Homonyms

WHAT IS A HOMONYM?
The Purdue Owl defines homonyms as, “words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings.” What does this mean? It means that it’s understandable to mix them up because they sound the same; however, they don’t mean the same things, and some are even different parts of speech. Here are some common homonyms and their meanings to help you differentiate between them:

Affect/Effect:
- **Affect** is a verb, and it means “to act on”
  - Ex: Poor grammar AFFECTS most Americans.
- **Effect** is a noun, and it means “a result”
  - Ex: Language skills have a positive EFFECT in life.

Too/To/Two
- **Too** is an adverb meaning “also” or “as well”
  - Ex: Are you coming TOO?
- **To** is a proposition used to express direction
  - Ex: I want to go TO the beach.
- **Two** is a noun indicating the number which proceeds one
  - Ex: I have TWO roommates.

Their/There/They’re
- **There** is a pronoun, and is the possessive case of they
  - Ex: THEIR outlook on life is admirable.
- **There** is an adverb indicating direction or place
  - Ex: Look over THERE!
- **They’re** is a contraction meaning “they are”
  - Ex: THEY’RE some of the greatest people you’ll ever meet.

Accept/Except
- **Accept** is a verb meaning “to take” or “to receive”
  - Ex: I was ACCEPTED into the university of my dreams.
- **Except** is a preposition which implies exclusion
  - Ex: Everyone went to the writing center, EXCEPT me.

Hear/Here
- **Hear** is a verb meaning “to have listened”
  - Ex: I didn’t HEAR what you said.
- **Here** is an adverb meaning “in this place”
  - Ex: Could you please come HERE?
Homonyms, Continued

Passed/Past
- Passed is a verb implying the past tense of the verb “to pass”
  - Ex. I PASSED my English test!
- Past is an adjective meaning “gone by” or “in elapsed time”
  - Ex. Poor grammar skills are in my PAST.

Then/Than
- Then is an adverb meaning “at that time”
  - Ex. Read this worksheet, THEN watch your English skills improve.
- Than is a conjunction used to compare two things
  - Ex. I probably liked making this sheet more THAN you will enjoy reading it.

Whose/Who’s
- Whose is a pronoun, and the possessive case of who
  - Ex. WHOSE jacket is this?
- Who’s is a contraction meaning “who is”
  - Ex. WHO’S going to the concert tonight?

Its/It’s
- Its is the possessive form of it
  - Ex. The book lost ITS value after I spilled my drink on it.
- It’s is a contraction of “it is”
  - Ex. IT’S hard to explain how much I love the English language.

Lose/Loose
- Lose is a verb meaning “to come to be without”
  - Ex. My mom asked me not to LOSE her car keys, but I did.
- Loose is an adjective meaning “free” or “unbound”
  - Ex. This shirt does not fit me: it is too LOOSE.

Your/You’re
- Your is a pronoun, and it is the possessive case of you
  - Ex. I’m here to help you with YOUR paper.
- You’re is a contraction of “you are”
  - Ex. YOU’RE a trooper for making it through this worksheet!

Whether/Weather
- Whether is an idiom meaning “regardless”
  - Ex. I’m going to the store WHETHER you want me to or not.
- Weather is a noun referring to the temperature or climate
  - Ex. The WEATHER has been lovely lately!