

Appendix A: List of Homophones

Homophones are words that sound the same but have different meanings. They are usually spelt differently, so that when written they are clearly distinguishable, but in a speech-based interface they have the potential to cause ambiguity and confusion and are best avoided. It is worth consulting this list when designing spoken utterances as it is easy to become blinkered, thinking only of the particular meaning one has in mind and forgetting that a homophone might exist.

The following list is based on Alan Cooper's Homonym List (http://www.cooper.com/alan/homonym_list.html), and is used here with his permission. The original list attempts to be comprehensive, but this one is rather more selective and has been edited to include words that seem more likely to occur in speech-based devices. It has also been modified to reflect British pronunciations and spellings, and includes a number of words that are not strict homophones but are close enough in pronunciation to cause confusion.

A		ascent	the climb
acts	things done	assent	to agree
axe	chopping tool	ate	past tense of eat
affect	to change	eight	8
effect	result	aught	anything
air	<i>see: err</i>	ought	should
aisle	<i>see: I'll</i>	aural	of hearing
allowed	permitted	oral	of the mouth
aloud	spoken	B	
altar	raised centre of worship	ball	playful orb
alter	to change	bawl	to cry
ant	insect	band	a group
aunt	parent's sister	banned	forbidden

bare	naked	bolder	more courageous
bear	wild ursine	boulder	large rock
baron	minor royalty	born	brought into life
barren	unable to bear children	borne	past participle of bear
berry	small fruit	born	a small stream or boundary
bury	to take under	bough	tree branch
base	foundation	bow	front of a ship; respectful bend
bass	the lowest musical pitch or range	buoy	navigational aid
bases	plural of base	boy	male child
basis	principal constituent of anything	brake	stopping device
basses	many four-stringed guitars	break	to split apart
be	to exist	breach	to break through
bee	insect	breech	the back part
beat	to hit	bread	a loaf
beet	edible red root	bred	past tense of breed
berth	anchorage	brewed	fermented
birth	your method of arrival	brood	family
bight	middle of a rope	bridal	pertaining to brides
bite	a mouthful	bridle	horse's headgear
byte	eight bits	broach	to raise a subject
billed	has a bill	brooch	an ornament fastened to clothes
build	to construct	buy	to purchase
blew	past tense of blow	by	near
blue	colour of California sky	bye	farewell
boar	wild pig	C	
Boer	a South African of Dutch descent	ceiling	<i>see: sealing</i>
boor	tasteless buffoon	E	
bore	not interesting	effect	<i>see: affect</i>
board	a plank	eight	<i>see: ate</i>
bored	not interested		
bold	brave		
bowled	knocked over		

elicit	to draw out	for	in place of
illicit	unlawful	fore	in front
ere	eventually	four	number after three
err	to make a mistake	foreword	introduction to a book
e'er	contraction of "ever"	forward	the facing direction
air	gas we breathe	foul	grossly offensive to the senses
heir	one who will inherit	fowl	domestic hen or rooster
ewe	<i>see: yew</i>	frees	releases
F		freeze	very cold
facts	objective things	frieze	a wall decoration
fax	image transmission technology	G	
faint	pass out	genes	a chromosome
feint	a weak, misdirected attack to confuse the enemy	jeans	cotton twill trousers
fair	even-handed	gild	to coat with gold
fare	payment	gilled	having gills
feat	an accomplishment	guild	a craft society
feet	look down	gilt	gold-plated
find	to locate	guilt	culpable
fined	to have to pay a parking ticket	gorilla	large ape
finish	to complete	guerrilla	irregular soldier
Finnish	from Finland	grate	a lattice
fir	evergreen tree	great	extremely good
fur	animal hair	grease	lubricant
furr	to separate with strips of wood	Greece	Mediterranean country
flea	parasitic insect	grill	to sear cook
flee	to run away	grille	an iron gate or door
flour	powdered grain	groan	reaction to hearing a pun
flower	a bloom	grown	has become larger
		guessed	past tense of guess
		guest	a visitor

