

**air / heir**

air - the element that we breathe which surrounds us

I'm going outside. I need some fresh air.

heir – a person who gets all the money/property/valuables after someone dies

John is the heir to his father's fortune.

**aisle/ isle / I'll**

aisle – the space between rows of seats

I prefer aisle seats to window seats on an airplane.

isle – an island

Have you ever been to the Isle of Wight?

I'll – the contraction of 'I will'

I'll see you tomorrow.

**eye / I**

eye – the organs we use to see

My eyes are red because I got shampoo in them.

I – subject pronoun

I love you.

**bare / bear**

bare –without anything

I love walking on the beach with bare feet.

bear – a large animal with thick fur

Bears are one of my favorite animals.

**be / bee**

be – the most common verb in English

Don't worry. Be happy.

bee – an insect which pollinates flowers

Bees make honey.

**brake / break**

brake – the mechanism which stops a car/bike/train

I stepped on the brakes too late and crashed into another car.

break – a rest / to damage something

I need to take a 10-minute break.

**buy / by**

buy – to get something because you paid for it

I usually buy breakfast at the train station.

by – preposition

I want a house by the sea.

**cell / sell**

cell – a small room in a prison / the smallest unit of a plant or animal

Our bodies are made up of trillions of cells.

sell – to offer a product for money

We want to sell our house and move to New York.

**cent / scent**

cent – 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a dollar

Can you believe it? This notebook only cost 40 cents!

scent – an aroma

I love the scent of vanilla.

**cereal / serial**

cereal – food made from grains usually eaten for breakfast

I prefer cereal with yogurt to milk.

serial – crime which is repeated again and again

This book I'm reading is about a serial killer who lives in Tampa.

**coarse / course**

coarse – small pieces which are not smooth

The sand on this beach is quite coarse so I suggest you wear shoes.

course – a study programme with a start and end date

I'm currently taking an Indian cooking course.

**complement / compliment**

complement – to add something to make something else better

I think this wine really complements this meal.

compliment – something positive you say to/about someone

Ellen paid you a very nice compliment about you earlier. She said you were very talented.

**dear / deer**

dear – used at the beginning of a letter

Dear Mr. Baker,

deer – a plant eating animal with four legs

My grandparents used to hunt deer for food.

### **die / dye**

die – for life to end

I could never be a gardener. All of my plants always die.

dye - to colour something

Do you think I should dye my hair blond?

### **fair / fare**

fair – equal

That's not fair! Bobby got more cake than I did.

fare – the money you pay to use public transportation

The fare is \$4.50 please.

### **fir / fur**

fir – a type of evergreen tree

Our ski slope was dotted with fir trees.

fur – the thick patches of hair on certain animals

My cat's fur is so soft.

### **flour / flower**

flour – a powder made from wheat (or other grains)

This bread recipe calls for 5 cups of flour.

flower – the pretty part of a plant

My husband bought me a nice bouquet of flowers for our anniversary.

### **for / four**

for – preposition

This letter is for Anne.

four – the number after three

Could we have the cheesecake with four spoons please?

### **hair / hare**

hair – the strands that grow on your head/legs/arms etc

I'm so jealous of your hair Sue. It's so thick.

hare – an animal which looks like a large rabbit

People in this region heavily depend on hares as a food source.

### **heal / heel**

heal – for an injury to become better

Don't worry, this cut will heal soon.

heel – the back end of your foot

My heels get so dry in winter and the skin cracks.

### **hear / here**

hear – the ability to use your ears

Please speak up. I can't hear you.

here – this location

This church is beautiful. Let's have the wedding here.

### **him / hymn**

him – an object pronoun for a male

Yes, Jake is fine. I spoke to him earlier.

hymn – a religious song

Amazing Grace is a very popular hymn.

### **hole / whole**

hole – a space in the middle of something

Oh man, there's a hole in my sock.

whole – everything of something (100%)

I can't believe I ate the whole pizza.

