

By learning and practicing vocabulary strategies, you'll know what to do when you encounter unfamiliar words while reading. You'll also know how to refine the words you use for different situations—personal, school, and work. Learning basic spelling rules and checking your spelling in a dictionary will help you spell words that you may not use frequently.



Included in this handbook:
TEKS 2, 2A–E

1 Using Context Clues

The context of a word is made up of the punctuation marks, words, sentences, and paragraphs that surround the word. A word's context can give you important clues about its meaning.

1.1 GENERAL CONTEXT

Sometimes you need to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar, ambiguous, or novel word by reading all the information in a passage.

Stop teasing me! Just because you are a better tennis player than I am doesn't mean you should belittle my abilities.

You can figure out from the context that *belittle* means “make something less than it is.”

1.2 IDIOMS, SLANG, AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

An **idiom** is an expression whose overall meaning differs from the meaning of the individual words.

A nasty case of the flu kept me under the weather. (Under the weather means “tired and sickly.”)

Slang is informal language in which made-up words and ordinary words are used to mean something different from their meanings in formal English.

I'm going to jazz up this salad with some walnuts. (Jazz up means “make more interesting.”)

Figurative language is language that communicates meaning beyond the literal meaning of the words.

The lone desert monument was like a sentinel standing guard. (Lone and standing guard help describe a sentinel.)

1.3 SPECIFIC CONTEXT CLUES

Sometimes writers help you understand the meanings of unfamiliar, ambiguous, or novel words by providing specific clues such as those shown in the chart.

Specific Context Clues		
Type of Clue	Key Words/ Phrases	Example
Definition or restatement of the meaning of the word	or, which is, that is, in other words, also known as, also called	Olympic gymnasts are very limber , or flexible .
Example following an unfamiliar word	such as, like, as if, for example, especially, including	We collected <i>kindling</i> , such as dry twigs and branches , to start the fire.
Comparison with a more familiar word or concept	as, like, also, similar to, in the same way, likewise	Kari's face was <i>luminous</i> , like the rays of the sun .
Contrast with a familiar word or experience	unlike, but, however, although, on the other hand, on the contrary	The summer was <i>sultry</i> , but the fall was dry and cool .
Cause-and-effect relationship in which one term is familiar	because, since, when, consequently, as a result, therefore	When the <i>tree fell across the road</i> , it obstructed traffic.

For more information, see **Vocabulary Strategy: Context Clues**, pages 134 and 898, **Vocabulary Strategy: Similes**, pages 188 and 850, **Vocabulary Strategy: Synonyms as Context Clues**, page 280, **Vocabulary Strategy: Idioms**, page 337.

2 Analyzing Word Structure

Many words can be broken into smaller parts. These word parts include base words, roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

2.1 BASE WORDS

A **base word** is a word part that by itself is also a word. Other words or word parts can be added to base words to form new words.

2.2 ROOTS

A **root** is a word part that contains the core meaning of the word. Many English words contain roots that come from older languages such as Greek, Latin, Old English (Anglo-Saxon), and Norse. Knowing the meaning of the word's root can help you determine the word's meaning.

Root	Meaning	Example
<i>aud</i> (Latin)	hear	audio, audition
<i>voc</i> (Latin)	voice	vocal, invoke
<i>mem, ment</i> (Latin)	mind	memory, mental, mention
<i>chron</i> (Greek)	time	chronic, synchronize
<i>gram</i> (Greek)	something written	telegram, grammar
<i>gen</i> (Greek)	race, family	genesis, genre, genius
<i>angr</i> (Old Norse)	painfully constricted, sorrow	anger, anguish

For more information, see *Vocabulary Strategy: Word Roots*, pages 651, 737, 943, 998, and 1012.

2.3 PREFIXES

A **prefix** is a word part attached to the beginning of a word or word root. Most prefixes come from Greek, Latin, or Old English.

Prefix	Meaning	Example
mid-	middle, center	midnight
pro-	forward	proceed, procession
uni-	one	uniform, unicycle
tele-	view	telescope
multi-	many, much	multimedia, multivitamins

For more information, see *Vocabulary Strategy: Prefixes*, pages 64, 244, and 428.

