

DIPHTHONGS AND TRIPHTHONGS

PHONETICS OF ENGLISH

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/iə/	/əʊ/	/aʊ/	/aɪ/	/eɪ/	/eə/	/ʊə/	/ɔɪ/
fear	go	house	I	pain	pear	tour	toy
here	know	how	my	play	there	pour	voice
beer	home	down	either	cave	where		choice
hear	bone	loud	eye	reign	air		
clear	sew		sigh	made	heir		
dear	crow		Thai	maid	wear		
	Don't		tie	obey			
	foam			pay			
	foe						

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Diphthongs

- In the articulation of diphthongs there is a **movement from one point to another** (unlike monophthongs), which is they are also called **glides**.
- In English phonetics they are considered to be **ONE phoneme** (not two).

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Diphthongs

- **Movement or glide** from one vowel to another vowel (the first part is longer and louder, while the second part is shorter and not as loud)
- There are eight diphthongs in English;
- They can be classified into: centring and closing
ending in /ə/ ending in /ɪ/ʊ/

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Diphthongs

- English diphthongs may cause difficulty, esp. when it comes to spelling

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Diphthongs

Articulatory features:

1. Type of articulation: **VOWELS**
2. Manner of articulation: **DIPHTHONGS**

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Diphthongs

- **closing diphthongs** – the glide is made from a more open to a more close position /i, u/
- **centring diphthongs** – the glide is made from a more peripheral to a more central position /ə/

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Diphthongs

- **Marked with an arrow**, where the dot marks the start of the diphthong (the first “vowel” within the diphthong) and the arrow-head marks the direction of tongue movement (the tongue moves towards the position of the second “vowel”, but doesn’t really make it there).

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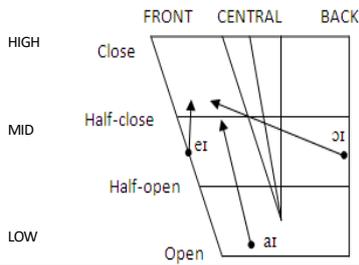
Closing diphthongs 1

Closing Diphthongs

/eɪ/ /aɪ/ /ɔɪ/

The tongue moves to:

/ɪ/



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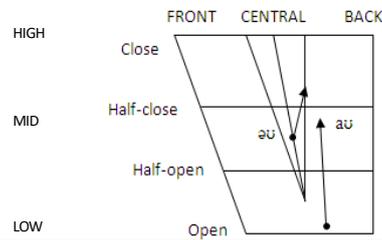
Closing diphthongs 2

Closing Diphthongs

/əʊ/ /aʊ/

The tongue moves to:

/ʊ/



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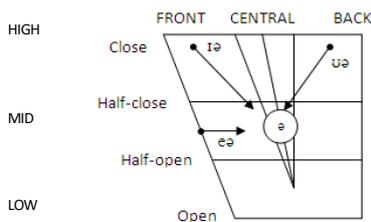
Centering diphthongs

Centring Diphthongs

/ɪə/ /eə/ /ʊə/

The tongue moves to:

/ə/



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American and British pronunciation - diphthongs

- The diphthongs /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /aʊ/ and /ɔɪ/ are the same in the two pronunciations.

- **In BrE /əʊ/ is used – in AmE /ou/ is used**

	cold	go	low
BrE:	/kəʊld/	/gəʊ/	/ləʊ/
AmE:	/koʊld/	/goʊ/	/loʊ/

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American and British pronunciation - diphthongs

- The centring diphthongs /iə/, /eə/ and /uə/ do not occur in AmE - instead there is a vowel followed by /r/:

	RP	GA
near, here	nɪə, hɪə	nɪr, hɪr
square, there	skweə, ðeə	skwer, ðer
cure, jury	kjʊə, dʒuəri	kjur, dʒur i

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American and British pronunciation - diphthongs

- But note that many /uə/ words in both BrE and AmE are pronounced with /o:/. This is more common in BrE than in AmE.

