# Homonyms, Homophones, and Homographs\*

**Homonyms** are words that have the same spelling and pronunciation but have different meanings. For instance, rose (which refers to a kind of flower) and rose (which is the past form of rise) are spelled and pronounced the same way.

Examples:

brief (short span of time) and brief (men’s underwear)

bright (opposite of dark) and bright (smart)

stalk (to harass by following) and stalk (part of a plant)

**Homophones** on the other hand are words which have the same pronunciation regardless of their spelling. If the spelling of the homophones are also the same, they are at the same time homonyms and homographs. For example, miss (failure to hit something) and miss (the state of loneliness when a loved one is away) are homonyms (because of the same spelling and pronunciation) and at the same time, homophones (same sound) and homographs (same spelling). However, *to*, *two*, and *too* are all pronounced the same way but have different spellings. They are NOT homonyms, but they are homophones. Homophones which have different spellings are heterographs.

Examples:

book (something we read) and book (to reserve) are *homophones*, *homonyms* and *homographs*

principle and principal are *homophones*

they’re , there and there are *homophones*

**Homographs** are words which have the same spelling no matter how they are pronounced. If homographs are pronounced the same, they are also homophones. The first given example ‘rose’ (noun) and ‘rose’ (verb) are homographs, homonyms and at the same time homophones. If the homographs are pronounced differently, they are called heteronyms. An example of this is bow (weapon used with arrows) and bow (to bend). They have the same spelling, but they differ when it comes to pronunciation.

Examples:

bass (type of fish) and bass (low voice) are *homographs*, *homonyms* and *homophones*

minute (tiny) and minute (measure of time) are *homographs*

wound (past form of wind) and wound (injury) are *homographs*, *homonyms* and *homophones*