2.4 SUFFIXES

A **suffix** is a word part that appears at the end of a root or base word to form a new word. Some suffixes do not change word meaning. These suffixes are

- added to nouns to change the number of persons or objects
- added to verbs to change the tense
- added to modifiers to change the degree of comparison

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-s, -es	to change the number of a noun	lock + s = locks
-d, -ed, -ing	to change verb tense	stew + ed = stewed
-er, -est	to indicate comparison in modifiers	mild + er = milder soft + est = softest

Other suffixes can be added to the root or base to change the word's meaning. These suffixes can also determine a word's part of speech.

Suffix	Meaning	Example
-age	amount	footage
-able, -ible	able, inclined to	readable, tangible
-ant, -ent	a specific state or condition	pleasant, different

For more information, see *Vocabulary Strategy: Suffixes that Form Nouns*, page 78, *Vocabulary Strategy: Suffixes that Form Adjectives*, page 932.

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Strategies for Understanding Unfamiliar Words

- Look for any prefixes or suffixes. Remove them so that you can concentrate on the base word or the root.
- See if you recognize any elements—prefix, suffix, root, or base—of the word. You may be able to guess its meaning by analyzing one or two elements.
- Think about the way the word is used in the sentence. Use the context and the word parts to make a logical guess about the word’s meaning.
- Look in a dictionary to see whether you are correct.

3 Understanding Word Origins

3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

During the past 2,000 years or so, English has developed from a language spoken by a few Germanic tribes into a language that is more widely spoken and written than any other in the world. Some experts, in fact, call today’s English the first truly global language. Its most valuable characteristic is its ability to change and grow, adopting new words as the need arises. The history of the English language can be divided into three main periods.

Old English About the year A.D. 449, Germanic people who lived on the European continent along the North Sea began a series of invasions into Britain. At that time, Britain was inhabited by the Celts, whose native language was Gaelic. Over a period of years, the raiders conquered and settled in Britain. The conquerors, known today as the Anglo-Saxons, prospered in Britain. In time, Britain became “Engla land,” and the Anglo-Saxon languages evolved into “Englisc,” or what modern scholars call Old English.

Old English was very different from the English we speak today. It was harsher in sound, had no silent letters, and was written phonetically. Few examples of Old English remain in our current English vocabulary. Those that do exist, however, are common words for people, places, things, and actions.

man (<i>mann</i>)	wife (<i>wif</i>)	child (<i>cild</i>)
house (<i>hus</i>)	meat (<i>mete</i>)	drink (<i>drincan</i>)
sleep (<i>slæpan</i>)	live (<i>libban</i>)	fight (<i>feohtan</i>)

In the sixth and seventh centuries, missionaries from Rome and other Christian cities arrived in England, bringing with them their knowledge of religion and ancient languages. Among the most influential figures was St. Augustine, who converted thousands of Anglo-Saxons, including a king, to Christianity. As the Anglo-Saxons accepted this faith, they also accepted words from Latin and Greek.

Latin	Greek
candle	alphabet
cup	angel
priest	box
noon	demon
scripture	school

During the late 8th century, Viking invaders from Denmark and Norway settled in northeast England. As a result, Scandinavian words became part of Old English.

sky	knife	are
steak	leg	birth
they	skin	seat
window	them	their

Middle English The Norman Conquest brought great changes to England and its language. In 1066, England was defeated by the Normans, a people from an area in France. Their leader, William the Conqueror, staged a successful invasion of England and became the nation’s new monarch. With William on the throne of England, Norman French became the language of the English court, government business, nobility, and scholars. Eventually, French words were adopted in everyday vocabulary as well.

The language that evolved is called Middle English. Middle English was not as harsh-sounding as Old English and borrowed many words from Norman French.

attorney	joint	mallet
baron	jolly	marriage
chivalry	laundry	merchandise
gown	lodge	petty

Norman French itself borrowed thousands of words from Latin and Greek, as well as from ancient Indian and Semitic languages. Consequently, Middle English also contained many of these foreign terms.

Latin	Greek	Indian	Semitic
language	circle	ginger	camel
library	hour	jungle	cinnamon
money	lantern	orange	coffee
serpent	leopard	sugar	lion
square	magnet	pepper	syrop

Modern English By the late 1400s, Middle English began to develop into Modern English. The various pronunciations, word forms, and spellings common to Middle English were becoming more uniform. One invention that aided this process was the printing press. Introduced to London around 1476, the printing press allowed printers to standardize the spellings of common English words. As a result, readers and writers of English became accustomed to following “rules” of spelling and grammar.

