



There, Their and They're: Untangling Year 2's Trickiest Homophones

A gentle guide to help your child understand the difference between 'there', 'their' and 'they're' using simple, playful tricks.

What are these words?

In Year 2 (children aged 6 or 7), children learn about homophones. These are words that sound exactly the same when we say them, but have different meanings and different spellings. 'There', 'their' and 'they're' are some of the trickiest homophones because they sound identical but do very different jobs in a sentence. 'There' usually refers to a place, 'their' shows that something belongs to people, and 'they're' is a short way of saying 'they are'. Because they sound the same, it is very common for children to swap them around while they are focusing on the ideas they want to write down.

Why do they get muddled?

It is completely normal for children to mix these words up, even after they have been told the rules. This happens because writing requires a lot of 'brain power'. A child in Key Stage 1 (the first stage of primary school, covering Reception to Year 2) is often concentrating on their story, their punctuation, and their handwriting all at once. When they hear the sound of the word in their head, they might simply pick the first version of the word that comes to mind. It isn't usually a lack of effort, but rather a natural part of how children develop their writing skills.

Understanding the mix-up

To help, it is useful to see which specific words your child is confusing, as each mix-up has a different fix. If they use 'there' for everything, they might just need a reminder that 'their' is for people. If they struggle with 'they're', they might not yet realise it is a contraction—which is when two words are joined together using an apostrophe (the little floating comma) to replace a letter. Every child learns at a different pace, including those with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) or those learning English as an additional language. If you are unsure how your child is progressing, your child's class teacher is the best person to ask.

Playful ways to help at home

You don't need to do formal drilling or worksheets. Instead, try these short, everyday tricks. For 'they're', ask your child to say the sentence out loud using 'they are'. If it still makes sense, then 'they're' is the right choice. For 'their', point out that it contains the word 'heir' (someone who inherits something), which links it to owning things. For 'there', notice that it has the word 'here' inside it, which helps link it to a place. You could play a quick game while walking to school, spotting things and saying, 'Their bag is red' or 'The shop is over there!'.

Common questions

Parents often ask if they should correct every single mistake. The most important thing is that your child feels confident and excited about writing. Rather than correcting every word, you might pick one 'word of the week' to focus on. You may also wonder if this is part of the National Curriculum (the official map of



what children should learn in state schools). Yes, spelling and grammar are key parts of the Year 2 English curriculum. However, remember that every school teaches these in their own way, so it is always a good idea to check with the school to see which specific methods they use in class.

Sources

- Department for Education, National Curriculum in England: English programmes of study
- GOV.UK, National Curriculum