

CALLING ON THE HOMOPHONE

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Too-fore-sics-ate! Homophones we appreciate!

Homophones are pairs (pears, pares), triads, or more capacious clusters of words that sound the same but are spelled differently and communicate different meanings. Here (hear) are some (sum) beastly examples:

What do you call a naked grizzly? A *bare bear*. What do you call a pony with a sore throat? A *hoarse horse*.

Have you ever seen a *dear deer*, a *grisly grizzly*, a *new gnu*, a *foul fowl*, a *towed toad*, an *ant aunt*, and a *gorilla guerrilla*?

Have you ever seen a *boar bore*, a *bee be*, a *whale wail*, a *flea flee*, *ewes use*, and *does doze*?

Or take this homophonic tour de farce: Have you heard about the successful perfume manufacturer? *Her business made a lot of scents (cents, sense)*. That's a triple play—three homophones nestled in a single syllable!

I have been able to snare well more than a hundred triple homophones (*there, their, they're*) and quadruple homophones (*right, rite, write, wright*), reaching as high as sextuple homophones (*air, heir, err, ere, Eyre, Ayer*).

Hear here. Let's start with 20 words that become their own homophones when their first letter is beheaded:

aisle/isle	knew/new	llama/lama	wrest/rest
hour/our	knickers/nickers	psalter/salter	wretch/retch
knap/nap	knight/night	scent/cent	wright/right
knave/nave	knit/nit	whole/hole	write/rite
knead/need	knot/not	wrap/rap	wrote/rote

Now take a look at another list of 20 words that become their own homophones when their last letter is curtailed:

add/ad	butt/but	flue/flu	ore/or
bee/be	bye/by	fore/for	please/pleas
belle/bell	canvass/canvas	inn/in	prose/pros
block/bloc	caste/cast	lamb/lam	sow/so
borne/born	damn/dam	lapse/laps	tease/teas

Next up, 20 pairs of words that are homophonic when we delete an internal letter:

aunt/ant	choral/coral	maize/maze	overrate/overate
boarder/border	fourth/forth	mined/mind	read/red
boulder/bolder	guild/gild	mooed/mood	reign/rein
callous/callus	hoarse/horse	mourning/morning	two (too)/to
fined/find	lead/led	oar/or	waive/wave

Now for the most pyrotechnic of all homophone acts—20 high-stepping homophonic pairs that turn out to be anagrams of each other:

bear/bare	hide/hied	pride/pried	steak/stake
break/brake	hose/hoes	reed/rede	tale/tael
discrete/discreet	meet/mete	rude/rued	tear/tare
gale/gael	ore/o'er	ruse/rues	tide/tied
great/grate	pear/pare	seer/sere	wear/ware

And, finally, two patterns that I observed in the passage you'll soon read—20 past-tense *-ed* verbs and 20 *s*-marked plural nouns that turn out to be homophonic:

allowed/aloud	guessed/guest	passed/past	weighed/wade
bowled/bold	holed/hold	sighed/side	wheeled/wield
chased/chaste	mooed/mood	soared/sword	whiled/wild
cored/chord	mussed/must	stayed/staid	whirled/world
graphed/graft	owed/ode	trussed/trust	whored/hoard
boos/booze	gays/gaze	pros/prose	sighs/size
cents/sense	guys/guise	rays/raise	tees/tease
chants/chance	hours/ours	seas/seize	tents/tense
days/daze	paws/pause	sects/sex	verses/versus
dents/dense	pennants/penance	senses/census	whys/wise

In the 12 paragraphs you are about to read, each word is homophonically misspelled. That means no *ifs*, *ands*, and only one *butt*, as almost all of the little prepositions and conjunctions that glue our sentences together become unavailable, along with most pronouns. While I do repeat homophones of articles, prepositions, conjunctions, and pronouns, I strive not to recycle the same spelling of any homophonic main word: nouns, verbs, and modifiers.

To the eye, the text looks like the work of a demented typesetter with an orthographic disability. But when you read it aloud, it sounds a lot like English. To avoid getting a headache, please consult the ensuing translation whenever necessary:

Hears sum rye, humerus pros eye rote won idol mourning our discreetly four nun butt deer auld ewe. Bye chants, wood yew — sunny buoy, chased made—chews riches sighed inn uh capitol caws, Dane two lone you're assistants two Dix kneed? Watt hee once mussed bee dun. Mite eww gneiss guise, suite Mrs. aurally reed mai hole peace allowed? Yew wood? Tea he! Yea! Hay! Aye guest rite!

Gays, stair, canvas, saver mai epoch owed too write-whey righting. Yule here ore sea Howe ate-carrot, forte-knocks-sighs, goaled-plaited versus martial hour census; rays hour aw; seam owe sew bowled, tern boulder — hear oar oversees, sealing two seller, there scull, lox, I browse, knows rite too they're heals, souls, feat, tows inn shoos.

Thee awl-whys sol praise, seize, here's, nose weave finely one uh whirled-premier, grayed-eh, tighten pries baste awn reel fax inn bettor, meteor, Whittier, finally-maid plotz witch plum purist soles. Grate read-wight-blew pried ads flare, caries wait, urns ascent, complements, hie preys, lo boughs four mai hail, cereal tail. Its acute butte! Adherence clamor fore moor!

Currant stile guyed lessens billed trussed; holed wait; we've whit; Wynne meddles; illicit acclimation—bayou fare-hewed flours; popery sashays; whine sands pier; pallet-peeking deserts; minx firs; sheik close, Whigs, warn genes; rapt presence pact inn uh bo-tide Bach's.

