

Homonyms and Paronyms

Some words are so alike to each other in their **spellings, Pronunciation or meanings** that it becomes difficult to understand and use them correctly. There is very little difference in their spellings and pronunciation (though their meanings are very different) so that one feels confused in understanding and using them correctly. Such words are called **Homonyms** or **Paronyms**.

The words which are **similar in pronunciation**, but **different in spellings and meanings** are called **Homonyms**, as **Site, cite, Sight**. All these three words have the same pronunciation, but their spellings and meanings are different. **Site** means the ‘**situation**’ of some building, **Cite** means ‘**to quote**’, and ‘**Sight means ‘a view**’. Errors are often committed in the correct use of such words. These words are called **Homonyms**.

Paronyms are those words which are derived from the same **root word**, and therefore they look alike, but in course of time their meanings have become very different. For example, a root word is ‘**art**’. From this **root word** have been derived three words—**artistic, artificial, and artful**. **Artistic** means ‘**full of beautiful art**’; **Artificial** means ‘**unnatural**’; and **Artful** means ‘**cunning**’. The correct use of such words is also very difficult.

We give below the lists of popular **Homonyms** and **Paronyms** with their meanings and use.

Homonyms

1. **Accede**—(agree)
 - He did not accede to my request.
- Exceed**—(surpass ; to be greater than)
 - The precis should not exceed 150 words.
2. **Access**—(approach ; reach ; admittance)
 - I have no approach to the Managing Director.

Excess—(superabundance; more than due)

- Excess of everything is bad.

3. **Accept**—(take)

- Please accept my application.

Except—(leaving out)

- Every student except Ram was present.

4. **Adapt**—(suit ; accustomed to)

- He has now learnt to adapt himself to the local conditions.

Adept—(expert ; skilful)

- She is adept in painting.

Adopt—(take up)

- I have adopted my brother’s son.

5. **Affect**—(to pretend, to act upon)

- This does not affect me.

Effect—(as verb it means accomplish, or carry into practice; as noun it means result)

- What is the effect of this medicine ?

6. **Addition**—(putting more adding)

- This is in addition to your share.

Edition—(a number of books printed at one time)

- This is the first edition of my book.

7. **Alter**—(change)

- I can’t alter my programme.

Altar—(place of offering in a temple or church)

- Put your offerings on the altar.

8. **Allusion**—(indirect reference)

- Make the allusion clear.

Illusion—(a deceptive appearance)

- The world is an illusion.

- 9. Apposite**—(proper ; suitable)
 ● He made some very apposite observations on our system of education in his speech.
Opposite—(standing in front of or contrary to)
 ● Our school is opposite the church.
- 10. Assent**—(agreement ; concurrence)
 ● I have already given my assent to your proposal.
Ascent—(going up)
 ● The hill has a sharp ascent.
- 11. Antic**—(odd ; strange)
 ● This is an antic piece of art.
Antique—(ancient; old-fashioned)
 ● The church has an antique magnificence.
- 12. Ail**—(to be ill)
 ● He has been ailing for over a week.
Ale—(a drink)
 ● He drinks country ale.
- 13. All together**—(in a body)
 ● They came all together.
Altogether—(completely)
 ● This is altogether a lie.
- 14. All ready**—(all things or persons are ready)
 ● We are now all ready to go.
Already—(before this time)
 ● I have already returned his book.
- 15. Ark**—(covered floating vessel)
 ● Noah saved himself and his tribe in an ark.
Arc—(a part of a circle)
 ● The moon is in the shape of an arc.
- 16. Amiable**—(lovable)
 ● She is a girl of amiable nature.
Amicable—(friendly)
 ● Let us come to an amicable settlement.
- 17. Bale**—(package of goods)
 ● I have taken delivery of a bale of clothes.
Bail—(security)
 ● The suspect has been released on bail.
- 18. Berth**—(sleeping place in a train)
 ● I have booked two berths.
Birth—(coming to life)
 ● Today is my son's birth-day.
- 19. Bare**—(uncovered)
 ● Don't go bare-footed.
Bear—(as verb, to carry or to tolerate)
 ● I cannot bear this humiliation any longer.
Beer—(a kind of drink)
 ● He drank a glass of beer.
- 20. Beach**—(shore)
 ● Let us go for a walk on the beach.
Beech—(a kind of tree)
 ● Beech tree grows on the Himalayas.
- 21. Brake**—(lever; an instrument to stop a wheel)
 ● The brakes of my scooter are loose.
Break—(to make apart)
 ● Don't break the stick.
- 22. Bough**—(a branch of a tree)
 ● The monkey sits on the bough of a tree.
Bow—(bend a contrivance to shoot arrows)
 ● He came with a bow and arrows.
- 23. Baron**—(a Norman noble ; a landlord)
 ● His father was a baron.
Barren—(not fertile ; unfruitful.)
 ● This is a barren tract of land.
- 24. Bridal**—(pertaining to marriage; adjective from bride)
 ● There is the bridal chamber.
Bridle—(reins used to drive a horse)
 ● Hold the bridle tight in your hand.
- 25. Calendar**—(chart showing the months and days of the year)
 ● This is a beautiful calendar.
Calender—(as verb, to press or give finish to a piece of cloth)
 ● Please calender my shirt.
- 26. Cannon**—(a big gun)
 ● Cannon-balls were fired.
Canon—(principles)
 ● These are the canons of taxation.