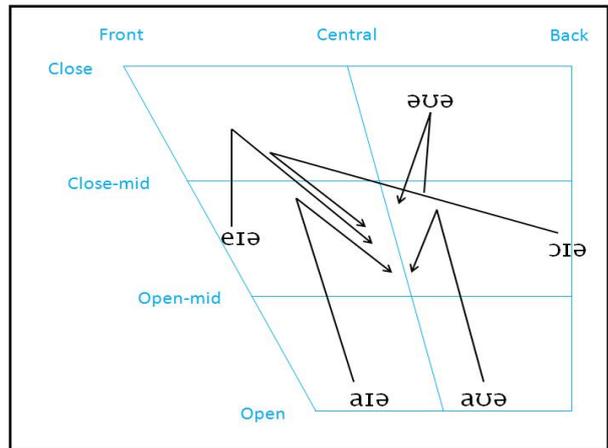
	RP	GA
cure	usually: kjʊə, sometimes: kjɔ:	only: kjur
sure	usually: ʃɔ:, sometimes: ʃue	usually: ʃur sometimes: ʃɔr
poor	usually: pɔ:, sometimes: puə	usually: pur, sometimes: pɔr or pour

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Triphthongs

- ei + ə = eiə player /pleiə/
- ai + ə = aiə fire /faɪə/
- ɔi + ə = ɔiə royal /rɔɪə/
- əu + ə = əuə lower /ləʊə/
- au + ə = auə hour /aʊə/

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American and British pronunciation - triphthongs

- In BrE the final r of all triphthongs is not pronounced, but in AmE, the final r is typically pronounced: 'layer' /leɪr/, 'fire' /faɪr/, 'lawyer' /lɔɪr/, 'lower' /ləʊr/, 'hour' /aʊr/
- In AmE the quality of the first vowel is different in /oʊr/; it is a back mid vowel: /o/ (in BrE, instead, /əʊə/ is used).

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Study questions

- How are diphthongs different from monophthongs?
- Provide a list of the English diphthongs.
- How can we classify diphthongs? What is the classification based on?
- Draw the chart(s) representing the closing diphthongs.
- Draw the chart representing the centering diphthongs.
- Explain the differences in the pronunciation of diphthongs in the British and the American pronunciation.
- Provide a list of the English triphthongs. Give examples of words containing them.
- Explain the differences in the pronunciation of triphthongs in the British and the American pronunciation.
- What are homophones? Provide three pairs for illustration.

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(Source: gramatachonyms)

way Which way should I go?	stairs Use the stairs to go up and down.	flower A rose is a beautiful flower.	bored The man was very bored.	one The first number is one.
weigh Weigh full at the supermarket.	stares The cat stares at the mouse.	flour Flour is used in baking.	board A carpenter cuts a board.	won I won the race!
hair I dry my hair.	son Dad helped his son to read.	eight Six, seven, eight, nine, ...	deer The deer ran through the forest.	eye Dust blew into my eye.
hare A rabbit is also called a hare.	sun The sun shined brightly.	ate Sally ate a sandwich.	dear Dear Mom, how are you?	I It's another way of saying "me".
feat A heroic act is called a feat!	forth To go forth is to go forward.	hear I hear with my ears.	hole The man climbed out of the hole.	groan When I feel sick I groan.
feet You walk on your feet.	4th fourth After third comes fourth.	here Here it is!	whole All parts together equal a whole.	grown The plant has grown.
knight The knight rode his horse.	mail Mail is delivered by a postman.	sew Use a needle and thread to sew.	waist Mary measured her waist!	write I can write my name.
night The moon comes out at night.	male A man is called a male.	so So? What's the answer?	waste Put all of your waste in the bin.	right That's correct! You are right!

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Capital — Capitol
 •The government is eager to attract foreign **capital**.
 •This same senator also once got lost in a **Capitol** Hill garden after leaving a conference committee on the House side.

Cellar — Seller
 •We don't use our coal **cellar** anymore.
 •She is a **flower seller**.

Census — Sense
 Homophones examples:
 •A national **census** is taken every ten years.
 •He felt an **overwhelming sense** of loss.

Cereal — Serial
 Eaten with milk or cream, they made an acceptable breakfast **cereal**.
 Their letters of planning went back and forth like installments of a **serial**.

Chili — Chilly
 The sauce needs more **chili**.
 I was feeling **chilly**.

Choral — Coral
 The third and final section of the evening was **choral**.
 They spent \$2 million on environmental measures, he said, and hired biologists to replant **coral** that would be damaged.