During this period, the English vocabulary also continued to grow as new ideas and discoveries demanded new words. As the English began to colonize and trade with other areas of the world, they borrowed foreign words. In time, the English vocabulary grew to include words from diverse languages, such as French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Chinese. Many of these words stayed the way they were in their original languages.

French	Dutch	Spanish	Italian
ballet	boss	canyon	diva
beret	caboose	rodeo	carnival
mirage	dock	taco	spaghetti
vague	skate	tornado	studio

Portuguese	Chinese	Japanese	Native American
cashew	chow	kamikaze	caribou
mango	ginseng	karaoke	moccasin
jaguar	kung fu	sushi	papoose
yam	kow tow	tsunami	tomahawk

Today, the English language is still changing and absorbing new words. It is considered the international language of science and technology. It is also widely used in business and politics.

For more information, see **Vocabulary Strategy: Foreign Words in English**, pages 48 and 750.

3.2 DICTIONARY AS A SOURCE OF WORD ORIGINS

Many dictionary entries provide information about a word's origin. This information often comes at the end of an entry, as in this example.

ge·om·e·try (jē-ŏm'ī-trē) *n., pl. -tries* **1.** The mathematics of the properties, measurement, and relationships of points, lines, angles, surfaces, and solids. **2.** Arrangement. **3.** A physical arrangement suggesting geometric forms or lines. [from Greek *geōmetriā*, from *geōmetrein*, to measure land].

3.3 WORD FAMILIES

Words that have the same root make up a word family and have related meanings. The charts below show some common Greek and Latin roots. Notice how the meanings of the example words are related to the meanings of their roots.

Latin Root	<i>circum</i> , around or about
English	circumference the boundary line of a circle circumnavigation the act of moving completely around circumstance a condition or fact surrounding an event
Greek Root	<i>monos</i> , single or alone
English	monopoly exclusive control by one group monologue a speech delivered by one person monotonous sounded or spoken in a single unvarying tone
French Root	<i>caval</i> , a horse
English	calvary troops trained to fight on horseback cavalcade a procession of riders or horse-drawn carriages

TIP Once you recognize a root in one English word, you will notice the same root in other words. Because these words develop from the same root, all words in the word family are similar in meaning.

For more information, see *Vocabulary Strategy: Researching Word Origins*, page 909.

4 Synonyms and Antonyms

4.1 SYNONYMS

Positive	Negative
slender	scrawny
thrifty	cheap
young	immature

A **synonym** is a word with a meaning similar to that of another word. You can find synonyms in a thesaurus or a dictionary. In a dictionary, synonyms are often given as part of the definition of the word. The following word pairs are synonyms:

satisfy/please occasionally/sometimes
rob/steal schedule/agenda

For more information, see *Vocabulary Strategy: Synonyms as Context Clues*, page 280.

4.2 ANTONYMS

An **antonym** is a word with a meaning opposite that of another word. The following word pairs are antonyms:

accurate/incorrect similar/different
fresh/stale unusual/ordinary

For more information, see *Vocabulary Strategy: Antonyms and Context Clues*, page 1029.

5 Denotation and Connotation

5.1 DENOTATION

A word's dictionary meaning is called its **denotation**. For example, the denotation of the word *thin* is "having little flesh; spare; lean."

5.2 CONNOTATION

The images or feelings you connect to a word add a finer shade of meaning, called **connotation**. The connotation of a word goes beyond its basic dictionary definition. Writers use connotations of words to communicate positive or negative feelings.

Make sure you understand the denotation and connotation of a word when you read it or use it in your writing.

For more information, see **Vocabulary Strategy: Denotations and Connotations**, pages 715 and 923.

6 Analogies

An **analogy** is a relationship between pairs of words. In an analogy question on a test, the words in one pair relate to each other the same way as the words in a second pair, one of which you have to choose. To complete an analogy, identify the relationship between the words in the first pair. Then choose the word that will cause the words in the second pair to relate to the other in the same way.

Analogies are often written as follows—

cheap : expensive :: humid : dry

If the analogy is read out loud, you would say, “cheap is to expensive as humid is to dry.”

There are various ways the word pairs in an analogy can be related.

