

3.13 Word pairs that cause confusion

There are many pairs or sets of words that can cause confusion for students. In some cases the words sound the same but have entirely different meanings, for example:

aloud / allowed

In other cases the spelling is similar and, when pronounced inaccurately, the words may sound the same, for example:

of / off

Other examples are: **know / no; there / their; where / were; throw / through / though; sum / some; sweet / suite; him / hymn; tree / three; which / witch; hour / our / are; see / sea; right (correct) / right (position) / write.**

It is important to draw attention to these as they arise in class.

Method

To raise students' awareness:

1. Draw attention to words that may cause confusion.
2. Get students to spell, read and say the words out loud.
3. Explain the difference in meaning between the words.
4. Get students to make a note of the words in a specific personal glossary which is kept for this purpose only.
5. Go round the class asking each student to give an example of how to use one of the pairs.
6. Either then or later, students write sample sentences to illustrate the difference in meaning between words.

Example: **of** or **off**

I had two glasses **of** water

I fell **off** the wall.



Get students to set up a special section in their personal dictionaries, so that they can record all such examples as they arise.