



Community Colleges of Spokane
Spokane Community College
Tutoring Services

Homonyms

Definition: Homonyms (similar to homographs and homophones) are two or more words that have the same sound or spelling but differ in meaning. Choosing the wrong word from among two or more homonyms results in a spelling error; this inaccuracy creates confusion in the mind of the reader and temporarily interrupts the flow of the passage.

How to correctly use homonyms:

- **Consult a dictionary or thesaurus:** If you think that you haven't used the correct word, consult a dictionary or thesaurus.
- **Make cautious use of your computer's word processor:** Correct errors that are indicated by the grammar and spell check function. However, keep in mind that a homonym that is spelled correctly may not have the correct meaning in the context of your paper.
- **Ask someone else to read your paper for you:** Another set of eyes looking at your paper will increase the chance of catching a homonym error.
- **Make a deposit in your memory banks:** One of the most effective ways to facilitate the correct use of homonyms is to store them in your memory.
- **Read widely and often:** The more frequently you see words spelled and used correctly in reliable text, the more likely you are to use them correctly in your own writing.

Some of the most commonly-confused homonyms include:

- there, their, and they're
- its and it's
- your and you're
- to, too, and two
- affect and effect
- accept and except
- complement and compliment
- capital and capitol
- principal and principle

YouTube Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=777zZy2UMaA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egMnGK0NlzY>

Online Resources:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/english/homonyms/>

<http://copywriterscrucible.wordpress.com/2009/09/01/41-commonly-misused-english-words/>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/2/1/48/>

<https://www.spellingcity.com/homophones-and-homonyms.html>

http://www.cooper.com/alan/homonym_list.html