- Words can be related because they are opposites, or antonyms, as in the example above.
- Words can be related because they are similar, or synonyms.

tired : exhausted :: talkative : chatty

- Words can be related by function. If the first pair of words contains a noun and its function, the second pair should also.

helmet : protection :: lamp : illumination

- Words can be related by description. If the first pair or words contains a noun and a word that describes it, the second pair should also.

rain : wet :: lettuce : green

For more information, see **Vocabulary Strategy: Analogies**, pages 260 and 802.

7 Homonyms, Homographs, and Homophones

7.1 HOMONYMS

Homonyms are words that have the same spelling and sound but have different meanings.

*The snake **shed** its skin in the **shed** behind the house.*

Shed can mean “to lose by natural process,” but an identically spelled word means “a small structure.”

Sometimes only one of the meanings of a homonym may be familiar to you. Use context clues to help you figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

7.2 HOMOGRAPHS

Homographs are words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and origins. Some are also pronounced differently, as in these examples.

*Please **close** the door. (clōz)*

*That was a **close** call. (clōs)*

If you see a word used in a way that is unfamiliar to you, check a dictionary to see if it is a homograph.

For more information, see **Vocabulary Strategy: Homographs**, page 368.

7.3 HOMOPHONES

Homophones are words that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings. The following homophones are frequently misused:

it’s/its they’re/their/there

to/too/two stationary/stationery

Many misused homophones are pronouns and contractions. Whenever you are unsure whether to write *your* or *you’re* and *who’s* or *whose*, ask yourself if you mean *you are* and *who is/has*. If you do, write the contraction. For other homophones, such as *fair* and *fare*, use the meaning of the word to help you decide which one to use.

8 Words with Multiple Meanings

Some words have acquired additional meanings over time that are based on the original meaning.

*I had to be replaced in the **cast** of the play because of the **cast** on my arm.*

These two uses of *cast* have different meanings, but both of them have the same origin. You will find all the meanings of *cast* listed in one entry in the dictionary.

For more information, see **Vocabulary Strategy: Multiple-Meaning Words**, page 289.

9 Specialized Vocabulary

Specialized vocabulary is special terms suited to a particular field of study or work. For example, science, mathematics, and history all have their own technical or specialized vocabularies. To figure out specialized terms, you can use context clues and reference sources, such as dictionaries on specific subjects, atlases, or manuals.

For more information, see **Vocabulary Strategy: Specialized Vocabulary**, page 228.

10 Using Reference Sources

10.1 DICTIONARIES

A **general dictionary** will tell you not only a word's definitions but also its pronunciation, parts of speech, and history and origin, or etymology.

- 1** **tan-gi-ble** (tăn'jə-bəl) *adj.*
- 1a.** Discernible by the touch; palpable. **b.** Possible to touch.
c. Possible to be treated as fact; real or concrete. **2.** Possible to understand or realize. **3.** Law that can be valued monetarily [Late Latin *tangibilis*, from Latin *tangere*, to touch] **5**
- 1** Entry word
2 Pronunciation
3 Part of speech
4 Definitions
5 Etymology

A **specialized dictionary** focuses on terms related to a particular field of study or work. Use a dictionary to check the spelling of any word you are unsure of in your English class and other classes as well.

For more information, see **Vocabulary Strategy: Using Reference Aids**, pages 89 and 485.

10.2 THESAURI

A **thesaurus** (plural, *thesauri*) is a dictionary of synonyms. A thesaurus can be especially helpful when you find yourself using the same modifiers over and over again.

10.3 SYNONYM FINDERS

A **synonym finder** is often included in word-processing software. It enables you to highlight a word and be shown a display of its synonyms.

10.4 GLOSSARIES

A **glossary** is a list of specialized terms and their definitions. It is often found in the back of a book and sometimes includes pronunciations. Many textbooks contain glossaries. In fact, this textbook has three glossaries: the **Glossary of Literary Terms**, the **Glossary of Reading & Informational Terms**, and the **Glossary of Vocabulary in English & Spanish**. Use these glossaries to help you understand how terms are used in this textbook.

11 Spelling Rules

11.1 WORDS ENDING IN A SILENT E

Before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel or *y* to a word ending in a silent *e*, drop the *e* (with some exceptions).

- amaze + -ing = amazing
love + -able = lovable
create + -ed = created
nerve + -ous = nervous

Exceptions: *change* + -able = *changeable*;
courage + -ous = *courageous*

When adding a suffix beginning with a consonant to a word ending in a silent *e*, keep the *e* (with some exceptions).