H

hair	grows from your head
hare	large rabbit
hall	a large room
haul	to carry
hangar	garage for aeroplanes
hanger	from which things hang
hear	to listen
here	at this location
heard	listened to
herd	a group of ruminants
heir	<i>see: err</i>
heroin	narcotic
heroine	female hero
hold	to grip
holed	full of holes
hole	round opening
whole	entirety
hour	sixty minutes
our	possessed by us

I

idle	not working
idol	object of worship
illicit	<i>see: elicit</i>
I'll	contraction of "I will"
isle	island
aisle	walkway
incite	to provoke
insight	understanding
innocence	a state without guilt
innocents	more than one innocent

it's	contraction of "it is"
its	possessive pronoun

J

jeans	<i>see: genes</i>
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K

know	to possess knowledge
no	negation
knows	<i>see: noes</i>

L

lead	heavy metal
led	guided
leak	accidental escape of liquid
leek	variety of onion
lessen	to reduce
lesson	a segment of learning
loan	allow to borrow
lone	by itself
loch	a lake
lock	a security device

M

made	accomplished
maid	young woman
mail	postal delivery
male	masculine person
maize	corn
maze	puzzle
manner	method
manor	lord's house
marshal	to gather
martial	warlike

massed	grouped together	no	<i>see</i> : know
mast	sail pole	noes	"The noes have it..."
meat	animal flesh	nose	"Plain as the nose on your face..."
meet	to connect	knows	"Only the shadow knows..."
mete	a boundary	none	not one
medal	an award	nun	woman of God
meddle	to interfere	nose	<i>see</i> : noes
mince	chop finely	O	
mints	aromatic sweets	oar	boat propulsion system
mind	thinking unit	or	alternative
mined	looked for ore	ore	mineral-laden dirt
miner	one who digs	one	singularity
minor	small	won	victorious
missed	not hit	oral	<i>see</i> : aural
mist	fog	ordinance	a decree
moan	to groan	ordnance	artillery
mown	the lawn is freshly cut	ought	<i>see</i> : aught
mode	condition	our	<i>see</i> : hour
mowed	a lawn in a well-trimmed condition	P	
moor	swampy coastland; to anchor	packed	placed in a container
more	additional	pact	agreement
morning	AM	pail	bucket
mourning	remembering the dead	pale	light coloured
muscle	fibrous, contracting tissue	pain	it hurts
mussel	a bivalve mollusc	pane	a single panel of glass
N		pair	a set of two
naval	pertaining to ships and the sea	pare	cutting down
navel	pertaining to the belly button	pear	bottom-heavy fruit
		passed	approved; moved on
		past	before now

patience	being willing to wait	presence	the state of being present
patients	hospital residents	presents	what Santa brings
pause	hesitate	pride	ego
paws	animal feet	pryed	opened
peace	what hippies want	pries	wedging open
piece	morsel	prize	the reward
peak	mountain top	principal	head of school
peek	secret look	principle	causative force
perique	ruffled pride		
pedal	foot control	Q	
peddle	to sell	quarts	several fourths-of-gallons
peer	an equal (a captain at sea has no peer)	quartz	crystalline rock
per	wharf (a captain at sea has no pier)		
pi	3.1416	R	
pie	good eating	racket	illegal money-making scheme
place	a location	racquet	woven bat for tennis
plaice	a flounder	rain	precipitation
plain	not fancy	reign	sovereign rule
plane	a surface	rein	horse's steering wheel
pleas	cries for help	raise	elevate
please	good manners	rays	thin beams of light
pole	big stick	raze	to tear down completely
poll	a voting	rapped	knocked sharply
poor	no money	rapt	spellbound
pore	careful study; microscopic hole	wrapped	encased in cloth
pour	to flow freely	read	having knowledge from reading
praise	to commend	red	a primary colour
prays	worships God	rest	stop working
preys	hunts	wrest	take away
precedence	priority		
precedents	established course of action		
presidents	commanders-in-chief		