### **hour / our**

hour – 60 minutes

The flight only lasts an hour.

our – an adjective pronoun for two or more people

Our teacher brought in cookies for us. What a treat!

### **idle / idol**

idle – not doing anything

My husband bought a sailboat, but it just sits there idle in the garage. He never uses it.

idol – someone you respect and love

Lionel Messi is an idol to many young football fans.

### **in / inn**

in – a preposition

I never carry cash in my wallet.

inn – a small hotel

After five hours of driving, we finally stopped at an inn for the night.

### **knight / night**

knight – a medieval soldier

My son loves to pretend he is a knight and his sister is a princess.

night – the opposite of 'day'

I couldn't sleep all night.

### **knot / not**

knot – the place where two pieces of rope or string connect

There's a knot in my shoelaces which I can't undo.

not – used to create a negative form

I do not like fish.

### **know / no**

know – to have information

I don't know my phone number. I just have it on my phone.

no – the opposite of 'yes'

A: Would you like a tea?

B: No, thank you.

### **made / maid**

made – created

My grandfather actually made this dining table.

maid – a woman who helps clean a home

We hired a maid after our daughter was born. I needed help with the cleaning.

### **mail / male**

mail – letters you receive

There's some mail on your desk. I think it's mainly bills.

male – the opposite of 'female'

Scientists confirm that the mummy found is a male.

### **meat / meet**

meat- the flesh of an animal that is eaten

Meat is so expensive nowadays.

meet – to get to know someone for the first time (or to see someone again)

I really want you to meet my parents.

### **morning / mourning**

morning – the time when people wake up to begin the day until 12:00 PM

I always wake up at 5 AM so I can get to the gym.

mourning – the period of great sadness when someone dies

Queen Victoria was in mourning for over 30 years when her husband Prince Albert died.

### **none / nun**

none – zero, nothing

None of my colleagues knew about our boss' affair.

nun – a woman who has dedicated her life to her faith

My elementary school was run by Catholic nuns.

### **oar / or**

oar – the long stick used to row a boat

Oh no! One of our oars has sunk to the bottom of the river.

or – the other option

Would you like tea or coffee?

### **one / won**

one – the first number

One, two, three, four...

won – the past simple and past participle of 'win'

I can't believe we won the race!

### **pair / pear**

pair – two things/people who belong together

I can't find a pair of socks anywhere!

pear – a sweet green fruit

My parents have a pear tree in their yard.

### **peace / piece**

peace – no violence or tension

We need peace. Not war.

piece – one part of something

I'm missing one of these puzzle pieces.

**plain / plane**

plain – simple, nothing extravagant

I like my toast plain with nothing but butter on it.

plane – a type of flying transportation

Our plane journey is over 15 hours.

**poor / pour**

poor – having no money

In my city there are many poor and homeless people.

pour – to put a liquid into another container

Can I pour you a glass of wine?

**pray / prey**

pray – to speak to God

Every night before bed, I pray.

prey – an animal hunted by predators

Chickens are such easy prey. They have no real defence system.

**principal / principle**

principal – the main thing / reason

Only a principal ballerina can dance Odette/Odile in Swan Lake.

principle – your idea of moral behaviour

I can't ask my parents for money out of principle.

**profit / prophet**

profit – money that a business has after paying for all the expenses

This year, our family bakery has managed to make over \$50,000 profit.

prophet – a person who communicates God's words to people

The cult was started by a man who declared himself a prophet.

**real / reel**

real – not fake

Those diamonds are not real. They are definitely fake.

reel – an object you use to keep string, rope or film on

I've attached a new reel to my fishing pole.

**right / write**

right – correct

Yes, you are right. The past participle of 'eat' is 'eaten'.

write – to use letters to form words

I know it's old-fashioned, but I still like to write letters to friends.

**root / route**

root – the part of a plant which helps it stay in the ground

Potatoes are an edible root.

route – the way to your destination

What route do you take to get to work?

