total'. The sum of four and five is nine.

steal from / off (16)

Something is stolen 'from' someone, not 'off' someone.

tail / tale (10)

An animal has a 'tail'. The horse brushed flies away with its tail. A 'tale' is a story. 'The Little Mermaid' is a fairytale by Hans Christian Andersen.

teach / learn (see 'learn')**their / there/ they're (1,2,4,5,8,9,11,18,21,22,23)**

'Their' means 'belonging to them'. That is their house.

'There' is a place. Do you mean the house over there?

'They're' is the contracted form of 'they are'. Let's see if they're at home.

threw / through (8,16, 23)

'Threw' is the past tense of 'throw'. Greg threw the ball back to the wicketkeeper. 'Through' is used to indicate starting on one side and finishing on the other. Little Red Riding Hood walked through the forest and came to her Grandma's house.

tied / tired (21)

'Tied' means 'bound'. The parcel was neatly tied with string. 'Tired' means 'weary'. Beau felt very tired after the swimming carnival.

tire / tyre (17)

'Tire' means 'to grow weary'. The teacher began to tire of Leonardo's inattentiveness.

A 'tyre' is an air-filled tube around the car wheel. He stopped because his tyre was punctured.

to / too / two (1,3, 4,10, 16, 18, 21)

'To' has several meaning and uses. Perhaps it is easiest to remember that it is used in all circumstances where 'too' and 'two' do not apply. 'Too' is used as an intensifier. This work is too hard. 'Too' can mean 'also'. May I go, too? 'Two' is a number. Birds have two wings.

took / had taken (21)

'Took' stands alone. 'Taken' needs a helper (has, have, had). The most common error is when children use the helper (auxiliary) with 'took'.

was / were (8, 10)

Both words are past tense forms of the verb 'to be'. 'Was' is singular (used with I, he, she, it). 'Were' is plural (used with you, they). Note that 'were' is used with 'you' whether it is being used in a singular or plural sense.

warn / worn (1, 23)

'Warn' means 'to notify of danger'. The signs on the beach warn us that this is not a safe place to swim. If something is suffering from wear and tear from constant use, we say it is 'worn'. We are getting new carpet at school because the old carpet is worn.

waist / waste (1)

Your 'waist' is your midriff. The climber tied the rope around his waist. 'Waste' means 'what is left over' or rubbish. Put any waste food in the bin. 'Waste' can also mean 'to spend unnecessarily' or 'to fail to take advantage of'. The silly boy wasted his money. Do not waste your opportunities.

weather / wether / whether (19)

When we talk about the 'weather' we mean the climatic conditions. On the news the reader said to expect more rainy weather. A 'wether' is a castrated male sheep. The wether had a wonderful fleece. 'Whether' is used to imply a possibility of choices. Whether you do it or not it is up to you.

weak / week (5, 17)

'Weak' means 'not strong'. The explorers were very weak after so long without food. A 'week' is a period of seven days. It is Hayden's birthday in a week.

were / where (2, 4, 9, 14, 21, 23)

These words are pronounced differently but are often confused in children's spelling.

An easy way to stop this confusion is to play an asking game to which the answer is always, 'Here!'

Where is your pen? (Child points and answers.) Here! The teaching point, of course, is that 'where' contains its answer, 'here'.

which / witch (3)

'Which' is used to distinguish a certain member from its group. 'Which book would you like to borrow?' asked the librarian. A witch is a woman who professes to practise magic. A male witch is a warlock. Hansel and Gretel came to a cottage of an old witch.

whole / hole (See 'hole')**wander / wonder (9, 22)**

To 'wander' is to travel about without any set purpose. The cattle wandered away. 'Wonder' is a mixture of surprise and curiosity. He looked at the new invention in wonder.

your / you're (5, 10, 16, 17)

'Your' means 'belonging to you'. That is your pen. 'You're' is the contracted form of 'you are'. You're in the same team as Colin.

Homophones

'Homophones' are words that sound the same whether spelt differently or not. Sometimes, these words are used incorrectly because they are easily confused.

allowed/aloud	gait/gate	road/rode/rowed
altar/alter	guessed/guest	rote/wrote
aren't/aunt	hair/hare	sail/sale
ate/eight	hail/hale	sauce/source
bare/bear	hear/here	saw/sore/soar
berry/bury	heard/herd	scene/seen
berth/birth	hoarse/horse	sea/see
blew/blue	hole/whole	seam/seem
board/bored	hour/our	sew/so/saw
boarder/border	idle/idol	shore/saw
bough/bow	key/quay	sight/site
boy/buoy	knead/need/knead	son/sun
brake/break	knew/new	stair/stare
buy/by/bye	knight/night	stake/steak
caught/court	know/no	stationary/stationery
cent/scent/sent	lead/led	steal/steel
ceiling/sealing	load/lode	storey/story
cereal/serial	made/maid	straight/strait
cheap/cheep	main/mane	tail/tale
check/cheque	mare/mayor	team/teem
chews/choose	meat/meet/mete	their/there/they're
coarse/course	medal/meddle	threw, through
complement/compliment	muscle/mussel	throne, thrown
council/counsel	none/nun	to/too/two
currant/current	one/won	vain/vane/vein
dessert/desert	paced/paste	waist/waste
die/dye	pair/pare/pear	wait/weight
faint/feint	paw/poor/pore/pour	wear/where
fair/fare	peace/piece	weak/week
fate/fete	plain/plane	weal/wheel
feat/feet	practice/practise	weather/wether/whether
flaw/floor	rap/rap	which/witch
foul/fowl	right/rite/write	wood/would

Difficult words to spell

ache	busy	don't	heard	meant	separate	tired	whether
again	buy	early	here	minute	shoes	tonight	which
always	can't	easy	hoarse	much	since	too	whole
among	choose	enough	hour	none	some	trouble	women
answer	colour	every	instead	often	straight	truly	won't
any	coming	February	just	once	sugar	Tuesday	would
been	cough	forty	knew	piece	sure	two	write
beginning	could	friend	know	raise	tear	used	writing
believe	country	grammar	laid	read	their	very	wrote
blue	dear	guess	loose	ready	there	wear	
break	doctor	half	lose	said	they	Wednesday	
built	does	having	making	says	though	week	
business	done	hear	many	seems	through	where	