- 27. Canvas**—(a kind of rough cloth)
 ● The tent is made of white canvas.
Canvass—(to solicit votes)
 ● I shall not canvass for any political party.
- 28. Casual**—(accidental or occasional)
 ● I had a casual meeting with him.
Causal—(relating to cause)
 ● There is no causal connection between one's poverty and level of intelligence.
- 29. Cast**—(as a verbs to throw)
 ● I shall cast away my old pair of shoes.
Caste—(community)
 ● Character does not depend upon caste.
- 30. Censer**—(a vessel in which incense is burnt in a temple)
 ● A censer was placed on the altar.
Censor—(an official examiner of plays, films etc)
 ● Every film has to be passed by the censor.
Censure—(disapprove ; criticise adversely)
 ● The court censured him for his bad character.
- 31. Cite**—(quote)
 ● I can cite a parallel stanza.
Site—(local position)
 ● This is an ideal site for building a house.
Sight—(view ; scene)
 ● It was a horrible sight.
- 32. Cession**—(noun from the verb 'cede' which means 'to yield')
 ● India cannot make cession of even an inch of land of Kashmir to Pakistan.
Session—(the time when a court or a public body sits)
 ● Hearing of the case will continue in the evening session.
- 33. Check**—(prevent, test)
 ● Please check my bill.
Cheque—(a written order for money to a bank)
 ● I shall pay you by cheque.
- 34. Chord**—(a string of a musical instrument)
 ● Tight the chords of your guitar.
Cord—(a thin rope)
 ● Hang the shirt on the cord.
- 35. Career**—(profession)
 ● He has made remarkable progress in his career.
Carrier—(one that carries)
 ● Place the bedding on the carrier.
- 36. Course**—(way, line of action)
 ● I shall follow this course of action.
Coarse—(rough)
 ● Poor men wear coarse clothes.
- 37. Collision**—(clashing; dashing together, accident)
 ● There was a serious collision between a car and a scooter.
Collusion—(secret agreement for an evil purpose)
 ● He is working in collusion with the smugglers.
- 38. Corpse**—(dead body)
 ● The corpse has been sent for postmortem.
Corps—(pronounced as 'kore', a body of troops)
 ● He belongs to the Gorkha corps.
- 39. Coma**—(state of senselessness)
 ● He is lying in coma.
Comma—(a mark of punctuation)
 ● Put a comma after the first clause.
- 40. Complacent**—(pleased, self-satisfied)
 ● He is complacent by nature.
Complaisant—(polite ; obliging)
 ● She is a gentle girl of complaisant nature.
- 41. Complement**—(that which completes)
 ● This verb must take a complement after it.
Compliment—(salute ; regards)
 ● I offer my sincere compliments to you.
- 42. Conscious**—(aware)
 ● I am fully conscious of my responsibility.

