

# Most Common Misused Homophones in Fiction Writing

Homophones are words that sound the same but have different meanings and are spelled differently.

## Accept/Except

- **Accept: to receive, allow, or approve**
  - He will accept the job offer this morning.
  - We should accept her back into our book club.
- **Except: describes seclusion of something**
  - It's quiet here, except for in the summer months.
  - Except for the bread, the dinner was delicious.

## Affect/Effect

- **Affect: typically used as a verb that refers to an action**
  - I didn't get a lot of sleep last night, but I won't let that affect my job performance today.
  - Losing your job could affect your whole family.
- **Effect: typically used as a noun that refers to an outcome**
  - The news of my favorite store closing had a saddening effect on me.
  - The hot sun had a burning effect on my skin.

## Already/All Ready

- **Already: by a certain time or so soon**
  - The package I ordered last night was already delivered today.
  - I can't believe it's already time for bed!
- **All Ready: fully prepared**
  - I'm all ready to leave even though my vacation isn't until next week.
  - Make sure your children are all ready for school before leaving the house.

## Capital/Capitol

- **Capital: the city where a government is located; the uppercase form of a letter; a financial resource for investment**
  - Washington D.C. is the capital of the United States.
  - We use a capital letter to spell someone's name.
  - Bringing on new partners meant gaining the capital needed to open a new company.
- **Capitol: refers to a specific building in which a legislature meets**
  - The state capitol is where state policy decisions are made by senators and representatives.
  - I enjoyed my tour of the Virginia State Capitol.

## Complement/Compliment

- **Complement: refers to an added element that enhances or completes something**
  - The pearl necklace would complement your blue dress perfectly.
  - We complement each other because we are soul mates.
- **Compliment: praise**
  - She gave me the sweetest compliment on my new hairstyle.
  - His compliment on our church picnic wasn't very friendly.

## Farther/Further

- **Farther: best used for measurements of distance - refers to real, physical distance**
  - Can we walk a little farther, please?
  - She drove quite farther than she needed to.
- **Further: best used for abstract distances, such as measurements of time or other qualities; deals with degree or extent**
  - The detective needs to further investigate.
  - We'll have to discuss this further.

## Its/It's

- **Its: denotes possession**
  - It looks like the old house is losing its roof!
  - It doesn't get cold because its feathers wick moisture.
- **It's: contraction meaning "it is"**
  - The test has been easy so far, but it's about to get hard.
  - It's time for lunch!

## Lie/Lay

- **Lie: to rest or recline; to tell an untruth**
  - I think I'll go lie down.
  - I had to lie about my age.
- **Lay: to put or place**
  - Yesterday, I lay on the bed thinking about life.
  - I lay the book on the end table.

## Principle/Principal

- **Principle: refers to a rule or a standard**
  - One principle we should all live by is kindness.
  - She left her job over a matter of principle.
- **Principal: the head of an institution**
  - The principal of my elementary school said he was our "pal".
  - The principal character in his book is a zombie.

## Than/Then

- **Than: used for comparison**
  - I'm much shorter than him.
  - I would much rather walk than jog.
- **Then: means "next"**
  - We were so much younger back then!
  - I guess we'll just have to wait until then.

## **Their/There/They're**

- **Their:** indicates possession among a plural group meaning “belonging to them”
  - The bees are still guarding their nest.
  - This is Mike and Michelle; their anniversary is coming up soon.
- **There:** expresses location
  - My book was right there on the table.
  - I was there yesterday when Lydia came to visit.
- **They're:** a combination of “they are”
  - Kittens are fun, but they're usually not as affectionate as dogs.
  - Otis called the sheriff and his deputy and they're on the way now.

## **Weather/Whether**

- **Weather:** climate conditions; to withstand
  - The weather was perfect for our picnic.
  - He had to weather some difficult financial situations.
- **Whether:** weighs between different possibilities
  - She couldn't decide whether to move to Tennessee or Virginia.
  - He is the boss, whether I like it or not.