

SPELLING EXERCISES

The following sentences contain sets of two or more words that are frequently mistaken for one another because they look or sound alike. In each sentence underline the word or words that have the appropriate meanings.

1. He got his (**clothes**, cloths) so dirty that they couldn't be worn again, except as a ragamuffin (custom, **costume**).
2. Old cloth diapers make good dust (**cloths**, clothes).
3. The first word of every sentence should begin with a (**capital**, capitol) letter.
4. Is Pierre the (**capital**, capitol) of South Dakota?
5. After several sessions, she decided the therapist she had chosen was not the best person to (**counsel**, consul, council) her.
6. The student (counsel, consul, console, **council**) met to vote on changes in (**its**, it's) bylaws.
7. Before the funeral, the priest left the (alter, **altar**) to walk down the (**aisle**, isle) and meet the mourners.
8. Since he has become so muscular, it will be necessary for him to (alter, **altar**) most of his (**clothes**, cloths).
9. In order to keep (**peace**, piece) in the family, the mother ate the last (peace, **piece**) of pie herself.
10. The (forth, **fourth**) runner-up in the Miss America contest was a girl from (**our**, are, hour) state.

Exercise 2

1. You are the (**sole**, soul) (**heir**, hare, hair) to (**your**, you're) uncle's fortune.
2. Trying to define the human (sole, **soul**) has kept philosophers and theologians damn busy for centuries.
3. The (souls, **soles**) of his shoes made a flapping sound as he (**pedaled**, peddled) his bike.

4. (**There**, They're, Their) was (allot, alot, **a lot**) of disagreement over which (cite, sight, **site**) would be chosen for the new campus.
5. In writing a research paper, you must (sight, **cite**, sire) the sources of your material, both quoted and paraphrased; otherwise, you are (libel, **liable**) to be accused of plagiarism.
6. All the bridesmaids glided gracefully down the (isle, **aisle**) (**except**, accept) me; my heels were so high I couldn't walk in a (**straight**, strait) line.
7. Naval (Metal, **Medal**) of Honor winners, please step forward.
8. The (**metal**, mettle, medal) (**base**, bass) of the floor lamp was scratched when the lamp fell over.
9. We need a new (base, **bass**) voice for our barbershop quartet.
10. The cat (chaste, **chased**) her (**tail**, tale) which (lead, **led**) her nowhere; then she played with the extension (chord, **cord**).

Exercise 3

1. Whatever (coarse, **course**) of study you choose, you will need to work hard.
2. (Their, They're, **There**) was no reason for you to be so (**coarse**, course) in front of my friends.
3. The (coarse, **course**) of the Chicago River was changed by a remarkable engineering (**feat**, feet).
4. In the (**desert**, dessert), we often have the fruit for (desert, **dessert**) because it contains so much water.
5. She had to take (to, too, **two**) (**personal**, personnel) leave days when her son had a (miner, **minor**) throat infection.
6. Mr. Vandevoot from the (personal, **personnel**) department will meet with the (**mayor**, mare) next Wednesday to discuss the (**retraining**, restraining) program.
7. One (mare, **mere**) (**dose**, does) of vitamins can hardly make a difference.
8. (**Does**, Dose) your dropping out of this race mean you are not going to be on the (**track**, tract) team?
9. Because they believed the school was not being run effectively, the parents prepared a (**track**, tract) in which they asked that the (**principal**, principle) change his approach.
10. However, the (**principal**, principle) would not (dessert, **desert**) his (principals, **principles**).

