

Beware of Grammar Homophones

Does that heading have you scratching your head? What is a homophone?

Homophones are those sneaky words that sound similar (or have the same pronunciation) but have different meanings. Below are examples of common homophones. Are they sneaking into your business communication?

ACCEPT	Consent to receive or believe a point as valid – <i>Accept the explanation</i>
EXCEPT	Not including – exclude – <i>I chose all of the items except this one</i>
AIR	The earth's atmosphere or to express an opinion – <i>Air your view</i>
HEIR	Person who inherits property or rank – <i>Heir to the throne</i>
CAPITAL	City that is seat of government or money/assets – <i>Invest capital</i>
CAPITOL	The building where legislators meet – <i>State capitol in the capital city</i>
CITE	Quote a passage or reference – <i>Cite your resource for the information</i>
SITE	Area/location or website – <i>The construction site is north of here</i>
FAIR	Equitable/unbiased – <i>A fair decision</i>
FARE	The charge/fee for a service – <i>The fare for airline tickets is escalating</i>
INCITE	Stir up trouble – <i>Incite a riot</i>
INSIGHT	Deep understanding/awareness – <i>The book shared the author's insight</i>
ITS	Belonging to – <i>The brokerage firm lost its license</i>
IT'S	Contraction for two words such as it is/it has – <i>It's a beautiful day</i>
LEAD	In charge of (rhymes with need) – <i>Mary will lead the way</i>
LED	Past tense of lead – <i>Mary led the way</i>

TIP: Lead that rhymes with bed is the metallic element



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Homophones

(Continued)

MAYBE	Possibly/perhaps – <i>Maybe I'll attend</i>
MAY BE	Could/would be a possibility – <i>I may be included in the invitation</i>
PEAK	Highest tip of a mountain or greatest/maximum – <i>Peak performance</i>
PEEK	Look quickly – <i>A sneak peek</i>
PIQUE	Stimulate interest or curiosity – <i>pique your interest</i>
PRINCIPAL	Invested money that earns interest or main/foremost – <i>Principal reason</i>
PRINCIPLE	Fundamental belief/truth – <i>He acted on principle instead of personal gain</i>
ROLE	An assigned character or a position/responsibility – <i>The CEO's role</i>
ROLL	Move by turning over – <i>The roll of the dice</i>
TAIL	An animal's rear body part or the end of a line – <i>The tail end of the traffic</i>
TALE	A narrative story – <i>Tell me the tale of the tortoise and the hare</i>
THEIR	Belonging to/associated with people – <i>Their belongings</i>
THERE	Designates a place/location – <i>The temperature was hot over there</i>
THEY'RE	Contraction of two words, they are – <i>They're lucky to have you on the team</i>
YOUR	Belonging to/associated with a person – <i>Your belongings</i>
YOU'RE	Contraction of two words, you are – <i>You're welcome</i>