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There vs Their vs They're

Common Mistakes - English Grammar



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A common mistake not only for students learning English but also for native speakers is the difference between **There**, **Their** and **They're** in written English.

This happens because both words sound the same when they are spoken.

Words that sound the same but have different meanings (and sometimes spelling) are called homophones. Therefore **they're**, **their** and **there** are Homophones.

Which words would make the following sentence correct?

- **They're/Their/There** playing **they're/their/there** video games over **they're/their/there**.

The answer appears at the end of the post so let's learn the rules meanwhile.

What is the difference between *There*, *Their* and *They're*?

THERE

There is the opposite of Here. It means 'in that place' not here.

- A: Where is my book? – B: It's over there.
- I will look for a hotel to stay when I arrive there.

There is/There are = to show that something exists.

- There is a book on the table
- There are many countries in Europe.

THEIR

Their is a possessive adjective which is used before a noun. It shows possession, that something belongs to them.

- Their house is big.
- All of their friends were crazy.
- The children put their books in their school bags.

THEY'RE

They're is a contraction of **they are**.

e.g. They're happy = They are happy

They're is usually before an adjective or a verb ending in ING.

- They're very interested in the project.
- I personally think they're crazy!
- They're singing loudly.

Example sentence...

So now you know the difference let's try the original question:

- **They're/Their/There** playing **they're/their/there** video games over **they're/their/there**.

The answer is:

- **They're** playing **their** video games over **there**.

Why?

They're playing (**they're** is used before a verb ending in -ing making it the progressive tense)

Their video games (**their** is a possessive used before a noun to show possession)

Over **there** (**there** because it means not here, in that place)

Here is a chart we have created to show you more about the difference: