

**THE BIG LIST OF
TRICKY
HOMOPHONES
FOR
NAPLAN SUCCESS**

peace



piece



there
their
they're



The Big List of Tricky Homophones for NAPLAN Success

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Introduction

Homophones are words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings. They present a unique challenge in English language learning and assessment because our ears cannot distinguish between them—we must rely on context, spelling knowledge, and understanding of meanings to use them correctly.

In NAPLAN assessments, homophones appear regularly in both the reading and language conventions sections. They test a student's ability to understand context, apply correct spelling, and demonstrate vocabulary knowledge. Misusing homophones is one of the most common errors students make, and mastering them can significantly improve test scores.

Why are homophones challenging?

- They sound identical, so you can't rely on pronunciation
- Many homophones have subtle meaning differences
- Some homophones are used in common expressions and idioms
- Spell checkers often miss homophone errors because the words are spelled correctly

This ebook provides a comprehensive collection of the trickiest homophones that commonly appear in NAPLAN tests. For each set of homophones, you'll find clear definitions, example sentences, memory tricks, and common mistakes to avoid. We've also included practice exercises and specific strategies for handling homophones in NAPLAN tests.

Whether you're a student preparing for NAPLAN, a parent helping your child study, or a teacher guiding your class, this resource will help build confidence and accuracy with these challenging words.

Common Homophone Pairs

Let's start with some of the most frequently confused homophone pairs that appear in NAPLAN assessments.

1. There / Their / They're

There: Refers to a place or existence

Example: The book is over there on the table.

Their: Shows possession, belonging to them

Example: The students completed their homework.

They're: Contraction of "they are"

Example: They're going to the cinema tonight.

Memory Trick: "There" contains "here" – both refer to place. "Their" contains "heir" – heirs inherit possessions. "They're" has an apostrophe – it's a contraction.

Common Mistake: "The children left they're bags there because their going home later."

Correct: "The children left their bags there because they're going home later."

Year 3-4: "Put your book over there." / "The dog ate their food." / "They're playing outside."

Year 7-9: "There are numerous reasons why the experiment failed." / "Their explanation lacked sufficient evidence." / "They're considering alternative approaches to the problem."

2. Your / You're

Your: Shows possession, belonging to you

Example: Is this your pencil?

You're: Contraction of "you are"

Example: You're invited to my birthday party.

Memory Trick: If you can replace the word with "you are" and the sentence still makes sense, use "you're". Otherwise, use "your".

Common Mistake: "Your going to love you're new teacher."

Correct: "You're going to love your new teacher."

3. To / Too / Two

To: Preposition indicating direction or purpose

Example: We are going to the park.

Too: Means "also" or "excessively"

Example: I want to come too. / It's too hot outside.

Two: The number 2

Example: She has two brothers.

Memory Trick: "Too" has too many o's (an extra one). "Two" has a 'w' – draw a '2' starting with the letter 'w'.

Common Mistake: "I want to go to the party to, but I have two much homework."

Correct: "I want to go to the party too, but I have too much homework."

4. It's / Its

It's: Contraction of "it is" or "it has"

Example: It's raining outside. / It's been a long day.

Its: Shows possession belonging to it

Example: The dog wagged its tail.

Memory Trick: If you can replace the word with "it is" or "it has", use "it's". For possession, remember that "its" follows the same pattern as other possessive pronouns like "his" and "hers" – none have apostrophes.

Common Mistake: "The cat licked it's paws because its wet outside."

Correct: "The cat licked its paws because it's wet outside."

5. Weather / Whether

Weather: Atmospheric conditions

Example: The weather forecast predicts rain tomorrow.

Whether: Expressing a choice or possibility

Example: I'm not sure whether to walk or take the bus.

Memory Trick: "Weather" contains the word "heat" – related to atmospheric conditions. "Whether" is about choice – it contains "he", and "he" can make choices.

Common Mistake: "I don't know weather to bring my umbrella or not, as the whether might change."

Correct: "I don't know whether to bring my umbrella or not, as the weather might change."

6. Where / Wear / Were / We're

Where: Refers to a place or location

Example: Where did you put my keys?

Wear: To have clothing on; to deteriorate

Example: What will you wear to the party? / These shoes will wear out quickly.

Were: Past tense of "are"

Example: We were late for school yesterday.

We're: Contraction of "we are"

Example: We're going on holiday next week.

