

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

CLASS: _____

SCORE: _____

LESSON 37 • HOMOPHONES • BEE VS. BE

Words Pronounced Alike • Vowel Digraph "ee" vs. Open Syllable "e" • Rhyme Completion

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🕒 **PHONICS & SPELLING RULES TO REMEMBER**

RULE 1 • VOWEL TEAM DIGRAPH "EE" (BĒE)
The vowel team **ee** represents a single phoneme: the tense **Long e** /i:/ sound. In classical Webster notation, the first e carries a macron (**ē**) showing its sound quality, while the second e is silent to complete the spelling structure (**bēe**).

RULE 2 • HOMOPHONES: BEE VS. BE
Bee and **be** sound identical (/bi:/). **Bee** (with -ee) is a noun naming the honey-making insect. **Be** (with single -e) is an open syllable linking or auxiliary verb (*to be happy, to be kind*).

RULE 3 • FLOSS RULE & CHOOSING K VS. C
FLOSS Rule: In 1-syllable words, a short vowel before final /l/ doubles the l to -ll (*tell, bell, sell, fell*).
K vs. C: Use **k** before front vowels (e, i as in *keep*); use **c** before back vowels (a, o, u as in *can, cot, cup*).

bee /bi:/ • Webster: **Noun:** A small flying insect that makes honey and buzzes.
bēe

be /bi:/ • Webster: **Verb:** To exist, live, or remain (*be good, be quiet, can be*).
bē

1 Write from dictation and supply the missing words (bee / be) on the lines:

Buzz! buzz! buzz!

This is the song of the _____.

The song was very soft and low,

And sweet as it could _____.

STUDENT TRANSCRIPTION (WRITE THE COMPLETE LINES WITH MISSING WORDS):
Line 1: _____
Line 2: _____
Line 3: _____
Line 4: _____

2 Use these words in sentences of your own: Compose a complete, neat sentence for each homophone:

1. bee (noun - insect) STARTS WITH CAPITAL • ENDS WITH PERIOD

2. be (verb - to exist) STARTS WITH CAPITAL • ENDS WITH PERIOD

3 Homophone Discrimination & Dictation: Select the correct spelling, then write from dictation:

CHOOSE THE RIGHT HOMOPHONE (BEE OR BE)
1. A yellow _____ made honey in the wooden hive. (**bee** / **be**)
2. Please _____ gentle and quiet near the baby. (**bee** / **be**)
3. Can you _____ ready when the school bell rings? (**bee** / **be**)
4. The stinging _____ flew quickly to the blossom. (**bee** / **be**)

CLASSROOM DICTATION:

LESSON 37 • TEACHER ANSWER KEY & LINGUISTIC GUIDE

Homophone Disambiguation (bee vs. be) • Orthographic Functions of -ee Digraph • Rhyme Completion

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Word	Rime	Webster	Sound Value	IPA	Linguistic & Historical Phonology Rationale
bee	-ee	bēe	Long e	/biː/	OE bēo; Germanic *bijōn; substantive noun retains vowel digraph -ee to distinguish from verb.
be	-e (open)	bē	Long e	/biː/	OE bēon; PIE *bheuH- ('grow/exist'); monosyllabic open syllable spelling with single -e.
buzz	-uzz	būzz	Short u	/bʌz/	Echoic onomatopoeia; short vowel /ʌ/ followed by expressive sibilant gemination -zz.
sweet	-eet	swēet	Long e	/iː/	OE swēte; vowel digraph ee represents tense /iː/; preserves historical long quality.
song	-ong	sōng	Short o	/sɒŋ/ ~ /sɔːŋ/	OE sang; nominal derivative of singan; velar nasal coda /ŋ/ conditions vowel quality.
soft	-oft	sōft	Short o	/sɒft/ ~ /sɔːft/	OE sōfte ('pleasant'); historical pre-cluster shortening before voiceless fricative cluster -ft.
low	-ow	lōw	Long o	/loʊ/	ON lógr / ME lah, low; vowel-consonant digraph -ow represents long diphthong /oʊ/.
could	-ould	cōuld	Short oo	/kʊd/	OE cūthe; modal auxiliary; silent -l- inserted by Early Modern analogy with should/would.

HISTORICAL PHONOLOGY & PEDAGOGICAL INSIGHTS:
1. Orthographic Disambiguation of Homophones: In Old English, *bēo* (noun) and *bēon* (verb infinitive) had distinct morphological forms. After the loss of inflectional endings in Middle English, both words coalesced phonetically into /biː/. Modern English orthography deliberately retained the digraph **-ee** for the content noun (*bee*) while reserving the single open vowel **-e** for the grammatical auxiliary (*be*) to prevent visual ambiguity in print.
2. The Mechanics of Digraph “ee” (bēe): In Noah Webster’s diacritical system, the first vowel carries the macron (ē) showing tense /iː/, while the second vowel is silent, signaling digraph completion.
3. The Pseudo-Etymological Silent “l” in could: Old English *cūthe* had no liquid consonant. In the 16th century, scribes erroneously introduced the letter *l* by false analogy with *should* (OE *scolde*) and *would* (OE *wolde*). Remind students that the *l* in *could* is entirely unvoiced.

CLASSROOM DICTATION SCRIPT (10 CONTEXTUAL SENTENCES)

- bee:** A striped honey bee gathered yellow pollen from the dandelion.
- be:** Always strive to be honest, courageous, and kind in all things.
- buzz:** The gentle buzz of the bumblebee lulled the garden to sleep.
- sweet:** Clover honey is sweet and wholesome for morning breakfast.
- song:** The meadow lark poured forth a merry song from the fence post.
- soft:** The newborn lamb had a soft fleece as white as fresh snow.
- low:** The cattle moved with low murmurs down toward the shaded brook.
- could:** The children worked as diligently as they could to finish the sum.
- hive:** Thousands of bees work in harmony within the cedar hive.
- clover:** Purple clover blossoms blossomed across the sunny hillside.

DIAGNOSTIC SCORING RUBRIC (50 POINTS)

Target Skill	Criteria for Mastery	Pts
Rhyme Completion	Supplies correct homophones (Line 2: <i>bee</i> ; Line 4: <i>be</i>) in poem.	/10
Poem Transcription	Accurate transcription with capital letters, exclamation marks, and commas.	/10
Sentence Generation	Composes 2 original grammatically sound sentences with <i>bee</i> and <i>be</i> .	/12
Homophone Discrim.	100% accuracy on Exercise 3 choice items (<i>bee</i> , <i>be</i> , <i>be</i> , <i>bee</i>).	/8
Dictation Accuracy	Exact transcription of synthesis sentence from teacher dictation.	/10
TOTAL SCORE:		/50

EXERCISE 1 KEY: Line 2: *bee*; Line 4: *be*.
EXERCISE 3 KEY: 1. *bee*; 2. *be*; 3. *be*; 4. *bee*.
COMMON ERRORS: Writing **be* instead of **bee* for the insect; forgetting capitalization or period in original sentences.