

Homophone Definition & Regularity: Instructions for Use

This task looks at the ability to access the meaning of a word directly from its visual form, rather than from its sound. All the words are homophones; that is they share the same pronunciation as another word but have different spelling and meaning. In order to define a homophone correctly, information about its meaning must be specified by its spelling, rather than by sound alone. Half of the words are regular and half have exceptional pronunciations.

This task has been shown to be helpful in testing patients who read phonologically (see **Surface Dyslexia: Neuropsychological and Cognitive Studies of Phonological Reading**, edited by Patterson, K.E., Marshall, J.C. & Coltheart, M. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates). Some surface dyslexic patients seem to be unable to access the meaning of a written word directly from its spelling and rely on a 'sub-lexical method' of constructing pronunciation from print. Such patients will have difficulty in defining the correct meaning of a homophonic word that has a regular pronunciation, and may experience difficulty even in arriving at correct pronunciations for the exception word set. In some cases, however, exception words that are homophones are wrongly defined, yet pronounced successfully, suggesting that word-specific spelling and sound have been correctly accessed even though the wrong meaning has been activated (Coltheart, M., Masterson, J., Byng, S., Prior, M. & Riddoch, M.J. (1983) **Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology**, **35A**, 469 - 496). A third pattern is seen in cases in which the meaning of a written word is accessed correctly from its spelling, but yet there are problems in pronouncing the word correctly (eg. Kay, J. and Patterson, K.E. (1985). In **Surface Dyslexia: Neuropsychological and Cognitive Studies of Phonological Reading**, edited by Patterson, K.E., Marshall, J.C. & Coltheart, M. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates).

Special Points:

Ensure that the subject does not sound the word before defining it.

Descriptive Statistics (for 21 control subjects):

Regular Homophones	(n = 10)	Mean = 9.81	Std. Dev. = 0.51
Exception Homophones	(n = 10)	Mean = 9.71	Std. Dev. = 0.78

Suggestions for Where to go next: A patient who reads phonologically without also using visual information about written word forms will make errors in which the wrong homophone meaning is defined. A number of possible patterns of performance have been outlined with examples of relevant cases in the literature (see above). Corroborative evidence for phonological reading can be obtained from testing Oral Reading [35]. Corroborative evidence for difficulty in using visual word-forms in reading can be obtained from testing Visual Lexical Decision [27].

*PALPA*Reading Task

First tell me what this word means, **then** say it aloud

mail

suite

bear

prophet

dough

pain

week

chute

steel

haul

roll

meat

scene

great

colonel

gait

loan

heir

pale

break

Homophone 'Define-then-Read' Task: Presenter's Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Target	Defined As:	Read As:
1 mail (r)		
2 suite (e)		
3 bear (e)		
4 prophet (r)		
5 dough (e)		
6 pain (r)		
7 week (r)		
8 chute (e)		
9 steel (r)		
10 haul (r)		
11 roll (e)		
12 meat (r)		
13 scene (e)		
14 great (e)		
15 colonel (e)		
16 gait (r)		
17 loan (r)		
18 heir (e)		
19 pale (r)		
20 break (e)		
Total Correct:		
(r)egular	/10	
(e)xception	/10	

PALPA

Homophone 'Define-then-Read' Task:

Marking Form

Name _____	Date: _____
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Regular	Defined As:		Read As:
1 mail			
2 pain			
3 week			
4 haul			
5 meat			
6 gait			
7 loan			
8 pale			
9 steel			
10 prophet			
Total Correct		/10	/10
Exception			
1 bear			
2 roll			
3 heir			
4 suite			
5 dough			
6 chute			
7 scene			
8 great			
9 break			
10 colonel			
Total Correct		/10	/10