Cite — Sight / Site
 He was **cited** for bravery.
 Anne's **sight** is very good for someone of her age.
 A **site** has been chosen for the new school.

Source: 7ESL

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Coarse — Course
 Homophones examples:
 •The **coarse** sand was hot.
 •Andy's doing a one-year journalism **course**.

Complement — Compliment
 •The dark red walls **complement** the red leather chairs.
 •Being compared to Abba is a great **compliment**.

Council — Counsel
 •He sent a letter to the **council** to complain about the noise.
 •The judge asked **counsel** for the defence to explain.

Deer — Dear
 A **deer** makes tracks in the snow.
 Congratulations to you my **dear** brother on all your fine accomplishments in school.

Die — Dye
 Do you believe in anything enough to **die** for it?
 Carbonless paper coated with chemicals and **dye** which will produce copies without carbon paper.

Discreet — Discrete
 He assured her that he would be **discreet**.
 The change happens in a series of **discrete** steps.

Doe — Dough
 Homophones examples:
 Ezra waited for the **doe** to open its eyes and look at him.
 Mix lemon juice and milk; stir into flour mixture until **dough** leaves side of bowl and forms a ball.

Source: 7ESL

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Draft — Draught
 This is only the first **draft** of my speech.
 A cold **draught** of air blew in from the open window.

Dual — Duel
 The piece of furniture serves a **dual** purpose as a cupboard and as a table.
 The officer challenged him to a **duel**.

Ewe — You
 He's helping to drive in the **ewes** for a mass ante natal clinic
 I have some news for **you**.

Homophones List (F)
Farther — Father
 We decided not to go any **farther**.
 I love my **father**.

Faze — Phase
 John was embarrassed, but it didn't **faze** Mike a bit.
 The first **phase** of renovations should be finished by January.

Find — Fined
 I can't **find** the car keys.
 The company was **fined** £20 000 for breaching safety regulations.

Fir — Fur
 You always clear away the soft topsoil till you get a **fir** base.
 There was cat **fur** all over the chair.

Flaw — Floor
 There is a fundamental **flaw** in Walton's argument.
 We are located on the seventh **floor** of the building.

Source: 7ESL

28

Flea — Flee
 A water **flea** that is starving in a crowded pond is the victim not of food shortage but of competition.
 He gathered what money he had just in case Gallagher was forced to **flee**.

Flew — Flu / Flue
 A bird **flew** by and saw one of the half-eaten calves that I had dug up.
 Steven's still in bed with **flu**.
 You may prefer central heating, and more controllable ventilation than permanently open **flue**.

Flex — Flecks
 She watched him raise one hand to rub the nape of his neck, then **flex** his shoulder muscles.
 Only a few **flecks** of gray could be seen in his full head of hair.

Flour — Flower
 Sift the **flour** and salt into a bowl.
 What beautiful **flowers**!

For — Four
 There's a letter **for** you.
 I choose number **Four**.

Foreword — Forward
 He was asked if he would consider writing a **foreword** for her book.
 They ran **forward** to welcome her.

Fort — Fought
 Just the three of you going to be holding the **fort** tonight.
 He **fought** many battles with the early Labor party in Lancaster and discrimination against socialist employees was alleged.

Foul — Fowl
 He woke up with a **foul** taste in his mouth.
 Fish, **fowl** and meat, most with a decidedly Southwestern treatment, are represented on the menu.

Source: 7ESL

29

Gait — Gate
 He was round and fat, he had an energetic **gait**, a bright, lively face, and laughing eyes.
 We went through the **gate** into the orchard.

Gamble — Gambol
 Their religion forbids them to drink or **gamble**.
 Now, at seventeen, I could **gambol** in the forbidden delights of Elysium with no one tugging at my hand.

Genes — Jeans
 The actual number of human **genes** is still in dispute.
 Her hair looked dishevelled, as did the sweatshirt and **jeans** she was wearing.

Gored — Gourd
 Homophones examples:
 He was attacked and **gored** by a bull.
 I felt hollow, like a dried **gourd**, a few loose seeds shaking uselessly inside me.

Great — Grate
 The movie was a **great** success.
 She took the two halves of the letter away, tore them in fragments, and burned them in her **grate**.