Memory Trick: "Where" contains the word "here" – both about location. "Wear" contains "ear" – you wear earrings. "Were" is the odd one out – it's for the past. "We're" has an apostrophe – it's a contraction.

Common Mistake: "Were going to the park where we'll wear our new jumpers. Do you know were the picnic area is?"

Correct: "We're going to the park where we'll wear our new jumpers. Do you know where the picnic area is?"

7. Right / Write

Right: Correct; the opposite of left; a legal entitlement

Example: You got the answer right. / Turn right at the traffic lights. / You have the right to remain silent.

Write: To form letters or words

Example: Please write your name at the top of the page.

Memory Trick: "Write" contains the word "rite" – a writing ritual. To write, you must use your wrist.

Common Mistake: "I will write with my right hand."

Correct: "I will write with my right hand." (This is actually correct, just often confused!)

8. Which / Witch

Which: Used to ask or indicate a choice

Example: Which colour do you prefer?

Witch: A woman thought to have magical powers

Example: The witch cast a spell on the prince.

Memory Trick: "Witch" has a 't' like the broomstick a witch uses.

Common Mistake: "The witch book is yours?"

Correct: "Which book is yours?"

9. Peace / Piece

Peace: Freedom from disturbance; quiet and tranquility

Example: After the war ended, there was finally peace.

Piece: A portion or fragment of something

Example: Would you like a piece of cake?

Memory Trick: "Piece" contains "pie" – you can have a piece of pie.

Common Mistake: "I just want some peace and quiet while I eat my peace of toast."

Correct: "I just want some peace and quiet while I eat my piece of toast."

10. Hour / Our

Hour: A period of 60 minutes

Example: The film lasted for more than an hour.

Our: Belonging to us

Example: This is our house.

Memory Trick: "Hour" contains "h" like "hour hand" on a clock. "Our" doesn't have an "h" – most

other possessive pronouns don't start with "h" either (your, their, etc.).

Common Mistake: "Our class starts in one our."

Correct: "Our class starts in one hour."

Practice Exercise: Common Homophone Pairs

Fill in the blanks with the correct homophone:

1. I don't know _____ (weather/whether) I should bring an umbrella, but the _____ (weather/whether) forecast predicts rain.
2. _____ (They're/Their/There) going to bring _____ (they're/their/there) books to _____ (they're/their/there).
3. _____ (Your/You're) invited to _____ (your/you're) friend's party.
4. We need _____ (to/too/two) buy _____ (to/too/two) loaves of bread. I want one _____ (to/too/two).
5. The dog wagged _____ (it's/its) tail when _____ (it's/its) time for a walk.

Answers:

1. whether, weather
2. They're, their, there
3. You're, your
4. to, two, too
5. its, it's

Tricky Homophone Triplets

Some homophone sets contain three or more words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings. These "triplets" can be particularly challenging.

1. Accept / Except / Expect

Accept: To receive or agree to something

Example: I accept your apology.

Except: Excluding or not including

Example: Everyone went to the party except Sarah.

Expect: To anticipate or look forward to

Example: We expect good results from this experiment.

Memory Trick: "Accept" starts with "acc" – think "I can accommodate that request". "Except" starts with "ex" – as in "exclude". "Expect" contains "pect" which sounds like "predict".

Common Mistake: "I will except your invitation. Everyone is coming accept John. I expect you'll understand."

Correct: "I will accept your invitation. Everyone is coming except John. I expect you'll understand."

2. They're / Their / There

They're: Contraction of "they are"

Example: They're playing football in the park.

Their: Possessive form of "they"

Example: Their car broke down yesterday.

There: Refers to a place or position

Example: Put the box over there, please.

Memory Trick: "They're" has an apostrophe – it's a contraction. "Their" contains "heir" – heirs inherit possessions. "There" contains "here" – both refer to place.

Common Mistake: "There going to pick up their bags from over they're."

Correct: "They're going to pick up their bags from over there."

3. To / Too / Two

To: Preposition indicating direction, destination, or purpose

Example: I'm going to the shop.

Too: Also; to an excessive degree

Example: I want to come too. / The soup is too hot.

Two: The number 2

Example: I have two sisters.

Memory Trick: "Too" has too many o's. "Two" has a 'w' – like the number spelled out: t-w-o.

Common Mistake: "I want to go two the cinema to."

Correct: "I want to go to the cinema too."

4. For / Four / Fore

For: Preposition indicating purpose or recipient

Example: This present is for you.

Four: The number 4

Example: There are four seasons in a year.

