

Homonyms

There are many words in the English language which have the **same pronunciation** but are **spelt differently** and **have different meanings**. Most of them are short and monosyllabic. These words are called '**homonyms**'.

Examples:

- 1 tail : the flexible prolongation of an animal's spine
tale : a story of imaginary events
- 2 hail : to call out to someone to get their attention
hale : robust, healthy
- 3 pail : a container for carrying water
pale : of a whitish or colourless complexion
- 4 bare : uncovered, naked
bear : a large furry animal

Homonyms

For each of the following sentences, choose the correct word in the brackets and fill in the blank.

- We will go hiking tomorrow if the _____ permits.
(weather / whether)
- It is not _____ for the villagers to do their washing at the crocodile-infested river.
(safe / save)
- After much preparation, the cruise ship is now ready to set _____.
(sail / sale)
- The explorers are trying to locate the _____ of the mighty river.
(source / sauce)
- There have been a lot of complaints about the new manager from the members of the _____.
(staff / stuff)
- Animals in cold regions have thick _____ to protect them from the cold.
(fir / fur)
- Because of the landslide, the coach had to take a longer _____ to reach its destination.
(root / route)

Vocabulary Builder



Audio

permit - to allow

infest - to exist in large numbers

cruise ship - a large ship that people travel on for pleasure

explorer - someone who travels to places that no one has discovered yet

mighty - very large or important

complaint - referring to what you say because you feel that things are not good or wrong

staff - people working in a company or an organization

stuff - things, ideas, etc.

fir - a tree with needle-shaped leaves

landslide - a rapid downward movement of earth or rocks on a slope

route - the way from one place to another

8 Christians all over the world celebrate the _____ of Jesus Christ on Christmas Day.
(**berth** / birth)

9 The police are now at the _____ searching for clues of the **explosion**.
(scene / seen)

10 Mrs Lam is taking up a _____ in flower arrangement to keep herself occupied.
(cause / course)

11 The _____ of the lion makes it look **majestic**.
(main / **mane**)

12 I do not like it when people _____ in my personal affairs.
(medal / **meddle**)

 13 Which part of an egg do you think is more **nutritious**, its white or its _____?
(**yoke** / yolk)

 14 The **tyrant** was forced to _____ the country when his army **surrendered** to the rebels.
(**flea** / **flee**)

 15 In some countries, _____ without permission from the authorities is an offence.
(**basking** / **busking**)

berth - a place where ships stop

explosion - a loud sound that is produced when a bomb goes off

majestic - very big and beautiful

mane - hair around a lion's face and neck

meddle - to be part of a situation that does not have anything to do with you

nutritious - food that contains all the things that the body needs in order to be healthy

yoke - something that can be placed across your shoulders so that you can carry two heavy things on each side

tyrant - a powerful ruler who uses his power cruelly

surrender - to give up a fight because you cannot win

flea - a small insect that feeds on the blood of animals and humans

flee - to run away from

bask - to enjoy lying in the sun

busk - to play music or sing in public to earn money

Revision 1

A Fill in each blank in the diary entry with one word from the given list. Only one word from each homonym pair is used.

stuff / staff

feint / faint

whether / weather

cue / queue

maze / maize

feat / feet

rest / wrest

save / safe

route / root

Corn mazes are a popular American tourist attraction, so we had to visit one on our trip. When we arrived at the site there was a long (1) _____ to get in, probably because it was a weekend and the (2) _____ was clear and sunny. Mum was worried that the maze would not be (3) _____ after dark, but I reassured her that we would definitely not need the whole day to find the correct (4) _____. When we finally got into the maze, Dad said, "We're in a maze, surrounded by (5) _____!" Dad's jokes are so bad sometimes.

The maze, though, was no joke – I thought it was for kids, but it was enormous. We were lost within 20 minutes. Soon Mum said her (6) _____ hurt from walking, and she felt (7) _____ from the bright sun. We needed to take a (8) _____, but I had no idea which way to go. Fortunately, there were many (9) _____ members in the maze to help people who had gotten lost, and one guided us to the exit.

B Underline the correct word from the homonym pairs in the brackets.



Call 1234-5555 to book your reservation and (1) (**save / safe**) \$10 off all drinks on our drink menu.

Why dine at Le Château Blanc? Maybe because we are the (2) (**source / sauce**) of the finest A5 Wagyu beef (3) (**steak / stake**) in the city. Maybe because our award-winning (4) (**stuff / staff**) are famous for their perfect service. Or maybe, because you want to take a look at our wine (5) (**seller / cellar**), where you can taste wines brewed in our own winery.

Come try our six (6) (**course / cause**) King's Banquet!

C Underline the correct words to complete the WhatsApp conversation.

Brian

Exams are finally over! What do you guys want to do this weekend? I suggest we visit the Museum of Coastal Defence. I've always been interested in Hong Kong's (1) (**naval / navel**) history.

Kalli

Sure. The Art and Collectibles (2) (**fair / faire**) I wanted to go to was postponed, so I have no other plans.

Jenna

Count me in! Let's go to the (3) (**stationary / stationery**) shop too though, because I need a sketchbook for art class.

Brian

Can't you go buy one by yourself Jenna? The (4) (**cue / queue**) at that shop is always so long.

Jenna

That's exactly why I want you guys to come with me. I'm always so (5) (**bored / board**) while waiting in line alone.

D Underline the incorrectly used word in each line of the passage and write the correct homonym that should replace it in the blanks below.

Meeting minutes

- 1 The student counsel met to confirm the details of the upcoming spelling bee competition.
- 2 One issue raised was whether a trophy should be awarded to winners. It was determined
- 3 that it would be possible to create a meddle for each of the top three students. As several
- 4 members from the school's board of directors will be present, it was decided to book the
- 5 school hall to be the competition venue rather than the covered playground.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____