

Spelling Stumpers

The English language is full of words whose sound and spelling are very similar. Listed below are some of the more common examples.

Accept:	to receive willingly: <i>I will <u>accept</u> the gift.</i>
Except:	not including, other than: <i>I will eat anything <u>except</u> meat loaf.</i>
Advice:	recommendation or an opinion: <i>My sister always gives good <u>advice</u>.</i>
Advise:	to counsel, to recommend, to give advice: <i>Let me <u>advise</u> you of your rights.</i>
Affect:	a verb meaning to influence: <i>He <u>affects</u> me in a strange way.</i>
Effect:	a verb meaning to bring about or to cause to happen: <i>Congress <u>effected</u> a change in the law.</i> Also used as a noun meaning the result of: <i>The <u>effect</u> of exercise is fitness.</i>
Alter:	to change somehow: <i>Mr. Austin decided to <u>alter</u> his will.</i>
Altar:	a structure used in worship: <i>The people knelt at the <u>altar</u>.</i>
Birth:	refers to being born: <i>Brooke gave <u>birth</u> to a baby girl.</i>
Berth:	a place to sit or sleep, as a berth in a ship: <i>May I sleep in a lower <u>berth</u>?</i>
Breath:	air taken into the lungs: <i>I took a deep <u>breath</u>.</i>
Breathe:	to exhale and inhale: <i>Smog makes it hard for me to <u>breathe</u>.</i>
Capital:	chief: leading or governing city: wealth resources: <i>The <u>capital</u> of California is Sacramento.</i>
Capitol:	a building that houses the state or national officials: <i>Have you been to the <u>capitol</u> in Wash. D.C.?</i>
Cite:	to use as an example, to quote: <i>Lynda loves to <u>cite</u> Shakespeare.</i>
Site:	location: <i>This is the <u>site</u> of our new house.</i>
Sight:	something seen or the process of seeing: <i>She was a <u>sight</u> for sore eyes.</i>
Conscience:	that which causes one to recognize right and wrong: <i>He was free of a guilty <u>conscience</u>.</i>
Conscious:	to be aware of, or to be awake: <i>The boxer was knocked down, but he was still <u>conscious</u>.</i>
Council:	an assembly of lawmakers, or an advisory group: <i>The student <u>council</u> met to discuss a new proposal.</i>
Counsel:	advice: to give advice: <i>We should have followed his wise <u>counsel</u>.</i>
Dairy:	a factory or farm that makes milk products: <i>We bought our cheese at the <u>dairy</u>.</i>
Diary:	a daily record of experiences and observations: <i>Missy writes in her <u>diary</u> every night.</i>
Desert:	a dry region; or to abandon: <i>Cactus grows in the <u>desert</u>.</i>
Dessert:	a sweet at the end of a meal: <i>My favorite <u>dessert</u> is ice cream.</i>
Dying:	ceasing to live: <i>Mary's dog is <u>dying</u>.</i>
Dyeing:	the process of coloring fabric: <i>She is <u>dyeing</u> the fabric blue.</i>
Emigrate:	to leave one country to settle in another: <i>My grandparents <u>emigrated</u> from Sweden.</i>
Immigrate:	to enter and settle in a country where you were not born: <i>They then <u>immigrated</u> to Canada.</i>

Forth: forward in space or place, onward in time: "Arise, go forth, and conquer."
Fourth: the ordinal equivalent of the number four: Colleen is their fourth daughter.

Hear: to receive sound: Did you hear what I said?
Here: in a certain place: I live here.

Its: the possessive form of "it", belonging to "it": The dog broke its leg.
It's: a short form of "it is": It's a beautiful day.

Know: to comprehend or understand: Bill knows how to fix a car.
No: the opposite of yes: No, I don't want to go to the show.

Later: refers to time: It's later than you think.
Latter: the second of two persons or things named: The latter is a teacher at a local high school.

Loose: not tight: My watchband is loose.
Lose: to suffer a loss, or misplace: I hope I don't lose the job.

Naval: pertaining to the navy: Skip is wearing a naval uniform.
Navel: "bellybutton": Your navel is in the middle of your stomach.

Pedal: a lever to be pressed down by the foot: Sarah pressed the brake pedal and the car stopped.

Peddle: to sell, especially door to door: Ted's job is to peddle life insurance.

Peer: to look at: She peered at me through the door.
Also one of the same rank or qualities: You are entitled to a jury of your peers.

Pier: a dock: We tied the boat to the pier.

Personal: of, relating to, or affecting a person: It was done purely for personal financial gain.
Personnel: the body of persons employed in any occupation, service or work: All of the personnel went out to lunch.

Principal: chief, most important: Jill understood the principal idea.
Also a school official: Bob is the principal of the school.

Principle: a belief, rule of conduct or thought: That was based around the main principle of the group.

Than: used for comparisons: Oranges are sweeter than lemons.
Then: refers to time: First make your bed; then we will go.