

# HOMOPHONES

Homophones are when two or more words can be said and pronounced in the same way but have different meanings and spellings. They are often mixed up and so make sure you learn the differences:

## THEIR, THERE AND THEY'RE

**There** goes with *where* and is used when referring to places and positions.

*The canteen is over **there**.*

**Their** shows belonging.

***Their** house was very small and had been neglected.*

**They're** is short for 'they are'. If 'they are' doesn't make sense in the sentence, you've used the wrong word!

***They're** behaving very badly at the moment.*

## YOUR AND YOU'RE

**Your**, like *their*, shows belonging.

***Your** bag is on the floor.*

**You're** is short for 'you are'. If 'you are' doesn't make sense in the sentence, you've used the wrong word!

***You're** being very silly today.*

## TO, TWO AND TOO

**To** means towards or comes before a verb (action word).

*He is going **to** his History lesson. She wants **to** play football on Saturday.*

**Two** is the number 2.

*Her brother is **two** years old.*

**Too** means too much or also.

*Her homework was **too** brief. He'd been well behaved **too**.*

# CAPITAL LETTERS

Using capital letters may seem very simple but it is one of the most common mistakes people make in their writing. Follow these simple rules to avoid them:

## USE CAPITAL LETTERS AT THE START OF SENTENCES

Every sentence and paragraph must start with a capital letter. Make sure that your capital letters are clear; they should be twice as big as your lower case letters.

**All punctuation marks with a dot at the bottom (.?! ) must be followed by a capital letter.**

You do not need a capital letter after a comma or semi-colon.

## SOME WORDS ALWAYS NEED CAPITAL LETTERS

Some words always start with a capital letter—even in the middle of a sentence!

- ◆ 'I' must always have a capital letter, wherever you see it:

*I think I need to be on time tomorrow.*

- ◆ People's names and titles:

*I have Mrs Williams for English.*

*Harry Potter is magic.*

- ◆ Names of companies and organisations:

*Islwyn High School*

*Church of England*

- ◆ Names of places, countries, languages and nationalities:

*Blackwood*

*The Spanish man could speak French fluently.*

- ◆ Titles of books and films:

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

*Of Mice and Men*

Small words like 'of', 'and', 'in', 'the' etc. don't need capital letters, unless they come at the beginning of the title.

- ◆ Religions, the names of gods and religious believers:

*Muslims worship Allah in Islam*

- ◆ Public holidays:

*Christmas*

*Easter*

- ◆ Days of the week and months of the year:

*Wednesday*

*January*

# APOSTROPHES

There are two different types of apostrophes. You can have apostrophes which indicate omission (missing letters) and you can also have apostrophes which show possession (belonging).

## OMISSION

Shortened words or when two words have been joined together use apostrophes to show where the missing letters are.

*I can not use apostrophes.*



*I can't use apostrophes.*

The apostrophe shows that the 'no' of 'not' are missing.

*I would like to learn.*



*I'd like to learn.*

An apostrophe has been put where 'woul' has been taken out.

Use the table below to help you:

WITHOUT AN		WITH AN		WITHOUT AN		WITH AN	
I am		I'm		Do not		Don't	
I had		I'd		Does not		Doesn't	
I would		I'd		Will not		Won't	
I have		I've		Who is		Who's	
They are		They're		Can not		Can't	

Make sure you don't get into the habit of using apostrophes for plurals or for any words ending in 's'.

*'I have six lesson's today'* is simply wrong!

## POSSESSION

Sadly, possessive apostrophe rules aren't quite as simple but once they click, you won't have to think about it any more.