Parvathi

Exercise 4

1. The busy doctor had many (**patients**, patience) (**whose**, who's) constant phone calls tried his (patients, **patience**).
2. Have you had a good (weak, **week**) since your father came out of his coma?
3. The examiner (**knew**, new) just how to find my (**weak**, week) points, and one of them was the use of the (**comma**, coma).
4. He has always been very (**conscious**, conscience, conscientious) of his physical appearance.
5. You could tell his (conscious, **conscience**, conscientious) was bothering him because he showed his wife an unusual amount of (**affection**, affectation).
6. She was such a (conscience, conscious, **conscientious**) babysitter that she even wrote down the times that each of the children went to sleep.
7. Some people think it an (affection, **affectation**) to observe a formal (**mourning**, morning) period following the death of a family member.
8. (**Our**, Are) final exam will be held on Thursday (mourning, **morning**) period following the death of a family member.
9. Being around all these (**formally**, formerly) dressed people makes me uncomfortable.
10. George Bush was (formally, **formerly**) the head of the CIA.

Exercise 5

1. By late afternoon the disease had (**passed**, past) (**its**, it's) crisis point, and the patient no longer felt (**faint**, feint).
2. The basketball player learned from (past, **passed**) mistakes that he had to improve his (faint, **feint**) to draw the opposing guard out of position.
3. On of the tour boats at Niagara Falls is called "Maid of the (Midst, **Mist**)"; when you go (**aboard**, abroad) you are given a yellow sticker.
4. In the (**midst**, mist) of life, people can often (**lose**, loose) their head.
5. Jeanne told her (**friend**, fiend) that going (aboard, **abroad**) is (quiet, quit, **quite**) an experience when you have very little money.
6. Just before the storm broke, it was very (quite, quit, **quiet**).

Parvathi

7. If you (quiet, **quit**, quite) now, you'll never (cease, **seize**) the brass ring.
8. If you take people for (granite, **granted**) for too long, they'll (**cease**, seize) caring for you.
9. In nearly every (instants, **instance**) of child abuse, the abusive parents were themselves abused as children.
10. Are (instance, **instants**) the same as seconds?

Exercise 6

1. What is this disgusting (sentiment, **sediment**) at the bottom of my coffee cup?
2. What you (**propose**, purpose) is not the correct solution in my view, but I do share (**your**, you're) (**sentiments**, sediments).
3. (Through, **Though**, Thorough) Jews do not recognize Jesus as God, they do acknowledge him as (**holy**, wholly, holey).
4. Moths had gotten into the closet and made all the wool suits which had been (pact, **packed**) away (holy, wholly, **holey**).
5. The subsidiary was (holy, **wholly**, holey) owned by the parent company the result of a (**pact**, packed) made ten years ago.
6. The lawyer combed (**through**, though, thorough) the book of legal (**statutes**, statures, statues) looking for the one that would apply (**to**, too, two) her client who had been accused of (**libel**, liable).
7. (**Though**, Through, Thorough) his mind was beginning to fail, his physical (statue, statute, **stature**) remained unchanged.
8. The sculptor was so (though, through, **thorough**) in his rendering that each of his (statutes, **statues**, statures) looked as (**though**, through, thorough) it could walk out of the room.
9. On humid days, she had trouble catching her (breathe, **breath**).
10. If you hyperventilate, (**breathe**, breath) (**into**, in to) a paper bag for a few minutes.

Exercise 7

1. Because I thought the earrings were too expensive, I could not (**accept**, except) them as a gift.
2. Everyone ate lunch at school (accept, **except**) Ed, (whose, who's) mother prepared his lunch from special diabetic (**recipes**, receipts).
3. The (**presence**, presents) of a notary public was required when they signed the documents; she gave them a (recipe, **receipt**) for her services.
4. When you (dissemble, **disassemble**) the radio, put the screws in a safe place.
5. The mother explained to her son that giving the other children (presence, **presents**) would not guarantee (**their**, they're, there) friendship.
6. Before he (**died**, dyed), the president of the (**board**, bored) asked his successor to play the (duel, **dual**) role of the president and trustee.
7. Sometimes (**dyed**, died) (**hair**, hare, heir) is (ascetically, **aesthetically**, anesthetically) unpleasant.
8. There is (know, **no**) excuse for being (board, **bored**); pretend (you're, **your**) a pirate and have a (**duel**, dual) with (you're, **your**) brother.