Grown — Groan
 Richard's jokes make you **groan** rather than laugh.
 He had been a **grown** man with a small but independent income when he had taken Minnie instead of her to wife.

Source: 7ESL

30

Hart --- Heart
 Whoever slew a **hart** or hind was to be blinded.
 Regular exercise is good for the **heart**.

Hear --- Here
 I could **hear** the sound of traffic.
 This switch **here** controls the lights.

Heel --- Heal
 The sergeant clicked his **heels** and walked out.
 This will help to **heal** your cuts and scratches.

Hi --- High
 Homophones examples:
 Hi guys!
 The house has a **high** wall all the way round it.

Him --- Hymn
 He took the children with **him**.
 The service began with a rousing **hymn**.

Hoard --- Horde
 They dug up a **hoard** of Roman coins.
 The elves defeated a huge **horde** of goblins.

Hole --- Whole
 The bomb blew a huge **hole** in the ground.
 She wasn't telling the **whole** truth.

Holy --- Wholly
 Homophones examples:
 The priest puts some **holy** water on the child's head.
 The report claimed that the disaster was **wholly** unavoidable.

Source: 7ESL

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Hour --- Our
 The interview lasted half an **hour**.
 We showed them some of **our** photos.

Homophones List (I)
I --- Eye
 I moved to this city six years ago.
 Ow! I've got something in my **eye**!

Idle --- Idol
 I cannot afford to leave the land lying **idle**.
 She is the **idol** of countless teenagers.

Incite --- Insight
 Republicans have complained that Democrats are using Social Security scare tactics to **incite** seniors groups and others to oppose the constitutional amendment.
 The article gives us a real **insight** into the causes of the present economic crisis.

Homophones List (K)
Knead --- Need
 On a lightly floured board, **knead** the dough for a couple of minutes.
 You don't really **need** a car.

Knew --- New
 I wonder if he **knew** of the plan?
 The hardest part of this job is understanding the **new** technology.

Knight --- Night
 She's still waiting for a **knight** in shining armor to come and rescue her.
 The accident happened on Friday **night**.

Source: 7ESL

32

Knot --- Not
 Tie the two ropes together with a **knot**.
 She did **not** see him.

Know --- No
 I **know** people's handwriting changes as they get older.
 "It was Tony."
 "No, you're wrong. It was Ted."

Leak --- Leek
 Water had started to **leak** into the cellar.
 For a first course, there is a potato **leek** soup.

Lessen --- Lesson
 They gave her an injection to **lessen** the pain.
 Our first **lesson** on Tuesdays is French.

Levee --- Levy
 Homophones examples:
 The last four of these sub-deltas were formed by **levee** breaches in 1839,1860,1874 and 1891.
 If the government wishes to raise tax revenue in order to subsidize the poor, it should **levy** a tax on films.

Links --- Lynx
 A love of nature **links** the two poets.
 They may be eagle-eyed or watch like a **lynx**.

Loan --- Lone
 I had to take out a **loan** to buy my car.
 He was by no means a **lone** voice criticizing the government.

Source: 7ESL

33

Loot --- Lute
 He refused to let his army enter and **loot** the city.
 Here too he started to write hymns which he would sing to his own accompaniment on a **lute**.

Made --- Maid
 The sky was clear and the sunlight had a brilliance and intensity that **made** her head reel.
 A **maid** pushed her cleaning cart down the path toward the cottages out back.

Mail --- Male
 He found a mountain of **mail** waiting for him.
 Many women earn less than their **male** colleagues.

Main --- Mane
 Homophones examples:
 The **main** reason for living in Spain is the weather.
 She tossed back her **mane** of chestnut hair.

Manna --- Manner
 There is no mention in the story of the giving of water, or of food beyond the **manna**.
 I had hoped you would behave in a more responsible **manner**.

Marshal --- Martial
 Heston has been named grand **marshal** of the parade.
 He'd heard rumors that the military were planning to declare **martial** law.

Mask --- Masque
 Her sarcasm is a **mask** for her insecurity.
 Comus is a **masque** in which a young lady's chastity is tried and not vanquished.

Maw --- More
 Millions of dollars were poured into the **maw** of defense spending.
 Children generally feel much **more** confident working in groups.

