

Homophones

Often the terms homonym, homophone and homograph are used interchangeably. The following definitions should help clarify the differences between the three.

Definitions

- Homophone:** One of two or more words pronounced alike, but different in spelling or meaning (e.g. to, too, two). Homonyms and homographs are both types of homophones.
- Homonym:** One of two or more words spelled and pronounced alike, but different in meaning (e.g. cleave, which can mean *to cut* and *to adhere*).
- Homograph:** One of two or more words spelled alike but different in meaning or pronunciation (e.g. the *bow* of a ship, a *bow* and arrow).

As requested by teachers, here is a list of common homophones. *Teachers are not expected to teach the words from this list; rather, this list is for reference only.* Please see the district-adopted materials for specific grade-level homonyms.

- already, all ready** *Already* is an adverb that tells when. *All ready* is a phrase meaning "completely ready."
- ant, aunt** An *ant* is an insect. An *aunt* is a female relative, the sister of a mother or father. Regional dialect can change the pronunciation of *aunt*.
- bare, bear** The adjective *bare* means "naked." A *bear* is a large animal with shaggy hair.
- base, bass** *Base* is a foundation or the lower part of something. *Bass* (pronounced "base") is a deep sound or tone or an instrument having a deep sound or tone. *Bass* (rhymes with "mass") is a fish.
- board, bored** A *board* is a piece of wood. *Board* also refers to a group or council that helps run an organization. *Bored* means "to become weary or tired of something." It can also mean "a hole made by drilling."