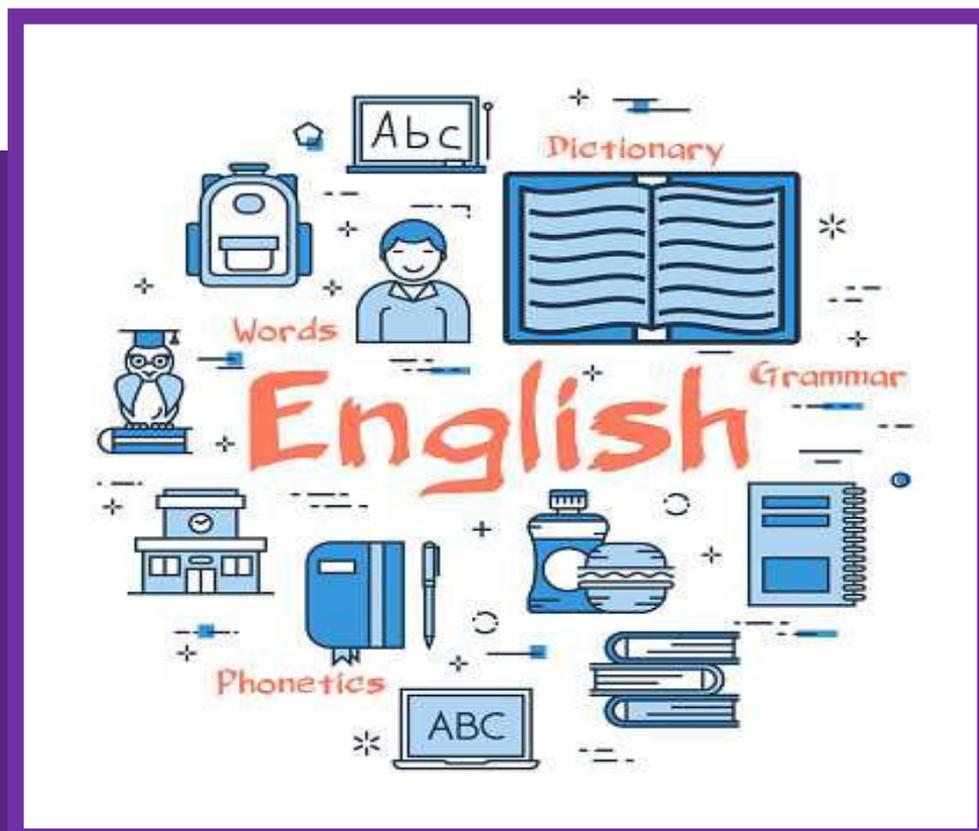




BLOOMSBURY INTERNATIONAL

Homophones, Homonyms and Homographs

Words that sound the same but have different meanings, and how to say “Hello” and “Goodbye” in English.



Homophones, Homonyms and Homographs

Have you ever been confused about a word that looks like another word or sounds like another word but has a different meaning?

If the answer is YES, then try reading this sentence out loud. Did you notice anything strange?

“This mourning eye went too sea to friends. Won has long hare and the other won’s had there hare died blue.”

Well, if you say the sentence out loud, the sentence seems to make sense, but if you look at it in detail it is incorrect. This is because the sentence is full of words that have the same pronunciation of the words that should be there.

E.g.: eye=l

Can you find the others? Clue: There are 11 mistakes in total.

Words that have the SAME PRONUNCIATION but a DIFFERENT MEANING and SPELLING are called homophones.



Some examples are:

To, too, Two /tu:/

There, their, they’re /ðε:/

Homophones are very common in English and you can find a full list here: singularis.ltd.uk

- Can (n) = a metal container for drinks like “a can of Coke”.
- Gum (n)= short for chewing gum or bubble gum
- Gum (n)= the soft pink flesh above your teeth

These types of words are called homonyms.

You can find a comprehensive list of homonyms here: english-for-students.com

Now, there is a third category of words called homographs. These are words that have THE SAME SPELLING but have DIFFERENT PRONUNCIATION and MEANING, depending on the context.