- late + -ly = lately
spite + -ful = spiteful
noise + -less = noiseless
state + -ment = statement

Exceptions: *truly*, *argument*, *ninth*, *wholly*, *awful*, and others

When a suffix beginning with **a** or **o** is added to a word with a final silent **e**, the final **e** is usually retained if it is preceded by a soft **c** or a soft **g**.

bridge + -able = bridgeable
peace + -able = peaceable
outrage + -ous = outrageous
advantage + -ous = advantageous

When a suffix beginning with a vowel is added to words ending in **ee** or **oe**, the final silent **e** is retained.

agree + -ing = agreeing **free + -ing = freeing**
hoe + -ing = hoeing **see + -ing = seeing**

11.2 WORDS ENDING IN Y

Before adding most suffixes to a word that ends in **y** preceded by a consonant, change the **y** to **i**.

easy + -est = easiest
crazy + -est = craziest
silly + -ness = silliness
marry + -age = marriage

Exceptions: *dryness, shyness, and slyness*

However, when you add **-ing**, the **y** does not change.

empty + -ed = emptied but
empty + -ing = emptying

When adding a suffix to a word that ends in **y** preceded by a vowel, the **y** usually does not change.

play + -er = player
employ + -ed = employed
coy + -ness = coyness
pay + -able = payable

11.3 WORDS ENDING IN A CONSONANT

In one-syllable words that end in one consonant preceded by one short vowel, double the final consonant before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel, such as **-ed** or **-ing**. These are sometimes called 1+1+1 words.

dip + -ed = dipped **set + -ing = setting**
slim + -est = slimmest **fit + -er = fitter**

The rule does not apply to words of one syllable that end in a consonant preceded by two vowels.

feel + -ing = feeling **peel + -ed = peeled**
reap + -ed = reaped **loot + -ed = looted**

In words of more than one syllable, double the final consonant when (1) the word ends with one consonant preceded by one vowel and (2) when the word is accented on the last syllable.

be•gin' per•mit' re•fer'

In the following examples, note that in the new words formed with suffixes, the accent remains on the same syllable:

be•gin' + -ing = be•gin'ning = beginning
per•mit' + -ed = per•mit'ted = permitted

Exceptions: In some words with more than one syllable, though the accent remains on the same syllable when a suffix is added, the final consonant is nevertheless not doubled, as in the following examples:

tra'vel + er = tra'vel•er = traveler
mar'ket + er = mar'ket•er = marketer

In the following examples, the accent does not remain on the same syllable; thus, the final consonant is not doubled:

re•fer' + -ence = ref'er•ence = reference
con•fer' + -ence = con'fer•ence = conference

11.4 PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES

When adding a prefix to a word, do not change the spelling of the base word. When a prefix creates a double letter, keep both letters.

dis- + approve = disapprove
re- + build = rebuild
ir- + regular = irregular
mis- + spell = misspell
anti- + trust = antitrust
il- + logical = illogical

When adding **-ly** to a word ending in **l**, keep both **l**'s. When adding **-ness** to a word ending in **n**, keep both **n**'s.

careful + -ly = carefully
sudden + -ness = suddenness
final + -ly = finally
thin + -ness = thinness

11.5 FORMING PLURAL NOUNS

To form the plural of most nouns, just add *-s*.

prizes dreams circles stations

For most singular nouns ending in *o*, add *-s*.

solos halos studios photos pianos

For a few nouns ending in *o*, add *-es*.

heroes tomatoes potatoes echoes

When the singular noun ends in *s*, *sh*, *ch*, *x*, or *z*, add *-es*.

waitresses brushes ditches
axes buzzes

When a singular noun ends in *y* with a consonant before it, change the *y* to *i* and add *-es*.

army—armies candy—candies
baby—babies diary—diaries
ferry—ferries conspiracy—conspiracies

When a vowel (*a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*) comes before the *y*, just add *-s*.

boy—boys way—ways
array—arrays alloy—alloys
weekday—weekdays jockey—jockeys

For most nouns ending in *f* or *fe*, change the *f* to *v* and add *-es* or *-s*.

life—lives calf—calves knife—knives
thief—thieves shelf—shelves loaf—loaves

For some nouns ending in *f*, add *-s* to make the plural.

roofs chiefs reefs beliefs

Some nouns have the same form for both singular and plural.

deer sheep moose salmon trout

For some nouns, the plural is formed in a special way.