In its simplest form, to show something belongs to someone or something, you add an apostrophe and an 's':

Alice's coat	<i>The coat belongs to Alice</i>
Islwyn High School's star pupil	<i>The pupil belongs to the school</i>
Mrs Bromfield's classroom	<i>The classroom belongs to Mrs Bromfield</i>
The lion's diet	<i>The diet belongs to the lion</i>

If the last letter of the word it belongs to is the letter 's', you don't need to add an 's':

*James' coat*

*Mrs Jones' classroom*

## POSSESSION WITH PLURALS

If the plural ends with an 's', you follow the same rule as above and simply add an apostrophe:

The plants' ecosystem

*The ecosystem belongs to all the plants*

The class' objective

*The objective belongs to the whole class*

If the plural doesn't end in an 's', add an apostrophe and an 's':

*The children's toys*

*Women's civil rights began to improve.*

Remembering these rules is important because it can change the whole meaning of a sentence!

<b>The pupil's work</b>	The work belongs to one pupil	<b>The pupils' work</b>	The work belongs to more than one pupil
<b>The classroom's carpet</b>	The carpet of one classroom	<b>The classrooms' carpet</b>	The carpet of many classrooms

# SENTENCE STRUCTURE

All sentences must be complete and so must contain a **verb** and a **subject**. A verb is a doing or action word.

*He **was** nervous and scared.*

This sentence contains the verb 'was' and so is **complete**.

*Nervous and scared.*

This is not a sentence because it doesn't contain a verb and is **incomplete**. **If, when typing, you see a green squiggly line under one of your sentences, it is normally because it is missing a subject or a verb.** However, having good sentence structure is not only about using complete sentences; there are three different types of sentences you can use in your writing:

## SIMPLE SENTENCES

**Simple sentences** contain a subject and a **verb** and are usually short. Here are some examples:

*I **screamed**.*

*She **sat** down.*

*He'd been **hiding** under the table.*

*Glaciers are constantly **moving** under their own weight. Sarah's performance **was** perfect.*

Simple sentences work well to make a direct statement or to add tension.

## COMPOUND SENTENCES

**Compound sentences** are two simple sentences joined together with one of the FANBOYS (For, and, nor, but, or, yet, so). examples:

*Kenya depends on agriculture **but** rainfall in Kenya is low.*

*We turned the Bunsen Burner on **and** we began to warm the liquid.*

Both sides of the FANBOYS could be simple sentences. When part of a sentence could be a sentence on its own, it's called a **main clause**.

### Feeling adventurous?

Rather than using a conjunction, if the two main clauses are connected, you could use a semicolon!

Be careful not to write sentences with *and, then* and *so* written over and over again.

You don't need commas before FANBOYS

## COMPLEX SENTENCES

A complex sentence has a **main clause** but also has at least one **subordinate clause**. A **main clause** could be a sentence on its own (a simple sentence) and is the main point of the complex sentence. A **subordinate clause** provides more information about the main clause and relies on the main clause to make sense. **It does not make sense on its own and could not be its own sentence.**

*He'd been hiding under the table **waiting for the door to shut.***

***Despite her nerves,** Sarah's performance was perfect.*

*I sat down **finally able to take a deep breath and take in what had just happened.***

As you can see from the examples, the **subordinate clause** needs a comma if it is at the beginning of the sentence.

## VARYING THE ORDER OF CLAUSES

You can put your **subordinate clause** at the beginning of your sentence. **If so, it must be followed with a comma.**

***Waiting for the door to shut,** he hid under the table.*

***Despite her nerves,** Sarah's performance was perfect.*

***Finally able to take a deep breath and take in what had just happened,** I sat down.*

You can also put your **subordinate clause** in the middle of your sentence. **If so, it must have commas either side.** These are called **parenthetic commas**.

*He, **waiting for the door to shut,** hid under the table.*

*Sarah's performance, **despite her nerves,** was perfect.*

*I, **finally able to take a deep breath and take in what had just happened,** sat down.*

### Feeling adventurous?

If you really want to emphasise the added bit of information, use hyphens, rather than commas!

Now, apart from within lists, you should understand where commas are and are not needed. They should never be used to separate two main clauses but this can be done with a semicolon (if they are linked in meaning).