**sail / sale**

sail – to travel by boat with the wind

It's my dream to one day sail around the world.

sale – a period of discounts

I can always get some great deals during the January sales.

**sea / see**

sea – large bodies of water such as the Mediterranean

Our hotel room overlooks the sea.

see – to use your eyes

I can't see without glasses.

**seam / seem**

seam – the place two pieces of cloth are put together

The seam in my favorite pair of jeans has split.

seem – the feeling that something is a certain way

Gary seems happier now that he is married to Valerie.

**sight / site**

sight – the ability to see

I think sight is the most important sense.

site – the location of a particular activity

This construction site has been fenced off to prevent people from entering.

**sew / so**

sew – to make clothes using a needle and thread

My grandma is 92 and she can still sew without wearing glasses.

so – very

I love you so much.

### **sole / soul**

sole – the only one

Karen was the sole survivor of the plane crash.

soul – the spiritual part of a person which continues to live after death

Do you believe everyone has a soul?

### **some / sum**

some – a small quantity

I need some time to myself.

sum – an amount of money

I was paid a sum of \$4,000 for my freelance work.

### **son / sun**

son – a male child

We decided to name our son Daniel.

sun – our solar system's star

Can we please close the blinds? There is too much sun coming through.

### **stair / stare**

stair – a step which gets you to the next floor

There are a total of 48 stairs in my house.

stare – to look in one direction for a long period

When I take the bus, I just stare out the window at everything passing by.

### **stationary / stationery**

stationary – not moving or changing

A helicopter is unique as it can remain stationary in the air.

stationery – office supplies

Our stationery supplier always gives us discounts on pens and paper.

### **steal / steel**

steal – to take something that is not yours

I did not steal the \$5 you had in your desk.

steel – a very strong metal

The Empire State Building is made of steel.

### **suite / sweet**

suite – a set of rooms which can be booked in a hotel (usually very expensive)

My wife and I booked a suite for our honeymoon in a very expensive hotel.

sweet – having a sugary taste

I think this cake is a bit too sweet.

### **Sunday / sundae**

Sunday – the day after Saturday

I go to church every Sunday.

Sundae – a fancy ice cream

I made a sundae with vanilla ice-cream, whipped cream and chocolate sauce.

### **tail / tale**

tail – the long part of an animal at the rear

My dog likes to chase his tail.

tale – a long story (which is usually fictional or difficult to believe)

When I was a child, my dad used to read me fairy tales of princesses and dragons.

### **their / there**

their – plural possessive adjective

Paul and Sheila are such a nice couple. Their daughter Evelyn is also really nice.

there – a location that is not 'here'

The train station is a great place to meet. I'll see you there at 6.

### **toe / tow**

toe – a digit on your foot

Hey! You're stepping on my toes!

tow – to pull something using a car, truck or boat

When we go camping, we tow a little trailer with us.

### **waist / waste**

waist – the middle side part of your body

Before children I had such a slim waist.

waste – to not use a person's or object's full potential

Don't waste your money on alcohol. Use it for something important.

**wait / weight**

wait – to allow time to pass for something specific to happen

After school, I wait for my mom to pick me up.

weight – how heavy something is

This elevator can only carry the weight of four people.

**way / weigh**

way – a path

Going up Franklin Street is the quickest way to the bus station.

weigh – to find out how heavy something is with a scale

I'm on a diet and I weigh myself once a week to see how much I've lost.

**weak / week**

weak – the opposite of strong

I've had the flu for a few days now and feel really weak.

week – 7 days

We will be gone for one week.

**wear / where**

wear – to have clothes or accessories on your body

I need to wear glasses to read.

where – asking for a location

Excuse me, can you please tell me where the nearest ATM is?

**ate / eight**

ate – the past tense of 'eat'

I ate a chocolate crepe for breakfast.

eight – the number after 7

My youngest son just turned 8.