

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?"

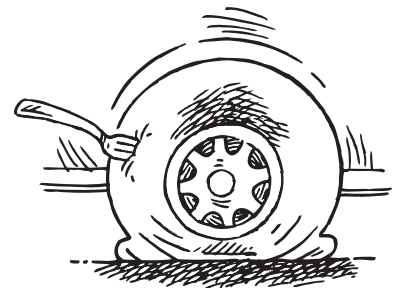
Boy: "There was a fork in the road."

• *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."

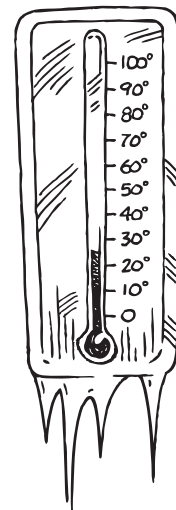
• *Explanation:* the verb "is" comes before the subject "thing."



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



Answer Key

Note: When multiple answers are required, they are separated by commas.

They're/Their/There

1. their, their
2. They're
3. their
4. There
5. their
6. they're
7. their
8. they're
9. Their
10. there