

What is the Difference Between

Homonyms, Homophones and Homographs? (Part 2)

Now that we've looked at the origins of the words homonym, homophone and homograph, let's look at the differences between them in detail.

HOMONYMS are words that:

- **sound the same**
- **have different meanings**

Here is an example:

SEA
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The two words above sound the same but they do not mean the same thing. The first word means the huge body of water we sail across in a ship, the second is what you do with your eyes.

Let's try another:

ROSE (flower)
ROSE (past tense of "rise")

As in the first example, these two words sound the same and mean something different, but notice that they are also spelt the same. They are still a type homonym though, just like the first pair.

So, you can see that although homonyms sound the same when we say them aloud, some are spelt the same way and some are spelt differently.



Remember: *Homonyms sound the same but mean something different. The spelling doesn't matter.*

HOMOPHONES are words which are **a type of homonym**. So you could say, "A homophone is a homonym," or "All homophones are homonyms."

Like homonyms, **homophones**:

- **sound the same**
- **have different meanings**

Unlike homonyms, **homophones**:

- **always** have different spellings

(Homonyms **sometimes** have different spellings.)

Here is an example of a pair of homophones:

SEA
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Did you notice they're the same words as in the first example?

Well, that's because as we just learnt, homophones are a kind of homonym.

They sound the same when we say them out loud but we know they're not the same when we see them written down because they're spelt differently.



Remember: Homophones sound the same but mean something different, and they are spelt differently.

HOMOGRAPHS are words that:

- **are spelt the same**
- **have different meanings**
- **sometimes sound the same**

Here is an example:

MINUTE (meaning tiny)

MINUTE (meaning sixty seconds)

As you can see, minute and minute are spelt the same but they mean something completely different.

Also, **they don't sound the same**, which means that although they are homographs, this pair of words are not homonyms.

But take a look at these:

ROSE (flower)

ROSE (past tense of "rise")

Do you remember these words from earlier? They were examples of homonyms. They are also homographs, because they are spelt the same but have different meanings.

So, you could say, "Some homographs are homonyms but others are not," or, "**Not all homographs are homonyms.**"



Remember: *Homographs mean something different but they are spelt the same. They do not have to sound the same.*