Aye—you're bazaar barred; meet mews; franc auricle; pore, plane profit; trustee tooter—whish Yul knot Bea hostel ore pea owed o'er doughs, knapping allot, two dammed board buy bass, cheep, feint, heirless, miner, stayed, stationery, wurst Babel witch Mrs. Marx.

Dew knot caul mi uh rued, ruff faux; uh foe, lacks lyre; uh sari, week-need cowered; oar uh doer, callus, mien nave hoo lax principals ore manors, hoo wood except graphed o'er hied oar berry boos, licker, logger bier, pail ail, junkie jinn, oar heroine; ore uh sic, grocer, teste putts (two quoin uh frays) hoo wood insight uh coo two sees uh hansom princess thrown; steel uh faro's lute—joules, purls, cache,

Czechs—uh shakes whored; o'er rayed uh precedence wore rheum.
“Holed yore hoarse! Clothes you're pi whole! Doo pennants! Your
cane, knot able—uh phat-but hangar-awn, uh cursor.hoo boarders awn
shear roomer! Aye overate yew!” isle repost, mach, tees, sensor.

Yoo hoo red mai holy Abel, Ernest whirred maize wright threw
Cannes coolie fined patients bye wresting you're world, phased,
waisted mined fora we bitt. Quires carrel coral cords, Cokes daze
berth. Wholly serifs clime starlet, Ariel piques, witch Basque inn
sonny whether. Reign-beaus ark. Uh summary see Bries throes knew
cedes, maze colonels. Lightning lodes, rapped harts ryes, sore—born
hi, razed hire, Leica gnu berth.

Whiled bores, mousse, yacks, lamas, news grays inn uh heard.
Hairs, dear, doze, fauns gamble inn Haydn Sikh. Aunts, Beatles, flees,
knits, leaches, Nat's, tics borough. Lam, use lo, bah. Bronx knicker,
Winnie. Grisly bare pause, clause. Katz per. Pidgin coups. Cox
Crowe. Fouls cheap. Signets lei. Wales, mores, raise, guild Marlon
pea. Links a tax, bytes. Guerrillas inn troupes eight pares, aplomb.
Quayle, Robyn, be, burred flu. Illegals wield, sword. Mewls, burrows
braid. Towed staid.

Wont Moore, rood guessed? Aisle knot paws butt—Pee Dee
Cue, *toot sweet*—altar hour mooded. He'd fay cymbals ore sines witch
cents bruit pane; worn ore bowed dyer straights; baron whoa, crewel
fete: Wringing belles peeled, told grizzly knight, chili rein, roomy
missed, Erie Paul. Inn uh Grimm would, Cyprus routes frees. Beach
bows sheikh. Timbre! Vial gilt wrecks. Few! Uh fowl cent Styx too
dents, teaming heir.

Taught, tents mussels flecks, titan. Vanes leek. Sells whither.
Limns brews, creek. Soars oohs. Wastes synch. Naval hertz. Hare
reseeds. Elicit, band hoars ewes sects. Haight Concord. Murderess
gorillas mustard fuhrer; chute pistils, canons; wheeled axis; serge;
sleigh heeling piece; pray awn holey fryers; reck Seine scents. Wii
pour retches, spade UNIX, cant bare undo torcher oar sloe dyeing,
sow whee brewed, “Thyme, tied whacks, wain—weight fore Noh
Mann.”

“Weir Dunne. Wheel loch hour gait, role, flea, peddle, sale
aweigh,” wee whale, wine, ball. “Idyll ours flue passed Leica soared-
baring night, hoo road foreword caste inn male,” Wii grown, mown,
mule, wile whet tiers coarse, poor, floe. Wracking size brake fourth.
Weal Finnish, waive by-buy! ado! high hoe! chow!

Silents rains.

Trust me, verbivorous readers. Every one of the 721 words in the passage you’ve just read is a homophone. Illuminating the more elusive ones, *auld* is the first word in *auld lang syne*, a *gneiss* is a rock, *mai* is the first part of *mai tai*, *fora* is a plural of *forum*, *Yul* refers to actor Yul Brynner, *caul* is an intestinal covering, *mi* is a note on the musical scale, a *wight* is a creature, an *awn* is a slender bristle, and a *wain* is a farm vehicle. You get the idea.

Sow pleas bare inn mined:

No humor;
No happiness.
Know humor;
Know happiness.

Translation

Here’s some wry, humorous prose I wrote one idle morning hour discretely for none but dear old you. By chance, would you—sonny boy, chaste maid—choose Rich’s side in a capital cause, deign to loan your assistance to Dick’s need? What he wants must be done. Might you nice guys, sweet misses orally read my whole piece aloud? You would? Tee hee! Yay! Hey! I guessed right!

Gaze, stare, canvass, savor my epic ode to right-way writing. You’ll hear or see how eight-carat, Fort-Knox-size, gold-plated verses marshal our senses; raise our awe; seem oh so bold, turn bolder—here or overseas, ceiling to cellar, their skull, locks, eyebrows, nose right to their shoes, heels, soles, feet, toes.

The all-wise soul prays, sees, hears, knows we’ve finally won a world-premiere, grade-A, titan prize based on real facts in better, meatier, wittier, finely-made plots which plumb purest souls. Great red-white-blue pride adds flair, carries weight, earns assent, compliments, high praise, low bows for my hale, serial tale. It’s a cute beaut! Adherents clamber for more!

Current style guide lessons build trust, hold weight, weave wit, win medals; elicit acclamation—buy you fair-hued flowers; potpourri sachets; wine sans peer; palate-