APPENDIX A

retch	call Ralph on the porcelain telephone	scull	rowing motion
wretch	a ragamuffin	skull	head bone
review	a general survey or assessment	sea	ocean
revue	a series of theatrical sketches or songs	see	to look
right	correct	sealing	closing
rite	ritual	ceiling	upper surface of room
wright	a maker	seam	row of stitches
write	to inscribe	seem	appears
ring	circle around your finger	seas	oceans
wring	twisting	sees	looks
road	a broad trail	seize	to grab
rode	past tense of ride	sects	religious factions
rowed	to propel a boat by oars	sex	if you have to ask, you're too young
role	part to play	sew	needle and thread
roll	rotate	so	in the manner shown
root	subterranean part of a plant	sol	musical note
route	path of travel	sow	broadcasting seeds
rose	pretty flower	shall	is allowed
rows	linear arrangement	shell	aquatic exoskeleton
rote	by memory	shear	to cut or wrench
wrote	has written	sheer	thin; abrupt turn
S		sign	displayed board bearing information
sail	wind powered water travel	sine	reciprocal of the cosecant
sale	the act of selling	slay	kill
saver	one who saves	sleigh	snow carriage
savour	to relish a taste	sleight	cunning skill
scene	visual location	slight	not much
seen	past tense of saw	soar	fly
		sore	hurt
		soared	to have sailed through the air
		sword	long fighting blade

solace	comfort	T	
soulless	lacking a soul	tacks	small nails
sole	only	tax	governmental tithe
soul	immortal part of a person	tail	spinal appendage
some	a few	tale	story
sum	result of addition	tare	allowance for the weight of packing materials
son	male child	tear	to rip
sun	star	taught	past tense of teach
soot	black residue of burning	taut	stretched tight
suit	clothes	tea	herbal infusion
stair	a step	tee	golf ball prop
stare	look intently	team	a group working together
stake	wooden pole	teem	to swarm
steak	slice of meat	tear	eyeball lubricant
stationary	not moving	tier	a horizontal row
stationery	writing paper	teas	more than one herbal infusion
steal	take unlawfully	tease	tantalize
steel	iron alloy	tees	more than one tee
storey	the horizontal divisions of a building	tense	nervous
story	a narrative tale	tents	more than one temporary shelter
straight	not crooked	their	belonging to them
strait	narrow waterway	there	a place
suede	split leather	they're	contraction of "they are"
swayed	curved; convinced	threw	to propel by hand
suite	ensemble	through	from end to end
sweet	sugary	throes	spasms of pain
summary	precis	throws	discharging through the air
summery	like summer	throne	the royal seat
sundae	ice cream with syrup on it	thrown	was hurled
Sunday	first day of the week		

APPENDIX A

tide	periodic ebb and flow of oceans	Wales	Western division of UK
tied	passed tense of tie	whales	a pod of ocean mammals
to	towards	war	large scale armed conflict
too	also	wore	past tense of wear
two	a couple	ware	merchandize
toad	frog	wear	attire
toed	having toes	where	a place
towed	pulled ahead	way	path or direction
toe	forepart of the foot	weigh	to measure weight
tow	to pull ahead	wey	watery part of milk
told	what was spoken	weak	not strong
tolled	a bell was rung	week	seven days
tracked	having tracks	weather	meteorological conditions
tract	a plot of land	wether	a castrated ram
trussed	tied up	whether	if it be the case
trust	faith	wet	watery
V		whet	prime
vain	worthless	whined	past tense of whine
vane	flat piece moving with the air	wind	what you do to a clockwork
vein	blood vessel	wined	drank well of spirits
verses	paragraphs	who's	contraction of "who is"
versus	against	whose	belonging to whom
W		whole	<i>see</i> : hole
waist	between ribs and hips	won	<i>see</i> : one
waste	make ill use of	wood	what trees are made of
wait	remain in readiness	would	will do
weight	an amount of heaviness	wrapped	<i>see</i> : rapped
waive	give up rights		
wave	undulating motion		

