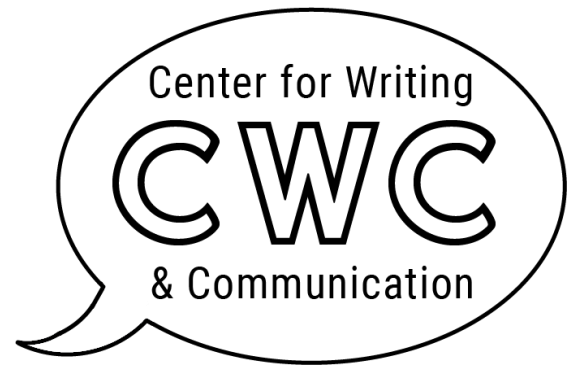


# Homophones



The word **homophone** refers to any two words that sound the same, but are spelled differently. Although it is easy to mix up these two words in writing, it is important to know the difference in their uses so as not to confuse both yourself and the reader.

Here are a few common homophones and their uses:

## Its vs. It's:

- **Its** without the apostrophe refers to the possessive form of "it." In other words, if you were talking about a book, but you wanted to describe the pages belonging to that book, you would say something like this:

- I read a very old book yesterday. **Its** pages were faded and torn at the edges.

In this case, "its" refers to the book's pages. Notice how the word "its" is used in the same way as the word "his" or "her." The word "its" is simply an adjective used to show possession of something that has no gender, such as a book.

- **It's** with the apostrophe is the contraction formed by the joining of the words "it is." For example, if somebody asked you what time it was, you would say:

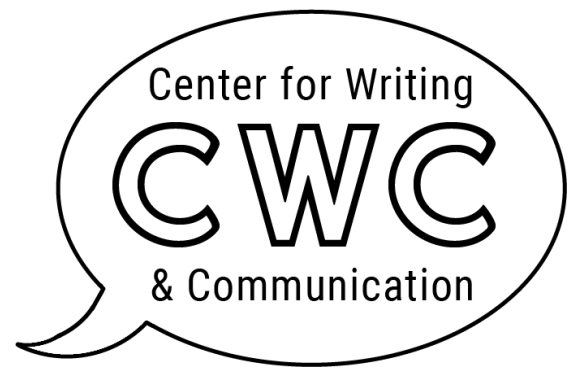
- **It's** twelve-thirty.

- In this case, it's refers to the words "it is."

If you are ever confused as to whether to use the word "its" or the word "it's," simply replace the word with "it is" and see if the sentence makes sense. If the sentence does not make sense with "it is," then you should use "its" without the apostrophe. If the sentence does make sense, you should use "it's" with the apostrophe.

- If we replace the word "its" with "it is" in the sentence about books above, it would read "I read a very old book yesterday. **It is** pages were faded and torn at the edges."
- This sentence, obviously, does not make sense, therefore, we know that the word "its" should be used because the contraction "it's" does not fit in this sentence.

# Homophones



## Lose vs. Loose:

- **Lose** refers to something that cannot be found, or something that was not gained, such as a victory in a football game. It is a verb that shows the action of the sentence.

If you were to misplace something that you once had, you would say:

- How could I **lose** something so valuable to me?

If you are not winning in your basketball game, you would say:

- I have a feeling that we will **lose** the game.
- **Loose**, on the other hand, refers to something that is set free, or is coming undone, or untightened. It is an adjective that describes the condition of something.

If you were to find a screw that was not tight on your door hinge, you would tell the mechanic:

- There is a screw **loose** on the top right hinge of the door frame.

## May Be vs. Maybe:

- The words "**may be**" are linking verbs that show that something "could be."

If, for example, you were referring to your enjoyment of a children's television show, you would say:

- I **may be** 19 years old, but I can still watch "Spongebob Squarepants" if I want to.
- The word **maybe**, is a word that describes the possibility of something happening.

If somebody asked you whether you were going to a friend's birthday party, you would answer:

- **Maybe**, but I haven't really decided whether I want to go or not.