- Conscientious**—(honest; careful; scrupulous)
 ● He is a very conscientious person.
- Consensus**—(agreement of opinion)
 ● Public consensus should be invited on this issue.
43. **Council**—(an assembly)
 ● He was a member of the Legislative Council.
- Counsel**—(advice)
 ● He gave me a very sane counsel.
44. **Credible**—(believable)
 ● His story is not credible.
- Creditable**—(worthy of praise)
 ● He did a creditable service.
45. **Cease**—(stop, discontinue)
 ● He ceases to be a Government counsel.
- Seize**—(catch ; hold tightly)
 ● He seized the first opportunity.
- Siege**—(state of being surrounded)
 ● The fort lay in siege for many days.
46. **Current**—(a stream)
 ● The current in the river was very swift.
- Currant**—(dried grapes)
 ● Currants are very nutritious.
47. **Capital**—(centre of administration, money invested in a business)
 ● New Delhi is the Capital of India.
- Capitol**—(Roman temple of Jupiter)
 ● Caesar was murdered in the Capitol.
48. **Defy**—(challenge)
 You can't defy my orders.
- Deify**—(to worship as a God)
 ● The sage stands deified in our countryside.
49. **Desert**—(as noun, a waste tract of sandy land)
 ● There is little rain in a desert.
- Deserts**—(what one deserves)
 ● Do whatever you like; you will get just your deserts.
- Dessert**—(fruit served after dinner)
 ● There must be a course desserts after dinner.
50. **Deference**—(respect)
 ● I say this in due deference to his scholarship.
- Difference**—(dissimilarity)
 ● There is no difference between man to man.
51. **Descent**—(coming down, slope)
 ● Go slow on the descent.
- Dissent**—(as verb, to 'differ'; as noun, 'disagreement')
 ● I have given my note of dissent.
52. **Disease**—(malady or illness)
 ● He suffers from a simple disease.
- Decease**—(death)
 ● His sons quarrelled over his property after his decease.
53. **Dye**—(as verb, 'to colour' ; as noun, 'colour')
 ● Dye my turban in deep green.
- Die**—(expire)
 ● He is going to die soon.
54. **Duel**—(a fight between two)
 ● There was a duel between the two combatants.
- Dual**—(double)
 ● This machine serves a dual purpose.
55. **Dose**—(the quantity of medicine taken at a time)
 ● Don't take a very heavy dose of this medicine.
- Doze**—(sleep)
 ● He dozed in the class.
56. **Draught**—(the quantity of liquid drunk at a time)
 ● There is not even a draught of water in the jug.
- Drought**—(want of rain)
 ● There is fear of famine on account of drought.
57. **Eminent**—(distinguished)
 ● Many eminent personalities were there.
- Imminent**—(impending ; approaching)
 ● There is imminent danger of war.

58. Eligible—(fit to be chosen)

- He is fully eligible for the post.

Illegible—(indistinct ; that which cannot be read)

- His handwriting is illegible.

59. Elusive—(baffling, escaping from grasp)

- He gave some elusive replies.

Illusive—(deceptive)

- The glamour of wealth is only illusive.

60. Fain—(gladly)

- I would fain go to the valley of flowers.

Feign—(pretend)

- He is in the habit of feigning.

61. Fair—(a show, temporary market)

- This fair is held every week.

Fare—(food, passage money)

- I have already paid the fare.

62. Feat—(an exploit, skill)

- It was a feat of real physical skill.

Feet—(the plural of foot)

- Her feet are so soft.

63. Forego—(go before)

- This is a foregone conclusion.

Forgo—(abstain from)

- I shall forgo my claim in your favour.

64. Felicity—(happiness)

- Real felicity comes from contentment.

Facility—(ease, opportunity)

- We shall give you every facility.

65. Foul—(dirty ; unfair)

- He was playing a foul game.

Fowl—(a bird)

- Many people eat the meat of fowls.

66. Gage—(security ; pledge)

- I throw my ring as a gage.

Gaze—(to look attentively)

- His gaze was offensive.