E.g.:

➤ object (N) /'ɒbdʒekt/= a thing that can be seen and touched.

There are many objects on the shelf.

➤ object (V) /əb'dʒekt/= say something to express one's opposition to or disagreement with something

"We all wanted to have pizza, but my parents objected."

➤ Polish (adj) /'pɒlɪʃ/= relating to Poland, its inhabitants, or their language.

"Have you ever tried Polish food?"



Polish Sour Soup

➤ Polish (v) /'pɒlɪʃ/= to make the surface of (something) smooth and shiny by rubbing it.

"I need to polish the table. It's looking a bit dull."

➤ Bow (V) /baʊ/ = to bend the head or upper part of the body as a sign of respect or greeting.

My teacher bowed to the [Queen](#) when he met her.

➤ Bow (n) / bəʊ/= a knot tied with two loops and two loose ends, used especially for tying shoelaces and decorative ribbons.

"I've never learned how to tie a bow in my shoelaces. I just knot them."

➤ Bow (n) / bæʊ/= a weapon for shooting arrows, typically made of a curved piece of wood joined at both ends by a string.

“Robin Hood used a bow and arrow.”

A full list of homographs can be found here: [List of English homographs.](#)

So to summarise, here is a table that will help you understand the key differences:

	Meaning	Spelling	Pronunciation	Example
Homophones	x	x	✓	I/eye
Homonyms	x	✓	✓	Gum/gum
Homographs	x	✓	x	Object/object

Angry Friend Quiz

Select the correct word for each of the remarks listed below.

Wear/Where were you yesterday?

1. Who were you **meating/meeting**?
2. I saw **poor /pour** John waiting,
3. Out there in the **reign/rain**.
4. I **know/no** you were busy,
5. And had not much **time/thyme**,
6. **Sow/So** now I'm going to give you
7. A **peace/piece** of my mind!
8. **Bye/by/buy**!



Answers

1. where, 2. meeting, 3. poor, 4. rain, 5. know, 6. time, 7. so, 8. peace, 9. bye

How to Say “Hello” and “Goodbye” in English

The first time you meet someone it's polite to greet them. The way you greet someone depends on the situation and the relationship you have with the person. There are two types of greetings: **formal** and **informal**, and we will be looking at them in detail.

Greetings		Goodbyes	
<i>Sentence</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Sentence</i>	<i>Response</i>
How do you do?	I'm doing well, thank you, and you? How do you do?	It was nice meeting you.	Nice meeting you, too.
Hello, pleased to meet you.	Pleased to meet you, too.	It was a pleasure to meet you.	Pleasure to meet you, too.
Good Morning, Good Afternoon, Good Evening	Morning, Afternoon, Evening,	Have a good day.	Thank you. You too.

HOW DO YOU DO?

The MOST formal greeting in English is “*how do you do?*”. This greeting is used most frequently in the workplace, or to show respect towards somebody who is older or more important than you. The most obvious response to this greeting would be “*I’m doing well, thank you, and you?*”, however, most people just repeat “*How do you do?*” right back, and it is perfectly acceptable to do so.



Giving a handshake at school

A: How do you do?

B: How do you do?

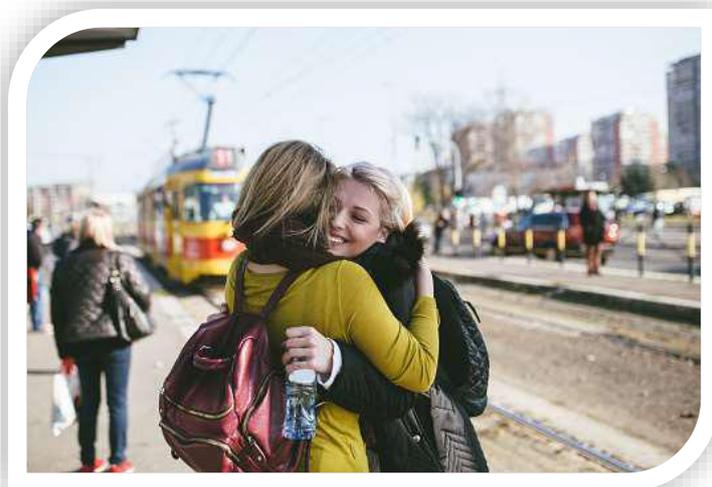
HELLO, PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

Another variation of this greeting is “*Hello, nice to meet you*”. This is a polite way of introducing yourself

and is often followed by “*Pleased/Nice to meet you, too*”.