If your sibling wanted to go with you and your friends to the movies, but the sibling was pestering you, you could say:

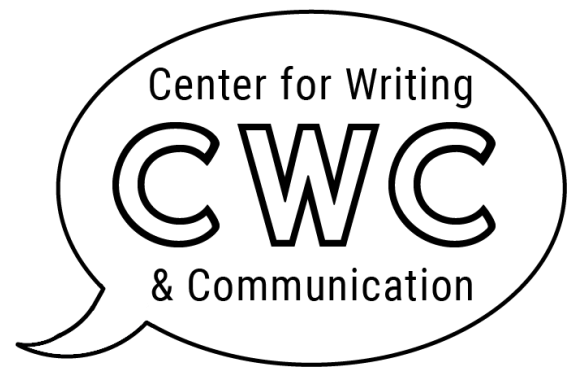
- **Maybe** if you stopped bothering me, I would let you go to the movie with us.

There are many other words that are homophones. Instead of going into more detail, I will simply state more common homophones and their meanings below:

## Affect vs. Effect:

- **Affect** is a verb, as in "Global Warming will **affect** everybody."
- **Effect** is a noun, as in "What **effect** will Global Warming have on the United States?"

# Homophones



## Whose vs. Who's:

- **Whose** is an adjective that describes possession, as in “**Whose** pencil is this on the floor?”
- **Who's** is a contraction formed by the joining of the words “who is,” as in “**Who's** dropping their pencil on the floor?”

## There vs. Their vs. They're:

- **There** is a word that shows the location or clarification of something, as in “**There** are thirteen people in this classroom,” or in the sentence, “I saw him run over **there**.”
- **Their** is a possessive adjective used to describe something that belongs to more than one person, as in “I went to **their** house to see the new, remodeled kitchen.”
- **They're** is a contraction formed by the joining of the words “they are,” as in “They said that **they're** going to Las Vegas for the honeymoon.”

## Your vs. You're

- **Your** is a possessive adjective that is used to describe something that belongs to the person that you are currently talking to, as in “Since you are too big for them, can I have **your** shoes?”
- **You're** is a contraction formed by the joining of the words “you are,” as in “**You're** going to see the Bruno Mars concert tonight, right?”

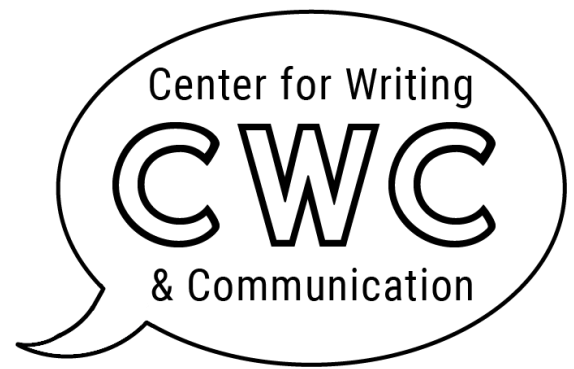
## Accept vs. Except

- **Accept** is an adjective used to show the action of receiving something, as in “I **accept** your apology.”
- **Except** is a word used to exclude something else, as in “I will eat every type of candy **except** for Twizzlers.”

## Anyone vs. Any One:

- **Anyone** is a word that refers to many people, but they are acting as one, as in “**Anyone** can learn how to ride a bike.”
- **Any one** are words that refer to one specific person, as in “**Any one** person can learn how to ride a bike.”

# Homophones



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## Everyone vs. Every One:

- **Everyone** is a word that refers to every person within a given area, as in “**Everyone** in the room had the flu.”
- **Every one** are words that refer to every person or every item within a given area, but separately, as in “**Every one** of the rocks that I collected was under three ounces.”

## Assure vs. Ensure vs. Insure:

- **Assure** is a verb used to state something in a confident tone, as in “I **assure** you, there will not be anybody late for the meeting tomorrow.”
- **Ensure** is a verb used to show that someone is going to make sure that something will happen, as in “I will **ensure** that nobody is late tomorrow.”
- **Insure** is a verb used to show that somebody will make sure that someone or something is safe, as in “Geico lets me **insure** my car against any small scrapes, damages, or dents for a small price.”

## Elicit vs. Illicit:

- **Elicit** is a verb that refers to bringing something about, or causing something to happen, as in “If you talk to other people in class while I am trying to teach a lesson, you will **elicit** punishment among the whole class.”
- **Illicit** is an adjective used to describe something that is illegal, as in “Killing somebody is an act of **illicit** behavior.”