Fore: At or towards the front; in golf, a warning cry

Example: The captain stood at the fore of the ship. / "Fore!" he shouted as the golf ball headed towards the crowd.

Memory Trick: "Four" has a 'u' – like the number spelled out: f-o-u-r. "Fore" has an 'e' at the end – think "before" (fore = front).

Common Mistake: "I bought four tickets for the show. We'll sit in the fore row."

Correct: "I bought four tickets for the show. We'll sit in the front row."

5. Wait / Weight / Waite

Wait: To stay where one is or delay action until a particular time

Example: Please wait here until I return.

Weight: How heavy someone or something is

Example: The weight of the package was 2 kilograms.

Waite: A surname

Example: Mr. Waite is our new neighbour.

Memory Trick: "Weight" has the word "eight" in it – and eight has weight.

Common Mistake: "Please weight a moment while I check your wait."

Correct: "Please wait a moment while I check your weight."

6. Hear / Here / Hare

Hear: To perceive sound

Example: I can hear music playing.

Here: In this place

Example: Come over here, please.

Hare: An animal similar to a rabbit

Example: The hare ran quickly across the field.

Memory Trick: "Hear" contains "ear" – you hear with your ears. "Here" contains "re" like "real estate" – a place. "Hare" looks like "hare" – it refers to the animal.

Common Mistake: "Can you here the hare over hear?"

Correct: "Can you hear the hare over here?"

7. Bare / Bear / Bair

Bare: Uncovered, naked

Example: She walked barefoot on the bare floor.

Bear: To carry or endure; a large mammal

Example: I cannot bear the pain. / We saw a bear in the forest.

Bair: A surname; also a rare spelling of "bear" (animal)

Example: Mr. Bair is our new teacher.

Memory Trick: "Bare" and "naked" both have four letters. "Bear" contains "ear" – bears have ears.

Common Mistake: "I can't bare to look at the bear's bare paws."

Correct: "I can't bear to look at the bear's bare paws."

Practice Exercise: Tricky Homophone Triplets

Choose the correct homophone to complete each sentence:

1. Everyone was invited _____ (accept/except/expect) for John.
2. I _____ (accept/except/expect) you to arrive on time.
3. Did you _____ (hear/here/hare) that noise over _____? (hear/here/hare)
4. The _____ (bare/bear/bair) necessities are all we need.
5. I can't _____ (bare/bear/bair) to see you in pain.

Answers:

1. except
2. expect
3. hear, here
4. bare
5. bear

More Challenging Homophone Sets

These homophone sets are more sophisticated and typically appear in NAPLAN tests for older students (Years 7-9).

1. Principle / Principal

Principle: A fundamental truth or proposition

Example: The scientific principle of gravity explains why objects fall.

Principal: The most important; head of a school

Example: The principal reason for our success was teamwork. / The school principal gave a speech.

Memory Trick: "Principal" ends with "pal" – the principal is your pal (friend).

Common Mistake: "The principle of the school explained the basic principals of good behaviour."

Correct: "The principal of the school explained the basic principles of good behaviour."

2. Stationary / Stationery

Stationary: Not moving; fixed

Example: The car remained stationary at the traffic lights.

Stationery: Writing materials

Example: I need to buy new stationery for school.

Memory Trick: "Stationery" has an "e" – like in "letter" and "envelope" (things you write with).

Common Mistake: "The train was stationary while I bought stationery from the shop."

Correct: "The train was stationary while I bought stationery from the shop." (This is actually correct, just often confused!)

3. Complement / Compliment

Complement: Something that completes or goes well with something else

Example: The sauce is the perfect complement to the dish.

Compliment: A polite expression of praise or admiration

Example: She received many compliments on her new haircut.

Memory Trick: "Complement" has the word "complete" in it – it completes something. "Compliment" has an "i" – "I like to give compliments."

Common Mistake: "That was a lovely complement about my dress. The colours really compliment each other."

Correct: "That was a lovely compliment about my dress. The colours really complement each other."

4. Allude / Elude

Allude: To refer to indirectly or hint at

Example: The author alludes to Shakespeare in the opening paragraph.

Elude: To escape from or avoid

Example: The answer continues to elude me.

Memory Trick: "Allude" starts with "a" like "a hint". "Elude" starts with "e" like "escape".

Common Mistake: "The criminal continued to allude the police."

Correct: "The criminal continued to elude the police."

5. Affect / Effect

Affect: To influence or make a difference to (usually a verb)

Example: The weather will affect our plans.

