THE INTRICACIES OF HOMOPHONES

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Homophones are words which have the same pronunciation but different spellings and meanings. Homophones differ in a variety of ways. They may…

1. have the same number of letters:
   (a) same letters = transposals
   (b) one letter different:
      (i) a vowel replaced by a different vowel
      (ii) a vowel replaced by a Y
      (iii) a vowel replaced by a consonant
      (iv) a consonant replaced by a consonant such as prise and prize – these are not considered here

2. have a different number of letters:
   (a) by losing a single letter
   (b) by replacing a single letter, or a group of letters, with a different length group of letters.

1. SAME NUMBER OF LETTERS

(a) TRANSPOSALS

In these the last 2 letters swap places:

DE - ED HIDE - HIRED MEDE - MEED PRIDE - PRIEND RUDE - RUED TIDE - TIED
KE - KE PEAK - PEKE
EL - LE ABE - ABLE GALE - GALE
ER - RE DIER - DIRE Meter - METRE SEER - SERE SHIER - SHIRE VEER - VERE
ES - SE HOES - HOSE NOES - NOSE POES (more than one person named POE) - POSE
PRIES - PRISE ROES - ROSE

In these, the last 2 letters do not swap places:

BARE - BEAR BREAK - BRAKE GREAT - GRATE STAKE - STEAK WARE - WEAR

(b) ONE LETTER DIFFERENT

(i) A VOWEL REPLACED BY A DIFFERENT VOWEL

A replaced by E

In these, the A is replaced by the 2nd E of a doubled EE:

BEACH - BEECH BREACH - BREECH BEAN - BEEN BEAT - BEET
CHEAP - CHEEP CREEK - CREEK DEAR - DEER FEAT - FEET
FLEA - FLEE HEAL - HEEL LEACH - LEECH LEAK - LEEK
LEAR - LEEER MEAT - MEET PEA - PEE PEAK - PEEK
| PEAL - PEEL | READ - REED | SEA - SEE | SEAM - SEEM |
| SEAS - SEES | SHEAR - SHEER | STEAL - STEEL | TEA - TEE |
| TEAM - TEAM | TEAS - TEES | VEAR - WEEK |

In these, the E is replaced by an O which is **not** part of a doubled EE:

| AYE - EYE | CURRANT - CURRENT | DRY - DREY | DUAL - DUEL |
| FAINT - FEINT | FATE - FETE | LAY - LEY | NAVAL - NAVAL |
| PRAY - PREY | RAJS - REIN | STATIONARY - STATIONERY |
| SUMMARY - SUMMERY | TOAD - TOED | VAIL - VEIL | VAIN - VEIN |

**A replaced by O**

| AUGHT - OUGHT | BOAR - BOOR | BROACH - BROOCH |
| SWAB - SWOB | SWAT - SWOT | WARN - WORN | WRATH - WROTH |

**A replaced by U**

| COARSE - COURSE |

**E replaced by I**

| ANTE / ANTI | BEER - BIER |
| COUNSEL - COUNCIL | FREEZE - FRIEZE |
| TAXES / TAXIS | PEER - PIER |

**E replaced by O**

| CENSOR - CENSOR | LESSEN - LESSON | SEW - SOW |
| SHOE - SHOQ |

**E replaced by U**

| TERN - TURN |

**I replaced by O**

| WHIRL - WHORL |

**I replaced by U**

| FIR - FUR |

**O replaced by U**

| SON - SUN | TON - TUN |

(ii) **A VOWEL REPLACED BY Y**

| EERE / EYRIE |

**I replaced by Y**

| DJER - Dyer | DINE - DYNE |
| RIDE - RYDE | BRIE - DRYER |
| TIRE - TYRE |

(iii) **A VOWEL REPLACED BY A CONSONANT**

| A replaced | BAAS - BAR | GROAN - GROWN |
| TOE - TOW | MOAN - MOWN |

**E replaced**

| ROLE - ROLL | ROES - ROWS |
| SLOE - SLOW | THROES - THROWS |

**I replaced**

| STUDIED - STUDEED |

**O replaced**

| TOO - TWO |

**U replaced**

| CAUL - CALL | GAUL - GALL |
| MAUL - MALL | PAUL - PALL |
| DOUSE - DOWSE | FOUL - FOWL |
2. A DIFFERENT NUMBER OF LETTERS

(a) LOSE A SINGLE LETTER

Aisle - A = Isle  Boarder - A = Border  Bread - A = Bred  Heard - A = Herd  
Horse - A = Horse  Lead - A = Led  Leant - A = Lent  Oar - A = Or  Hobbs - B = Hobbs  
Jamb - B = Jam  Plumb - B = Plum  Scent - C = Sent  Ladd - D = Lad  Bee - E = Be  
Bye - E = By  Cash - E = Cash  Cast - E = Cast  Cored - E = Cord  Die - E = Di  
Fined - E = Find  Floe - E = Flo  Flue - E = Flu  Fore - E = For  Greater - E = Grater  
Heart - E = Hart  Heroine - E = Heroin  Hib - E = Hi  Hoe - E = Ho  Hold - E = Hold  
Kaye - E = Kay  Lore - E = Lor  Maine - E = Main  Mined - E = Mind  Mood - E = Mood  
Nore - E = Nor  Ore - E = Or  Pease - E = Peas  Please - E = Pleas  Prose - E = Pros  
Sleight - E = Slight  Soled - E = Sold  Sty - E = Sy  Taxes - E = Taxis  
Tease - E = Teas  Toke - E = Tor  Wee - E = We  Graff - F = Graf  
Whales - H = Wales  When - H = Wen  Whet - H = Wet  Whether - H = Wether  
Bandied - I = Banded  Candied - I = Canded  Daily - I = Daly  Male - I = Maze  
Place - I = Place  Posies - I = Poses  Taxies - I = Taxes  Tied - I = Tided  Waive - I = Wave  
J...  Block - K = Bloc  Knaves - K = Nave  Knell - K = Nell  Known - K = New  
Knight - K = Night  Knit - K = Nit  Knot - K = Not  Knuts - K = Nuts  Picks - K = Pcs  
Sack - K = Sac  Sick - K = Sic  Specks - K = Specs  Tick - K = Tic  Holmes - L = Homes  
Marshall - L = Marshall  Common - M = Common (surname)  Cannon - N = Canon (s name)  
Damn - N = Dam  Finnish - N = Finish  Inn - N = In  Nunn (surname) - N = Nun  
Callosus - O = Callosus  Kips - O = Kips  Barr (surname) - R = Bar  Err - R = Er  
Father - R = Father  Iron - R = Ion  Mar - R = Mr  Tar - R = Ta  Dos - S = Dos  
Loss - S = Los  Butt - T = But  Matt - T = Mat  Sett - T = Set  Boulder - U = Boulder  
Buoy - U = Boy  Buy - U = By  Four - U = For  Gauge - U = Gage  Guild - U = Gild  
Guilt - U = Gilt  Mourn - U = Morn  Rigour - U = Rigor  V...  Flow - W = Flo  
Low - W = Lo  Mow - W = Mo  Sow - W = So  Whole - W = Hole  Wrack - W = Rack  
Wrap - W = Rap  Wrapped - W = Rapped  Wreath - W = Rest  Wrang - W = Ring  
Write - W = Ride  Wrote - W = Rote  Wrung - W = Rung  X...  Y...  Z...  

Rarely, a set of 3 homophones can be obtained by losing 1 letter after another: 
Parr - R = Par  - R = Pa  Bourne - U = Borne  - E = Born  

(b) REPLACING LETTERS

Some homophones are formed when 1 or more letters are replaced in a word:  
replaced  
by  2 letters replaced by 1 letter  
A  Manner - Manna  Tuber - Tuba  Where - Ware  Rotor - Rota  
Lowed - Load  Rowed - RoaD  Towed - ToaD  
E  Bee - Be  
I  Stayed - StaI'd  Rhyme - Rime  Thyme - Time  
O  Britain - Briton  Aural - Oral  Rigger - Rigor  
S  Booze - Boos  Freeze - Frees  Furze - Furs  
T  Bused - Bust  Leased - Least  
U  Pearl - Purl  Berry - Bury  Crewel - Cruel  Flew - Flu  MeW - Mu  
Y  Chillie - Chilly  
Z  Raise - Raze  

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by 2 letters replaced by 2 letters

**EW** DUE - DEW
**ZE** CRAYS - CRAZE
YOU - YEW
**LAYS - LAZE**
**DAYS - DAZE**
**RAYs - RAZE**

by 2 letters replaced by 3 letters

**E** - BOW - BEAU
**L** - LOO - LIEU
**O** - SHAW - SHORE
**Q** - KEY - QUAY
**U** - HEW - HUGH
**ISLET - EYELET**
REVUE - REVIEW
GUYS - GUISE
PEW - PUGH

by 2 letters replaced by 4 letters

**I** - STYX - STICKS
**O** - THREW - THROUGH

by 3 letters replaced by 1 letter

**A** LEIGH - LEA
**C** QUEUE - CUE
**K** SACQUE - SACK
**T** DUCKED - DUCT
**X** FLECKS - FLEX
PACKED - PACT
PICKED - PICT
LACKS - LAX
PACKS - PAX
RECKS - REX
SICKS - SIX
TACKS - TAX
TRECKS - TREX

by 3 letters replaced by 3 letters

**A** - GREYS - GRAZE

by 3 letters replaced by 4 letters

**A** - PREYS - PRAISE
**C** - KERNEL - COLONEL
**U** - FIRS - FURZE

by 3 letters replaced by 5 letters

**O** - TALK - TORQUE