

Tricky Words of the Day

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

Note: Illustrations appear only on meanings where a picture genuinely helps ESL/ELL learners grasp the word. Abstract or context-dependent meanings are intentionally shown as text only.

Homophone · Lesson 1 of 6

Knight / Night

Good pair for story-based lessons.

Meaning 1

Knight: a soldier from the past, often in stories, who wore armor and rode a horse.

Both words sound exactly the same, but one belongs to history and stories and the other is a very common time word.

"The knight protected the castle."

"Stories often show a brave knight with a shield."

Meaning 2

Night: the time when it is dark and people usually sleep.

Learners hear the same sound as 'knight' but the meaning is about time, making context very important.

"The stars are bright at night."

"They prefer to study at night."



Read the full lesson

eslwordwiz.com/words/knight-night

Homograph · Lesson 2 of 6

Bark

Common idiom: 'Their bark is worse than their bite' (They sound scary but are actually nice).

Meaning 1

The loud sound a dog makes.

A basic noun/verb. Pronunciation stays the same for both meanings.

"The neighbor's dog started to bark at the mailman."

"I heard a loud bark in the middle of the night."

Meaning 2

The hard outer covering of a tree.

A noun. ESL learners often forget this meaning.

"The bark of the birch tree is white."

"Some animals eat tree bark during the winter."

Related: dog; tree; wood; yelp



Read the full lesson

eslwordwiz.com/words/bark

Idiom · Lesson 3 of 6

Call it a day

Extremely common in office and construction environments.

Meaning 1

To stop working on something for the rest of the day.

This doesn't mean giving the day a name. It means deciding that the day's work is finished.

"We've been working for ten hours"

"let's call it a day."

Related: finish; quit; wrap up



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Contronym · Lesson 4 of 6**Refrain**

Wait for the grammar. If it's an action, it's stopping. If it's a thing, it's repeating.

Meaning 1

To stop oneself from doing something.

Used as a verb, often followed by 'from'.

"Please refrain from smoking in this building."

"He had to refrain from laughing during the serious meeting."

Meaning 2

A repeated part of a song or poem.

Used as a noun, technically meaning something that keeps coming back.

"The audience joined in for the song's catchy refrain."

"The poem's refrain emphasizes the theme of loss."

Related: abstain; chorus; repeat



Read the full lesson

eslwordwiz.com/words/refrain

Multi-Meaning · Lesson 5 of 6**Mine**

As a verb, 'to mine' means to dig for minerals or, recently, to generate cryptocurrency.

Meaning 1

A pronoun used to show that something belongs to the speaker.

Possessive pronoun. Learners often confuse 'my' (adjective) with 'mine' (pronoun).

"The blue car is mine."

"That sandwich isn't yours, it's mine!"

Meaning 2

A deep hole or tunnel in the ground used to extract coal, gold, or minerals.

A noun referring to the physical location of extraction.

"His grandfather worked in a coal mine for forty years."

"They are searching for gold in an abandoned mine."

Meaning 3

A bomb placed hidden under the ground or underwater.

Used in military or historical contexts.

"The ship was damaged by an underwater mine."

"The soldiers had to clear the field of land mines."

Related: possessive; quarry; explosive; dig



Read the full lesson

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Euphemism · Lesson 6 of 6

Reception center

Often used in government or immigration contexts to sound less harsh than 'jail' or 'detention.'

Meaning 1

A formal name for a prison or a place where people are detained.

It sounds like a hotel lobby, which can be very confusing for learners reading official documents.

"The new arrivals were processed at the regional reception center."

"Visitors must check in at the reception center before meeting residents."

Related: detention center; correctional facility; holding area



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