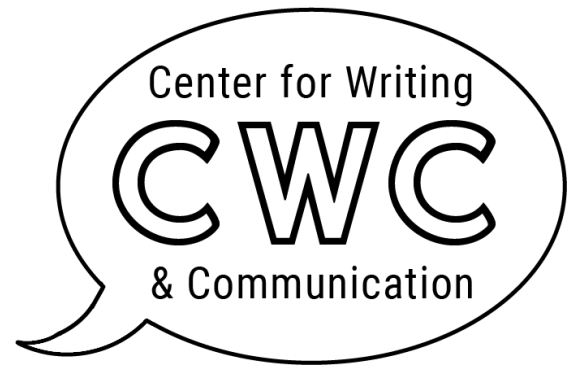
## Sit vs. Set:

- **Sit** is a verb that refers to a seat, or a person being in a seated position, as in “Jeremy decided to **sit** at the side of the pool and stick his feet in.”
- **Set** is a verb that refers to placing one item on top of another item, as in “**Set** your books on the counter and come help your sister carry these boxes out to the car.”

## Farther vs. Further:

- **Farther** refers to distance, as in “She threw the ball **farther** than I did.”
- **Further** refers to additional, more, or extra, as in “The bank is closed until **further** notice.”

# Homophones



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## Advice vs. Advise:

- **Advice** is a noun that refers to information given to somebody else, as in “Will you give me some **advice** on how to survive my first year of college?”
- **Advise** is a verb that refers to the action of actually giving somebody that information or advice, as in “I **advise** you not to wear sneakers when you go to the beach.”

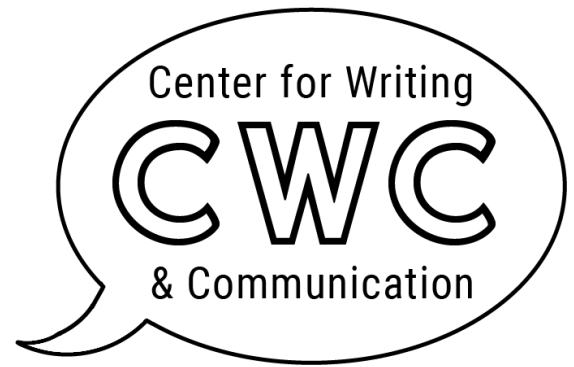
## Principal vs. Principle:

- **Principal** is an adjective that means first, primary, or main, as in “The **principal** rule of Fight Club is: Don’t talk about Fight Club.”
- **Principle** is a noun that refers to a rule, or statement, or law, as in “The only **principle** that the teacher told us about was that we could not chew gum.”

## Explicit vs. Implicit

- **Explicit** is a word that refers to something that is directly expressed or shown, as in “This movie is rated R because of **explicit** language.”
- **Implicit** is a word that refers to something that is implied, as in “The **implicit** meaning behind Robert Frost’s poem ‘The Road Not Taken’ is that we cannot spend so much time trying to make a decision. Rather, we should just make the decision and move on.”

# Homophones



## Lay vs. Lie

- **Lay** means to put or place an object upon something else, as in “**Lay** your pillow on your bed and then go to sleep.”
- **Lie** means to rest or recline on something, as in “**Lie** on the floor and take a nap until your father comes home from work.”
  - It is important to not the difference in the conjugated forms of both of these verbs. The conjugated forms of lay are as follows:
    - As I **lay** my dead hamster down on the grass, a single tear falls from my eyes.
    - Yesterday, I **laid** a glass of milk on the table, and now it is gone.
    - In the future, Tommy **will lay** a life jacket on the seat of the boat so that we can throw it to him if he falls off the boat again.
    - Because I work at a nursery, I **have lain** many a baby in a crib before.
    - I **am laying** my keys down on the counter so that I can come help you.
  - The conjugated forms of lie are as follows:
    - **Lie** under a car if you are playing hide-and-seek outside; it’s the best spot.
    - The flowers **lay** on the driveway, wilted and brown from the hot sun.
    - Tomorrow I **will lay** on a beach towel and catch some rays from the sun.
    - He **has laid** on a bed of nails without being hurt.
    - She **is lying** on the ground watching a caterpillar inch by her.

For more information on homophones, visit [getitwrite.com/archive/tips.htm](http://getitwrite.com/archive/tips.htm) and look under the section labeled “Word Usage.”