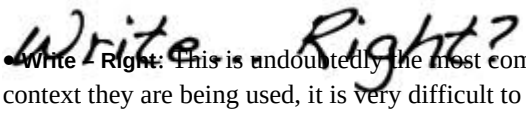
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The Tricky World of Homophones

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If you thought English is a confusing language, wait till you come across homophones, because homophones take confusion to a whole new level!So what are Homophones? These are words that sound similar but are spelt differently, and their meanings are way different too. Now you know why English is a confusing language!On a lighter note, you need not be terrified of homophones. It can be a fun learning them and will definitely add to your vocabulary power! For a start, here are a few homophones for you:



• **Write - Right**: This is undoubtedly the most common homophone. They sound exactly the same, and unless you know in which context they are being used, it is very difficult to know which one is being used. 'Write' is a verb, which means the act of writing. Right, on the other hand, has two meanings, depending on how it is used. Right denotes a direction, ex. "Move towards the right, will you?" The other meaning of right is to say 'correct'. For ex. 'What you are saying is right'.

• **Where - Were**: Many people make this mistake not only while listening to these words but also during writing. Maybe the reason is that the difference between the two words is only one alphabet. However, you should understand that these words are strictly not interchangeable. 'Where' implies to the positioning of the object or subject. Like, 'Where is my car?' or 'this is where I live'. On the other hand, 'were' explains the state of the object or the subject, 'Were you at home last night?' or 'You were looking so sick yesterday!'

• **Rap - Wrap**: Striking a surface repeatedly with hard blows, this is what a 'rap' is, like knocking or tapping continuously. Rap, or rapping, has one more meaning – quick speech or a song/ poem using quick speech. While the other word 'wrap', means to cover or enclose something in a cover. Like, wrapping a gift means to cover the gift with a paper.

• **Carrot - Carat**: Even you said these words over and over again, right, trying to find at least a slight difference between the two. The former is a root-vegetable. Carat is a unit of quality classification for precious metals like gold, silver, platinum, or precious stones like diamonds, ruby, etc.

• **Steel - Steal**: When you pronounce these two words, it is almost impossible to know which one we are saying, unless it is understood in the context it is being used. Steel is an alloy metal made of Iron and other elements. Steal refers to the action of robbery or theft. Like, two robbers making a plan, "Let's steal that fancy mobile phone."

• **Principle – Principal**: How often have you come across someone writing 'principal' when it should have been 'principle'. This is probably the most common mistake that people make while writing. However, this pair of homophones is as different as chalk and cheese! Principle(s) refers to ones values, traditions, belief, etc. For example, "I cannot steal, that is against my principles." Principal means the 'first in order', or when used in reference to a person, it means the one with the highest authority. The principal is usually used for referring to the highest post in an educational institution, like the principal of the college or school.

Homophones are engaging and it is fun to learn them. The number of homophones is many and it will be amusing for you to learn them. However, do not rush to learn all at once! Take your time and learn them as and when you come across them. Also, share your knowledge with your family and friends. This way you will not only share the knowledge, but also remember them in a better way. There are many online English learning programs that teach you about homophones and other aspects of the English language, to help in building your vocabulary. Online English tutors are a handy and convenient tool for learning and improving spoken English.

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