wrest *see: rest*

wretch *see: retch*

wright *see: right*

write *see: right*

wring *see: ring*

wrote *see: rote*

Y

yew a type of tree

you the second person

ewe female sheep

yoke oxen harness

yolk yellow egg centre

yore the past

you're contraction of

“you are”

your belonging to you

Appendix B: Words with More than One Meaning

The words listed below can take different meanings depending upon the context in which they are used.

Many English words can take several related meanings and function as more than one part of language without a change in the way they are spoken. Words which can be used as different parts of language but refer to the same object or function (for example camp, which can be used as either a verb or a noun) are not included in this list since they pose few problems in the design of speech dialogues. Provided a clause is correctly structured, the way in which the word is being used will be clear to the listener.

However, where a word can take more than one meaning while functioning as the same part of language (for example jet which, when used as a noun, can mean either a stream of liquid or an aircraft) it must be used with care in order to avoid ambiguity.

The following list contains a selection of such words, but is not exhaustive.

Word	Meanings
Air	gaseous mixture, melody
Bark	outer sheath of tree trunk, sound made by animal (e.g. dog), abrade
Bill	demand for money, act of parliament, beak of web-footed bird
Deal	fir or pine wood, business agreement, distribution of playing cards or other items
Die	numbered cube used in games of chance, mould used to stamp shape in metal, cease living
File	instrument used to shape or smooth materials, collection of papers or records, line of people or objects
Fly	move through the air, run away, two-winged insect
Jet	stream of liquid, black lignite, aircraft
Jig	lively tune or dance, device for holding work-piece in machine tool

Joint	junction between two parts, portion of animal prepared as food, in common
Just	merely, precisely, in accordance with justice
Keen	sharp-edged, enthusiastic
Kit	personal effects, equipment or clothing needed for particular task, set of components
Lace	fine fabric, cord used for fastening shoes, etc., act of fastening using cord
Lap	front of thighs of a seated person, overhanging edge, e.g. of floorboard, single turn around, e.g. race track, cable reel, etc.
Left	remaining, opposite direction to right
Let	hinder or obstruct, allow or enable, hire
Lie	make a false statement, adopt a horizontal position, shape or pattern or distribution (e.g. of land)
Lock	secure fastening, portion of hair
Mass	celebration of the Eucharist, coherent body of matter
Match	competitive endeavour, short piece of wood with combustible tip, equal or complementary
Mean	stingy, equidistant from two extremes, have as purpose
Mine	excavation in earth, explosive device, statement of possession
Mould	fungal growth, pattern or template, give shape to
Neat	tidy, undiluted
Page	leaf of book, boy employed as servant, summon
Palm	inner surface of hand, tropical tree
Peer	one who is equal in some respect, noble person, look intently
Pen	writing instrument, enclosure
Pole	stick, magnetic pole, native of Poland
Quarry	place from which stone is extracted, object of hunt
Race	ethnic group, competition by speed, strong current
Rail	abuse or react strongly against, enclose with rails, bars placed horizontally and/or in continuous series
Rank	line or queue (e.g. of taxis), position within hierarchy, loathsome, corrupt, sort by some criterion
Rear	breed, cultivate, rise up, hindmost part
Right	correct, good, opposite of left, entitlement
Sack	dismiss from employment, pillage, large bag of coarse fabric
Sage	herb, wise person

