

## Commonly confused homophones

### Its/it's

**Its** belongs to a family of other possessive adjectives, none of which contains an apostrophe.

**Its**      **her**      **his**      **my**      **our**      **your**      **their**

- The dog wagged **its** tail.
- Susan grabbed **her** coat.
- David drove **his** car.

**It's** is short for it is or it has.

- **It's** been a great day. (It has been a great day.)
- **It's** a sunny day. (It is a sunny day.)

### There/their/they're

**There** - "here in where and here in **there**, so spelling them is not a scare."

Think of the three words, here, where and there as part of a family that all talk about the location of something, and remember this rhyme to help you spell them.

**Their** - "A throne has an heir, as does **their**."

The word **their** talks about something that they own, so they are heir to it. Use this to help you remember how to spell **their**.

**They're** - "They're over there is quite simple to see, but only the first has an apostrophe."

**They're** actually means "they are", but because it has been shortened, the apostrophe goes where the missing "a" should be.

### Were/where

These two words are actually pronounced differently. "Were" rhymes with "spur", while "where" rhymes with "spare".

**Were** = third person plural verb: they were, we were, etc.

**Where** = a question word, meaning "in what place?" it is part of the family of question words below, which all begin with wh-

**Where**   **when**   **who**   **why**   **what**   **which**

### Practice/practise

Practice = noun                      practise = verb

An easy way of telling whether something is a noun is to see if you can put the words "the" or "a" or an adjective in front of it. For example, you could put "the" in front of "football practice", therefore "practice" is a noun.

- A doctor **practises** in his **practice**.
- In band **practice**, he **practises** the trumpet.

# Literacy Toolkit

## Effect/affect

Effect = noun    affect = verb

- Parents **affect** children with the **effect** of their actions.
- The **effect** of the revision classes was tremendous. It positively **affected** their exam results.

## Stationery/stationary

- Stationery = paper/pens etc.: I am looking for a **stationery** shop.
- Stationary = not moving: the train was **stationary**.

## A/an

A/an is the same word that changes its spelling according to the word that follows.

- A followed by a consonant: **a car/a dog/a boat**
- An followed by a vowel: **an apple/an aeroplane/an ice cream**

## Advice/advise

Advice = noun    advise = verb

- The doctor gave him good **advice**. She **advised** him to quit smoking.

## Bought/brought

Bought = past tense of buy: I **bought** a cake from the shop.

Brought = past tense of bring: I **brought** a cake to the party.

## Accept/except

Accept = to take something: he **accepted** the prize.

Except = not including: I like all food **except** tripe.

## Break/brake

Break = to smash: will he break the world record?

Brake = a mechanism for slowing down/to slow down: he needs to put his foot on the brake.

## License/licence

Licence = noun    License = verb: to give a licence to

- You need a licence to practise medicine.
- I am licensed to practise law in this country.

## Dependent/dependant

Dependant = someone who is kept or supported by another: I have three **dependants**.

Dependent = relying on or determined by: whether we go camping will be **dependent** upon the weather.