67. Gait—(manner of walking)

- Her gait is so graceful.

Gate—(large door)

- Please lock the gate.

68. Goal—(aim)

- I have come to achieve my goal.

Gaol—(prison ; jail)

- The convict has been sent to the gaol.

69. Gild—(to apply a thin covering of gold)

- Ornaments are gilded here.

Guild—(society of men belonging to a particular profession)

- I have joined the guild of artisans.

70. Hail—(frozen rain)

- There was a hail storm.

Hale—(healthy)

- I am hale and hearty.

71. Hoard—(a store)

- He has a hoard of rice.

Horde—(a gang)

- A horde of robbers was seen in the valley.

72. Hart—(a male deer)

- Don't shoot the hart.

Heart—(an organ of the body)

- His heart beat is normal.

73. Ingenious—(clever)

- He is a very ingenious statesman.

Ingenuous—(frank and simple)

- I like her for her ingenuous nature.

74. Incite—(to provoke to anger)

- Don't incite him, please.

Insight—(a clear perception)

- He is a man of deep insight.

75. Jealous—(envious of another's advantages)

- I am not jealous of you.

Zealous—(enthusiastic)

- He is so zealous about the Olympic games.

76. Lightening—(making lighter, reducing)

- He has appealed to the High Court for lightening the sentence.

Lightning—(electric discharge or flash in clouds)

- There was fierce lightning and thundur.

- 77. Loath**—(unwilling)
 ● I would loath do it.
Loathe—(to dislike greatly)
 ● I loathe him for his untidy habits.
- 78. Loose**—(adjective, slack or relaxed)
 ● My shirt is very loose.
Lose—(to have no more, miss)
 ● I don't want to lose this chance.
- 79. Mead**—(meadow)
 ● Goats were grazing in the mead.
Meed—(reward)
 ● Contentment is the meed of honesty.
- 80. Metal**—(iron, brass, copper, etc.)
 ● No metal is used in making this chain.
Mettle—(spirit, courage)
 ● This is the test of your mettle.
- 81. Monetary**—(relating to money)
 ● We cannot go against our monetary system.
Monitary—(warning)
 ● I resent his monitary advice.
- 82. Moat**—(ditch around a castle)
 ● It is not easy to cross the moat.
Mote—(a dust particle)
 ● A mote fell into my eyes.
- 83. Maize**—(a rough grain)
 ● The bread is made of maize.
Maze—(labyrinth)
 ● We passed through a maze of rooms.
- 84. Minor**—(underage, lesser)
 ● He is still a minor.
Miner—(One who works in a mine)
 ● The life of a miner is very hard.
- 85. Meter**—(measuring instrument)
 ● Your meter is defective.
Metre—(of the verse)
 ● The metre of this poem is difficult.
- 86. Main**—(chief)
 ● Speak on the main point.
Mane—(long hair on an animal's neck)
 ● My horse's mane are long and golden.
- 87. Marshal**—(a military officer)
 ● The Marshal will inspect the parade today.
Martial—(warlike)
 ● He is skilled in all martial exercises.
- 88. Oar**—(is used for rowing a boat)
 ● Move both the oars together.
Ore—(the mineral from which metal can be extracted)
 ● Here is a stock of iron ore.
- 89. Ordinance**—(a rule made by the Government)
 ● The Governor has issued an ordinance.
Ordnance—(a gun factory)
 ● There is a famous ordnance depot.
- 90. Persecute**—(to harass or oppress)
 ● You cannot persecute any poor or weak man now.
Prosecute—(to bring before a court, to pursue)
 ● The police prosecuted the suspects.
- 91. Physic**—(medicine)
 ● No physic can cure a spiritual malady.
Physique—(body health)
 ● He enjoys good physique.
- 92. Prescribe**—(to give directions, to fix a course of studies)
 ● The doctor will prescribe some tonic for you.
Proscribe—(to prohibit)
 ● The Government is going to proscribe the publication of this book.
- 93. Practice**—(noun, use)
 ● I am out of practice these days.
Practise—(verb, to put in use)
 ● I practise law.
- 94. Precede**—(go before)
 ● One precedes two.
Proceed—(to go on)
 ● You can proceed further with your arguments.
- 95. Pray**—(offer prayer to God, entreat)
 ● Let us pray to God.