man—men goose—geese
ox—oxen woman—women
mouse—mice child—children

For a compound noun written as one word, form the plural by changing the last word in the compound to its plural form.

stepchild—stepchildren firefly—fireflies

If a compound noun is written as a hyphenated word or as two separate words, change the most important word to the plural form.

brother-in-law—brothers-in-law
life jacket—life jackets

11.6 FORMING POSSESSIVES

If a noun is singular, add *'s*.

mother—my mother's car Ross—Ross's desk

Exceptions: The *s* after the apostrophe is dropped after *Jesus'*, *Moses'*, and certain names in classical mythology (*Zeus'*). These possessive forms can thus be pronounced easily.

If a noun is plural and ends with *s*, just add an apostrophe.

parents—my parents' car
the Santinis—the Santinis' house

If a noun is plural but does not end in *s*, add *'s*.

people—the people's choice
women—the women's coats

11.7 SPECIAL SPELLING PROBLEMS

Only one English word ends in *-sede*: *supersede*.

Three words end in *-ceed*: *exceed*, *proceed*, and *succeed*. All other verbs ending in the sound “seed” are spelled with *-cede*.

concede precede recede secede

In words with *ie* or *ei*, when the sound is long *e* (as in *she*), the word is spelled *ie* except after *c* (with some exceptions).

i before *e* thief relieve field
piece grieve pier
except after *c* conceit perceive ceiling
receive receipt

Exceptions: either neither weird
leisure seize

12 Commonly Confused Words

WORDS	DEFINITIONS	EXAMPLES
accept/except	The verb accept means “to receive or believe.” Except is usually a preposition meaning “excluding.”	Did the teacher accept your report? Everyone smiled for the photographer except Jody.
advice/advise	Advise is a verb. Advice is a noun naming that which an adviser gives.	I advise you to take that job. Whom should I ask for advice ?
affect/effect	As a verb, affect means “to influence.” Effect as a verb means “to cause.” If you want a noun, you will almost always want effect .	How deeply did the news affect him? The students tried to effect a change in school policy. What effect did the acidic soil produce in the plants?
all ready/already	All ready is an adjective meaning “fully ready.” Already is an adverb meaning “before or by this time.”	He was all ready to go at noon. I have already seen that movie.
desert/dessert	Desert (dĕz'ərt) means “a dry, sandy, barren region.” Desert (dĭ-zûrt') means “to abandon.” Dessert (dĭ-zûrt') is a sweet, such as cake.	The Sahara, in North Africa, is the world's largest desert . The night guard did not desert his post. Alison's favorite dessert is chocolate cake.
among/between	Between is used when you are speaking of only two things. Among is used for three or more.	Between ice cream and sherbet, I prefer the latter. Gary Soto is among my favorite authors.
bring/take	Bring is used to denote motion toward a speaker or place. Take is used to denote motion away from such a person or place.	Bring the books over here, and I will take them to the library.
fewer/less	Fewer refers to the number of separate, countable units. Less refers to bulk quantity.	We have less literature and fewer selections in this year's curriculum.
leave/let	Leave means “to allow something to remain behind.” Let means “to permit.”	The librarian will leave some books on display but will not let us borrow any.
lie/lay	To lie is “to rest or recline.” It does not take an object. Lay always takes an object.	Rover loves to lie in the sun. We always lay some bones next to him.
loose/lose	Loose (loōs) means “free, not restrained”; lose (loōz) means “to misplace or fail to find.”	Who turned the horses loose ? I hope we won't lose any of them.
passed/past	Passed is the past tense of pass and means “went by.” Past is an adjective that means “of a former time.” Past is also a noun that means “time gone by.”	We passed through the Florida Keys during our vacation. My past experiences have taught me to set my alarm. Ebenezer Scrooge is a character who relives his past .
than/then	Use than in making comparisons. Use then on all other occasions.	Ramon is stronger than Mark. Cut the grass and then trim the hedges.
two/too/to	Two is a number. Too is an adverb meaning “also” or “very.” Use to before a verb or as a preposition.	Meg had to go to town, too . We had too much reading to do. Two chapters is too many.
their/there/they're	Their means “belonging to them.” There means “in that place.” They're is the contraction for “they are.”	There is a movie playing at 9 P.M. They're going to see it with me. Sakara and Jessica drove away in their car after the movie.