Effect: A result or consequence (usually a noun)

Example: The effect of the medication was immediate.

Memory Trick: "Affect" is an "Action" (both start with A). "Effect" is the "End result" (both start with E).

Common Mistake: "The rain had a negative affect on the event. It will effect our decision."

Correct: "The rain had a negative effect on the event. It will affect our decision."

6. Desert / Dessert

Desert: A dry, barren area; to abandon

Example: The Sahara desert is extremely hot. / The soldiers would never desert their posts.

Dessert: A sweet course eaten at the end of a meal

Example: We had ice cream for dessert.

Memory Trick: "Dessert" has two "s"s because you want seconds of dessert.

Common Mistake: "We ate our desert in the dessert."

Correct: "We ate our dessert in the desert."

7. Advice / Advise

Advice: Guidance or recommendations (noun)

Example: My father gave me good advice about saving money.

Advise: To recommend or suggest (verb)

Example: I advise you to study harder for the next exam.

Memory Trick: "Advice" has "ice" in it (noun) – a thing. "Advise" has "ise" (in British spelling) which

sounds like "eyes" – with your eyes, you can see action (verb).

Common Mistake: "I'd like to offer some advise. The doctor will advice you on what medication to take."

Correct: "I'd like to offer some advice. The doctor will advise you on what medication to take."

8. Loose / Lose

Loose: Not firmly or tightly fixed; not tight-fitting

Example: My belt is too loose; I need a new one.

Lose: To be deprived of or cease to have or retain

Example: Don't lose your keys again!

Memory Trick: "Loose" has an extra "o" – it's "looser" than "lose".

Common Mistake: "If your shoelaces are lose, you might loose your shoe."

Correct: "If your shoelaces are loose, you might lose your shoe."

9. Practice / Practise

Practice: The noun form - a repeated exercise to improve skill

Example: Piano practice is every Tuesday.

Practise: The verb form - to repeatedly do something to improve skill

Example: You need to practise your spelling.

Memory Trick: In British English, "practice" is the noun (like "ice" is a thing) and "practise" is the verb (like "revise" is an action).

Common Mistake: "I need more practise. I will practice every day."

Correct: "I need more practice. I will practise every day."

10. Passed / Past

Passed: Gone by or beyond (past tense of "to pass")

Example: The car passed the checkpoint.

Past: Gone by in time; belonging to an earlier time

Example: In the past, people wrote letters instead of emails.

Memory Trick: "Passed" has "ed" at the end like other past tense verbs (walked, talked). "Past" is shorter and often refers to time.

Common Mistake: "We past the museum on our way. In the passed, we would have stopped."

Correct: "We passed the museum on our way. In the past, we would have stopped."

Practice Exercise: Challenging Homophone Sets

Fill in the blanks with the correct homophone:

1. The rain will _____ (affect/effect) our picnic plans. The _____ (affect/effect) of the storm was devastating.
2. I need to _____ (practice/practise) my spelling. I have _____ (practice/practise) every Wednesday.
3. The school _____ (principal/principle) explained the _____ (principal/principle) of good behaviour.
4. My belt is too _____ (loose/lose). I don't want to _____ (loose/lose) it.
5. I'd like to give you some _____ (advice/advise). Let me _____ (advice/advise) you on this matter.

Answers:

1. affect, effect
2. practise, practice
3. principal, principles
4. loose, lose

NAPLAN-Specific Tips

Here are strategies specifically designed to help you tackle homophones in NAPLAN reading and writing tests.

Tips for NAPLAN Reading Tests

- **Context is Key:** When encountering a homophone in a reading passage, look at the surrounding words. The context will often clarify which homophone is being used.
- **Substitute Method:** Try substituting the homophone's meaning in the sentence. For example, if you see "their," replace it with "belonging to them" to see if it makes sense.
- **Multiple-Choice Strategy:** In multiple-choice questions about homophones, eliminate obviously incorrect choices first. Then check remaining options by considering the meaning of each homophone.
- **Watch for Tricky Contexts:** NAPLAN often tests homophones in contexts where both might initially seem to fit. Read carefully to determine the precise meaning needed.
- **Pronoun Referencing:** For homophones like "they're/their/there," identify what the pronoun is referring to. This can clarify which one is correct.