Medal --- Meddle
 Homophones examples:
 She won a gold **medal** at the last Olympics.
 Church leaders shouldn't **meddle** in politics.

Source: 7ESL

34

Meet --- Meat
 Maybe we'll **meet** again some time.
 I gave up eating **meat** a few months ago.

Might --- Mite
 I **might** be a few minutes late.
 Some teachers take everything a **mite** too serious.

Mist --- Missed
 We could just see the outline of the house through the **mist**.
 He **missed** 20 games after breaking a bone in his wrist.

Moose --- Mousse
 The team already knew that **moose** exposed to new predator populations are more vulnerable.
 She would bake a chocolate **mousse** torte.

Muscle --- Mussel
 Rooney has pulled a **muscle** in his thigh and won't play tomorrow.
 You can also try beef heart, **mussel**, chicken, liver prawn and the like.

None --- Nun
 I wish I could offer you some cake but there's **none** left.
 Georgiana later marries, and Eliza becomes a **nun**.

Source: 7ESL

35

Oar --- Or
 We took one **oar** each and rowed quickly to the shore.
 It can be black, white **or** grey.

Overdo --- Overdue
 Don't **overdo** the salt in the food.
 Her baby is two weeks **overdue**.

Pail --- Pale
 They filled their **pail** and container, and started the return journey.
 He looked very **pale** and drawn.

Pain --- Pane
 She felt a sharp **pain** in her leg.
 John peers through the **pane**, shakes her head and steps back.

Pair --- Pear
 Homophones examples:
 She felt as if every **pair** of eyes in the room was on her.
 This **pear** smells nice.

Passed --- Past
 We **passed** a group of students outside the theatre.
 Study some **past** exam papers to get an idea of the questions.

Peace --- Piece
 I wish she would just leave me in **peace**.
 He broke off a **piece** of bread and gave it her.

Peak --- Peek
 Sales this month have reached a new **peak**.
 Shut your eyes and don't **peek**!

Source: 7ESL

36

Pedal — Peddle
Homophones examples:
*She put her foot down on the accelerator **pedal**.*
*Farmers come to Seoul to **peddle** rice.*

Plane — Plain
*She slept on the **plane**.*
*The advantages were **plain** to see.*

Principal — Principle
*His **principal** reason for making the journey was to visit his family.*
*The general **principle** is that education should be available to all children up to the age of 16.*

Profit — Prophet
*The shop's daily **profit** is usually around \$500.*
*He sent for Teiresias, the old blind **prophet**, the most revered of Thebans.*

Rain — Reign
*There will be heavy **rain** in most parts of the country.*
*A higher synthesis, one ushering in a new **reign** of peace and harmony, under a benign and ever just science.*

Red — Read
*We painted the door bright **red**.*
*I was shocked when I **read** of his death.*

Right — Write
*Keep on the **right** side of the road.*
*She had to **write** a report on the project.*

Ring — Wring
*She left a dirty **ring** around the bath.*
*They are always trying to **wring** additional funds from the government.*

Source: 7ESL

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Ring — Wring
*She left a dirty **ring** around the bath.*
*They are always trying to **wring** additional funds from the government.*

Rode — Road
*He **rode** away across the marshes.*
*I ran down the **road** to see what was happening.*

Role — Roll
*They want to limit the **role** of government.*
*I tried to **roll** him onto his side.*

Rouse — Rows
*We don't want to **rouse** any suspicions.*
*There were always **rows** when my dad got home.*

Rung — Wrung
*I have **rung** the world from these boxes and feel a great affection and gratitude towards them.*
*Sally **wrung** out the socks and hung them on the towel rack.*

Sail — Sale
*She always wanted to **sail** around the world.*
*The use and **sale** of marijuana remains illegal.*

Sauce — Source
*Stir in fish **sauce**, coconut milk, sugar, and lime juice and bring to a simmer.*
*Beans are a very good **source** of protein.*

Source: 7ESL

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Scene — Seen
*The police soon arrived at the **scene** of the crime.*
*He crouched down so he couldn't be **seen**.*

Skull — Skull
*You didn't **skull** too badly today.*
*Her **skull** was crammed with too many thoughts.*

