

A Shortcut to Understanding They're, There, and Their

1. The word *they're* is used only as a contraction for the two words *they* and *are*.
 - I like bananas only if they're ripe.
(they are)
 - The Smiths told me that they're related to the royal family of England.
(they are)
 - That's all you need to remember about *they're*.
2. The word *there* is often the first word of a sentence, and it usually comes in front of a verb of being or existence. Used in this way, the word *there* can take either a singular verb or a plural verb depending on the words that come after it.

For example, compare these two correct sentences:

- There is one large book on that table.
- There are many large books on that table.

Here are most of the verbs of being in the English language:

| | | |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| is | has been | have been |
| are | had been | seem to be |
| was | could be | seems to be |
| were | should be | may be |
| will be | can be | might be |
| would be | ought to be | shall be |

The word *there* is usually used in front of any of the above verbs.

- There are many people who work under stress in today's world.
- Recently there has been an increase in the number of college graduates.
- There might be fewer cars produced this year because of higher steel prices.

3. The word *their* always means that something plural is owning something, and so it is used in front of a noun (a word that names a person, place, or thing).

Persons:

- Children should be taught to honor their parents.
- The students asked their teacher many interesting questions.

Places:

- The Andersons always take good care of their home.
- My neighbors have an indoor swimming pool in their basement.

Things:

- Most drivers take good care of their cars.
- A lot of men dread the thought of losing their wallets.

Quiz on They're, There, and Their

Fill in the blanks with **they're**, **there**, or **their**.

People and _____ Shopping Habits

_____ are many ways in which people can shop for _____ groceries. If _____ on _____ way home from work, some people will just stop and shop briefly. They will pick up one or two items of something that _____ out of at home. _____ are other shoppers who will take _____ time and will shop slowly and carefully, using _____ lists and making sure _____ getting _____ money's worth. Some people can shop quickly in a store, while others spend a lot of _____ time _____ for hours at a time, and _____ cart is full of _____ food by the time they leave _____ are also the compulsive shoppers, who buy some items because _____ on sale or because _____ regular brand is not _____, and so _____ is no reason why they should not take whatever brand is _____ on the shelf. While _____ in the store, some people have to watch _____ behavior, because they cannot misbehave _____. However, once _____ home, these people let _____ hair down, because _____ own boss and _____ is nothing they cannot do in the privacy of _____ own homes.