

They're/Their/There • • • Rules to Remember

The easiest way to learn which of these words to use is to memorize when to use they're and their. Then you know that you must use there in every other case.

Rule: The word *they're* is always a contraction. Use it only when you can substitute *they are*.

Why don't frogs live very long?

... because they're always croaking

Father: "What are your grades like this term?"

Son: "They're underwater."

Father: "What does that mean?"

Son: "Below C level."

Why don't elephants like computers?

... They're afraid of the mouse.



Rule: The word *their* is always a pronoun. Use it to show ownership.

Why are male deer always smiling?

... to show off their buck teeth

Why did they open the first drive-through restaurant?

... so people could curb their appetites

Why were the elephants thrown out of the water park?

... They couldn't keep their trunks up.

Rule: The word *there* is used as an adverb or pronoun. It is used to show a place or a position, to tell of the existence of something, or when the verb comes before the subject in a sentence.

Boy: "That bank won't let my dad withdraw any money."

Girl: "Why not?"

Boy: "He doesn't have any in there."

- Explanation: "there" shows place in this example.

Girl: "What caused your flat tire?"

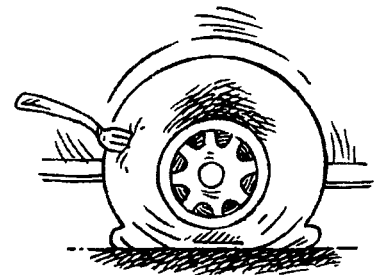
Boy: "There was a fork in the road."

- Explanation: "there" shows existence in this example.

Boy: "Why did you laugh when the teacher asked you what W-A-L-R-U-S spells?"

Girl: "Because there is no such thing as a walrus that spells."

- Explanation: the verb "is" comes before the subject "thing."



They're/Their/There • • • • • Practice Page

Directions: Finish each punchline by writing *they're*, *their*, or *there*. Remember to capitalize the first word in a sentence.

1. How do you know that grandfather clocks are shy?
... They always have _____ hands over _____ faces.
2. Why do people consider flowers lazy?
... _____ always in beds.
3. What kind of animals are the easiest to weigh?
... Reptiles; they always carry around _____ scales.
4. What's the longest word in the English language?
... "Smiles"; _____ is a mile between the first and last letters.
5. Why do the numbers one through twelve make the best guards?
... because they spend all of _____ time on the watch
6. If six copycats sat on a fence and one jumped down, how many would be left on the fence?
... None, _____ all copycats!
7. Do doctors get a big charge out of their work?
... No, but _____ patients surely do!
8. Why is winter the best time to purchase a thermometer?
... because in summer _____ higher
9. Why were the baby strawberries upset?
... _____ parents were in a jam.
10. When does it rain money?
... whenever _____ is change in the weather