See — Sea
*She looked for him but couldn't **see** him in the crowd.*
*The waste was dumped in the **sea**.*

Shoe — Shoo
*What's your **shoe** size?*
*You **shoo** the dog out of the kitchen.*

Side — Sighed
Homophones examples:
*They crossed from one **side** of London to the other.*
*He **sighed** deeply at the thought.*

Slay — Sleigh
*Those old movies still **slay** me!*
*Alternatives to skiing include a leisure pool, curling and skating on the nearby lake, indoor tennis and **sleigh** rides.*

Soar — Sore
*She watched the dove **soar** above the chestnut trees.*
*I had a **sore** throat and aching limbs.*

Source: 7ESL

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Sole — Soul
*Griffiths is the **sole** survivor of the crash.*
*He is really quite a sensitive **soul**.*

Some — Sum
*I need **some** apples for this recipe.*
*Bill wants to spend a large **sum** on modernizing the farm.*

Sort — Sought
*He wondered if Rosa was in some **sort** of trouble.*
*He **sought** revenge against Surkov for separating him from his wife and son.*

Staid — Stayed
Homophones examples:
*The museum is trying to get rid of its **staid** image.*
*She **stayed** at home while the children were young.*

Stalk — Stork
*He ate the apple, **stalk** and all.*
*We always used to say the guys on the Ridge were lucky, the **stork** brought their babies.*

Stare — Stair
*It's not polite to **stare**, you know.*
*The second **stair** creaks when you step on it.*

Source: 7ESL

40

Stationary — Stationery
*It is called a sinker because it sinks beneath you when you are **stationary**.*
*You could say the same for luggage and **stationery**.*

Steal — Steel
*Inventors know that someone is always going to try to **steal** their designs.*
*Sheffield is a major **steel** town.*

Stile — Style
*Continue on a clear path up the hillside to reach a **stile** on the ridge.*
*The paintings are in an expressionistic **style**.*

Sun — Son
*The **sun** was shining and birds were singing.*
*We have two daughters and a **son**.*

Tail — Tale
*The male has beautiful **tail** feathers.*
*His latest book is a delightful children's **tale** about talking animals.*

Team — Team
*We have a **team** of eight working on product development.*
*With luck, in a year the place should begin to **team** with federal workers.*

Source: 7ESL

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Their — There
*They washed **their** faces and went to bed.*
*We could go back to my cottage and have lunch **there**.*

Throne — Thrown
*Queen Elizabeth came to the **throne** in 1952.*
*The boat was **thrown** onto the rocks.*

Tide — Tied
*The body was washed up on the beach by the **tide**.*
*She **tied** the newspapers in a bundle.*

To — Too / Two
*I walked **to** the office.*
*The dress was **too** tight for me.*
*I was in **two** minds about the book.*

Toe — Tow
*He kicked the earth with the **toe** of his boot.*
*The car broke down and we had to get somebody to give us a **tow**.*

Source: 7ESL

42

Vain — Vein

She closed her eyes tightly in a **vain** attempt to hold back the tears.
The nurse was having trouble finding a **vein** in his arm.

Vary — Very

Class numbers **vary** between 25 and 30.
The new building has been **very** much admired.

Wail — Whale

Somewhere behind them a child began to **wail**.
We saw a **whale** blowing a jet of spray high in the air.

Waste — Waist

Homophones examples:
Why **waste** money on clothes you don't need?
He put his arm around her **waist**.

Way — Weigh

I'm not happy with this **way** of working.
The young birds **weigh** only a few grams.

Weak — Week

She is still **weak** after her illness.

He comes to see us once a **week**.

Weather — Whether

The **weather** is very changeable at the moment.

I asked him **whether** he had done it all himself or whether someone had helped him.

Where — Wear

Homophones examples:
I wonder **where** they will take us to.

I always **wear** black.

Source: 7ESL

43

Which — Witch

Which of the applicants has got the job?

He wants me to be a **witch**.

Who's — Whose

Who's the money for?

Whose house is that?

Won — One

Britain **won** five gold medals.

There's only room for **one** person.

Would — Wood

He said he **would** be here at eight o'clock.

All the furniture was made of **wood**.

You're — Your

You're a good person.

Dentists advise you to have **your** teeth checked every six months.

Source: 7ESL

44