GOOD MORNING, GOOD AFTERNOON, OR GOOD EVENING

Greeting someone according to the time of day is another popular form of greeting. Please be aware that *Goodnight* is never used, unless you are saying “*goodbye*” to someone after an evening meal, drinks or event. If you are meeting someone at 9pm before a meal or an event, remember to use “*Good evening*”. A more informal way of using these types of greetings is to shorten them and simply say “*Morning*”, “*Afternoon*” and “*Evening*”. The best way to reply is to repeat the greeting back.



Informal Sentences:

Greetings		Goodbyes	
<i>Sentence</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Sentence</i>	<i>Response</i>
<p>Hello.</p> <p>Hi.</p> <p>Hiya.</p>	<p>Hello.</p> <p>Hi.</p>	<p>Nice meeting you.</p> <p>Take it easy.</p> <p>Have a good day</p>	<p>You too, bye</p>
<p>How are you?</p>	<p>I'm fine, and you?</p> <p>All right, and you?</p>	<p>Ok, see you soon.</p> <p>See ya.</p>	<p>Bye.</p>
<p>How's things?</p>	<p>Pretty good.</p>	<p>How/What about you?</p>	<p>Take care.</p> <p>You too, bye.</p>
<p>How's it going, (mate)?</p>	<p>OK.</p> <p>Not bad.</p>	<p>How/What about you?</p>	<p>I'm off.</p> <p>OK, bye.</p>

<p>How're you doing?</p> <p>How's life?</p> <p>Hello, how are things with you?</p>	<p>Very well.</p> <p>Pretty good.</p> <p>Not Bad.</p>	<p>How/What about you?</p>	<p>I've got to go.</p> <p>See ya.</p> <p>Bye for now.</p>	<p>See you later.</p> <p>Bye.</p>
<p>What's up?</p>	<p>Nothing much, and you?</p> <p>Nothing special, and you?</p>		<p>So long</p> <p>See you later.</p> <p>Catch you later.</p>	<p>See you soon, bye</p>
<p>What's new?</p>	<p>Not much. I'm good.</p>			
<p>All right, mate?</p> <p>All right!</p>	<p>Yep, pretty good</p> <p>Yep, hunky dory.</p> <p>Hiya!</p>		<p>Have a good one.</p>	<p>You too.</p>

HELLO

Hello is the easiest and most popular way of greeting someone in social or semi-social occasions or even in some relaxed workplaces. This is often abbreviated to Hi or Hiya! Hiya is an abbreviation of 'How are you?' but in most cases there is no need to say 'How you are' and all you need to do is repeat *Hiya* back.



THE **HOW** QUESTIONS:

All the *How* questions are pretty informal and are usually used to greet somebody you know or have met before. In response it is polite to show an interest in the person and to follow your reply with “*what/how about you?*” or something similar.

THE **WHAT** QUESTIONS

The degree of formality in *What* questions is very low as the relationship between the speakers is well-established. You probably know what they have been up to, hence the answer, “*nothing much.*” The respective goodbye response in such situations in the UK are *Catch you later* and a *Have a good one* (a cool way of saying *have a good day!*).

ALL RIGHT, MATE?

(often pronounced “y’rite”)

This greeting is British through and through and literally means “*are you all right, my friend?*” Nowadays, it simply means ‘*Hello, how are you?*’ between close friends and family. The informality transpires in the answer as well (*Yep, and you?/ Yep, hunky dory/ Yep, hiya!*).



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- Read our bi-weekly [blog](#) which includes study tips, interesting aspects of the English language, worldwide facts and much more!
- Read what our [students](#) have to say about studying at Bloomsbury International and life in London.