APPENDIX B

Saw	observed, cut using a to-and-fro motion, device for cutting, old saying
Scale	horny plate forming skin of fish or reptile, graduated continuum against which value is measured, device for measuring weight, sequence of musical notes
Shy	move away suddenly in alarm, throw object, diffident, uneasy or wary in company
Slip	unintentional failing (e.g. error, loss of balance), loose cover (for person, furniture, etc.), artificial slope, travel unobserved
Table	item of furniture, information organized in columns
Tablet	slab of stone, drug in solid form
Tap	draw supplies or information, hit lightly, valve controlling flow (e.g. of water), sound (produced, e.g. by light knock on door)
Tend	incline towards, look after
Wake	funeral ritual, disturbance resulting from passage, e.g. of ship or aircraft, rise from sleep
Watch	period of wakefulness especially at night, personal chronometer, observe
Wax	sticky substance such as that produced by bees, apply such substance (e.g. to clean or protect surface), grow or increase
Vice	immoral or distasteful conduct or habit, device for securing object while working upon it
Yard	unit of measure, small enclosed area
Yarn	tale, thread

Appendix C: Words with More than One Pronunciation

The words listed below can take more than one spoken form depending upon how they are used. In general a change of vowel sound signifies a change of meaning; for example, the word “tear” can mean either a drop which falls from the eye (pronounced teer) or a break, rip or wound (pronounced tare). Changes in the placement of the stress generally indicate a change of usage from one part of language to another; for example, the word “record” is pronounced re-cord when it is used as a noun or an adjective but becomes re-cord when it is used as a verb.

The list below is not exhaustive, but is intended to give some idea of the range of such effects found in spoken English.

Absent	<u>ab</u> -sent	ab- <u>sent</u>
Abstract	<u>ab</u> -stract	ab- <u>stract</u>
Addict	<u>add</u> -ict	add- <u>ict</u>
Adept	<u>ad</u> -ept	ad- <u>ept</u>
Ally	<u>al</u> -ly	al- <u>ly</u>
Annex	<u>ann</u> -ex	ann- <u>ex</u>
Attribute	<u>att</u> -ri-bute	att- <u>ri</u> -bute
August	<u>aug</u> -ust	aug- <u>ust</u>
Bow	bo	bôw
Collect	<u>col</u> -lect	col- <u>lect</u>
Combat	<u>com</u> -bat	com- <u>bat</u>
Combine	<u>com</u> -bine	com- <u>bine</u>
Deliberate	de-lib-er-ate	de-lib-er-âte
Detail	<u>de</u> -tail	de-tail
Finance	<u>fi</u> -nance	fi- <u>nance</u>
Imprint	<u>im</u> -print	im- <u>print</u>
Incline	<u>in</u> -cline	in- <u>cline</u>

Indent	<u>in</u> -dent	in- <u>dent</u>
Insult	<u>in</u> -sult	in- <u>sult</u>
Intake	<u>in</u> -take	in- <u>take</u>
Intern	<u>in</u> -tern	in- <u>tern</u>
Interrupt	<u>in</u> -ter-rupt	in-ter- <u>rupt</u>
Intimate	inti-mate	inti-mâte
Lead	lead	lêd
Live	live	lîv
Mandate	<u>man</u> -date	man- <u>date</u>
Minute	<u>mîn</u> -it	mi- <u>newt</u>
Object	<u>ob</u> -ject	ob- <u>ject</u>
Perfect	<u>per</u> -fect	per- <u>fect</u>
Pervert	<u>per</u> -vert	per- <u>vert</u>
Read	reed	rêd
Rebel	<u>re</u> -bel	re- <u>bel</u>
Record	<u>re</u> -cord	re- <u>cord</u>
Row	ro	rôw
Second	<u>se</u> -cond	se- <u>cond</u>
Tear	tair	teer
Use	rhymes with fuse	rhymes with loose

Guide to Pronunciation

a = a as in ate

â = a as in at

e = e as in bead

ê = e as in bed

i = i as in lie

î = i as in lit

o = o as in go

ô = o as in brow

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