

WORKSHEET

Practice Using Homonyms, Homophones, and Homographs

Complete each of the following sentences by filling in the blank with the correct word. You'll find the answers at the end of the exercise. To heighten interest, all of the sentences are quotes from various authors' writings in books and magazine articles published over the years.

1. "He simply sat down on the ledge and forgot everything _____ [*accept* or *except*] the marvelous mystery."— Lawrence Sargent Hall
2. "I live in the Oakland Hills in a tiny house on a street so windy you can't drive more than ten miles per hour. I rented it because the _____ [*ad* or *add*] said this: 'Small house in the trees with a garden and a fireplace. Dogs welcome, of course.'"— Pam Houston
3. "Francis wondered what _____ [*advice* or *advise*] a psychiatrist would have for him."— John Cheever
4. "The _____ [*aid* or *aide*] gets out of the way, picking her skirt out of the rubble of children at her feet."— Rosellen Brown
5. "He seemed to want to recapture the cosseted feeling he'd had when he'd been sick as a child and she would serve him flat ginger _____ [*ail* or *ale*], and toast soaked in cream, and play endless card games with him, using his blanket-covered legs as a table."— Alice Elliott Dark
6. "He sat down and leaned forward, pulling the chair's rear legs into the _____ [*air*, *ere*, or *heir*] so that the waitress could get by."— Stanley Elkins
7. "[T]he stewardess was moving down the _____ [*aisle*, *I'll*, or *isle*], like a trained nurse taking temperatures in a hospital ward, to see that they were all properly strapped in for the take-off."— Martha Gellhorn
8. "Mrs. Parmenter laughed at his _____ [*allusion* or *illusion*] to their summer at Mrs. Sterrett's, in Rome, and gave him her coat to hold."— Willa Cather
9. "In the long years between, she had fashioned many fine dresses—gowned gay girls for their conquests and robed fair brides for the _____ [*altar* or *alter*]."— Mary Lerner
10. "On a Saturday morning soon after he came to live with her, he turned over her garbage while she was at the grocery store and _____ [*ate* or *eight*] rancid bacon drippings out of a small Crisco can."— Pam Durban
11. "The barn was bigger than a church, and the fall's fresh hay _____ [*bails* or *bales*] were stacked to the roof in the side mows."— John Updike
12. "Her two spare dresses were gone, her comb was gone, her checkered coat was gone, and so was the mauve hair- _____ [*band* or *banned*] with a mauve bow that had been her hat."— Vladimir Nabokov
13. "Without the shelter of those trees, there is a great exposure—back yards, clotheslines, woodpiles, patchy sheds and barns and privies—all _____ [*bare* or *bear*], exposed, provisional looking."— Alice Munro
14. "This was the time when outfielders were larger than they are today and well-hit balls would roll for a long time, giving runners ample time to round the _____ [*bases* or *basis*] for a home run."— Deidre Silva and Jackie Koney
15. "The conductor had his knotted signal cord to pull, and the motorman _____ [*beat* or *beet*] the foot gong with his mad heel."— Saul Bellow
16. "Nancy held the cup to her mouth and _____ [*blew* or *blue*] into the cup."— William Faulkner
17. "A pigeon landed nearby. It hopped on its little red feet and pecked into something that might have been a dirty piece of stale _____ [*bread* or *bred*] or dried mud."— Isaac Bashevis Singer
18. "He was wearing a new hat of a pretty biscuit shade, for it never occurred to him to _____ [*buy*, *by*, or *bye*] anything of a practical color; he had put it on for the first time and the rain was spoiling it."— Katherine Anne Porter

Answers to the Exercise

1. except 2. ad 3. advice 4. aide 5. ale 6. air 7. aisle 8. allusion 9. altar 10. ate 11. bales 12. band 13. bare 14. bases 15. beat 16. blew 17. bread 18. buy