Tips for NAPLAN Writing Tests

- **Plan Before Writing:** Note any potential homophone issues in your planning phase, especially for words you know you commonly confuse.
- **Revision Focus:** During the revision phase, specifically check for homophone errors. This is when most homophone mistakes can be caught.
- **Alternatives:** If you're unsure about a homophone, consider using a different word that expresses the same idea.
- **Common Pairs Awareness:** Be especially careful with the most common homophone pairs (their/there/they're, your/you're, to/too/two) as these are frequently evaluated.
- **Sentence Testing:** Read each sentence and ask yourself if the homophones you've used match the intended meaning.

Handling Homophones by Year Level

Years 3-4:

- Focus on the most common pairs: there/their/they're, to/too/two, your/you're
- Use simple memory tricks and visual cues
- Practice identifying homophones in simple sentences

Years 5-6:

- Expand to include more pairs: here/hear, no/know, our/hour, wear/where
- Start using context clues more effectively
- Learn to identify patterns in homophone usage

Years 7-9:

- Master more sophisticated homophones: affect/effect, practice/practise, principle/principal
- Understand homophones in more complex contexts
- Develop proofreading strategies specifically for homophones

Practice Exercise: NAPLAN-Style Homophone Questions

Answer these questions in the style of NAPLAN reading and language conventions tests:

1. Read the sentence below and choose the correct word to fill the blank:

The students left _____ books at school.

- A. there
- B. their
- C. they're
- D. theyre

2. Which sentence contains an error in homophone usage?

- A. We're going to the park tomorrow.
- B. Their going to visit their grandparents.
- C. I don't know where my book is.
- D. The principal spoke at assembly.

3. Choose the sentence that uses homophones correctly:

- A. I need to by a knew shirt because mine has a whole in it.
- B. I need to buy a new shirt because mine has a hole in it.
- C. I need too bye a new shirt because mine has a whole in it.
- D. I need to buy a knew shirt because mine has a hole in it.

Answers:

1. B. their (possessive form of "they")
2. B. Their going to visit their grandparents. (should be "They're going")
3. B. I need to buy a new shirt because mine has a hole in it. (all homophones used correctly)

Quick Reference Guide

Use this handy reference guide for last-minute revision before your NAPLAN test. It includes the most commonly tested homophones and their key distinctions.

Commonly Tested Homophone Pairs

| Homophone | Meaning | Quick Memory Trick |
|-----------|--------------------|---|
| their | Belonging to them | Contains "heir" - heirs inherit possessions |
| there | In that place | Contains "here" - both refer to place |
| they're | They are | Has an apostrophe - it's a contraction |
| your | Belonging to you | Possessive form - like "our" |
| you're | You are | Has an apostrophe - it's a contraction |
| to | Direction, towards | Shortest version - "go to" |
| too | Also; excessive | Too many o's (extra o) |
| two | The number 2 | Has a 'w' like tWo |
| it's | It is/It has | Has apostrophe - it's a contraction |
| its | Belonging to it | No apostrophe - like his/hers |

Advanced Homophones

| Homophone | Meaning | Quick Memory Trick |
|-----------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| affect | To influence (verb) | "A" for Action |
| effect | Result, consequence (noun) | "E" for End result |
| practice | Noun form (the thing) | "Ice" is a noun (thing) |
| practise | Verb form (the action) | "Ise" is for action (verb) |
| principal | Main; school head | The principal is your pal |
| principle | Basic truth or rule | PrincipLE - a rULE |

| | | |
|------------|--------------------|--|
| stationery | Writing materials | "E" for envelope |
| stationary | Not moving | "A" for at a standstill |
| passed | Past tense of pass | Ends in "ed" like other past tense verbs |
| past | Earlier time | Shorter word for time |

Conclusion

Mastering homophones is a critical skill for NAPLAN success. These tricky word pairs and sets can be challenging, but with consistent practice and the right memory techniques, you can avoid common errors and improve your test scores.

Remember these key strategies:

- **Context is crucial:** Always check how the word is being used in the sentence.
- **Use memory tricks:** Create associations to help remember the correct spelling for each meaning.
- **Practice regularly:** Frequent exposure to homophones helps cement the differences in your mind.
- **Proofread carefully:** During tests, allocate specific time to check for homophone errors.
- **When in doubt, rephrase:** If you're unsure about a homophone, try using a different word or restructuring your sentence.

The more you work with homophones, the more intuitive their correct usage will become. Pay attention to how these words are used in your reading, and make a note of any that consistently cause you trouble.

By studying the homophones in this book and completing the practice exercises, you've already taken a significant step toward improving your language skills and preparing for NAPLAN success.

Good luck with your NAPLAN tests!