- Prey**—(hunt and kill ; game)
 ● One should not prey upon animals.
- 96. Principal**—(chief)
 ● He is the principal Secretary.
- Principle**—(a rule)
 ● I cannot go against my principles.
- 97. Prophecy**—(noun, something foretold)
 ● No prophecy can be wholly true.
- Prophecy**—(verb, to foretell)
 ● I prophesy that he will lose the case.
- 98. Proffer**—(offer)
 ● I have no proposal to proffer at the moment.
- Prefer**—(like more)
 ● I prefer loose trousers to the tight ones.
- 99. Pair**—(two of a thing)
 ● I have a pair of dogs.
- Pare**—(to trim ; to part)
 ● Pare your finger nails.
- 100. Plane**—(level, to smoothen)
 ● He would plane the ground for you.
- Plain**—(simple ; easy)
 ● It is a plain story.
- 101. Quite**—(altogether)
 ● This is quite wrong.
- Quiet**—(silent)
 ● Keep quiet in the class.
- 102. Rein**—(bridle, to drive and control the horse)
 ● Pull the reins of the horse.
- Reign**—(rule)
 ● The king reigns in Nepal.
- 103. Rite**—(ceremony)
 ● This is a very old religious rite.
- Write**—(compose)
 ● We write an essay.
- 104. Rest**—(peace ; respite)
 ● We can have full rest here.
- Wrest**—(snatch by force)
 ● Who can wrest my sword from my hand ?
- 105. Route**—(course)
 ● There is no direct route from here to Kanpur.
- Rout**—(put to flight)
 ● The robbers were soon put to rout.
- 106. Spacious**—(having enough room or space)
 ● We have a spacious building.
- Specious**—(outwardly pleasing or attractive)
 ● They have made specious decorations.
- 107. Stationary**—(fixed)
 ● The sun is stationary.
- Stationery**—(writing material)
 ● He deals in stationery.
- 108. Straight**—(opposed to curved)
 ● Draw a straight line.
- Strait**—(narrow)
 ● The ship has to pass through a strait.
- 109. Sore**—(painful)
 ● I have a sore wound.
- Soar**—(to fly high)
 ● The eagle soars very high.
- 110. Story**—(a tale)
 ● Tell me a story.
- Storey**—(floor of a building)
 ● We live on the second storey of the building.
- 111. Suit**—(set of clothes, an action in a law court)
 ● He has filed a suit against me.
- Suite**—(retinue, a set of rooms)
 ● There are four suites in this Guest House.
- 112. Serge**—(a kind of cloth)
 ● The suit is made of blue serge.
- Surge**—(move as in waves)
 ● The sea is rising in high surge.
- 113. Shear**—(to clip the wool of sheep)
 ● We shear the sheep in summer.
- Sheer**—(downright)
 ● This is sheer madness.
- 114. Team**—(a party of players)
 ● We have a good football team.
- Teem**—(to abound in ; to be full of)
 ● The locality teems with mosquitos.

115. Umpire—(a referee)

- The umpire is absolutely impartial.

Empire—(dominion)

- The British Empire has still a Queen.

116. Vain—(useless ; proud)

- All your efforts are going vain.

Vein—(a blood vessel)

- The injection was given in the vein.

117. Vane—(weather-cock)

- Fix the vane on the front wall.

Wane—(to decrease)

- The moon is on the wane.

118. Veracity—(truthfulness)

- I cannot testify the veracity of his statement.

Voracity—(greediness)

- He has insatiable voracity for gold.

119. Vale—(valley)

- There is a cottage in the vale.

Wail—(to weep)

- The child is wailing.

120. Waive—(forgo)

- I cannot waive any condition.

Wave—(water currents in seas or rivers)

- High waves are rising in the sea.

121. Yolk—(the yellow portion of the egg)

- The yolk of the egg is nutritious.

Yoke—(bondage ; wooden structure put on a bullock's neck)

- They work under the yoke of slavery.