

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Its vs. It's

*Its* and *it's* are often confused and misused. Here's what you need to know to use them correctly.

**ITS** is a possessive that indicates ownership.

Examples:

The cat looked sadly at **its** empty bowl.  
That app sure takes **its** time loading.

**IT'S** is a contraction for "it is" or "it has."

Examples:

**It's** a beautiful painting.  
**It's** been a long time since I talked to Jacob.

Here's a trick: Replace the *it's* or *its* in your sentence with *it is* or *it has*.  
If the sentence makes sense, *it's* is correct. If it does not, *its* is correct.

**Directions:** Choose the correct sentence in each group below.

- Ⓐ Its difficult to study when its such a nice day outside.  
Ⓑ It's difficult to study when it's such a nice day outside.  
Ⓒ It's difficult to study when its such a nice day outside.  
Ⓓ Its difficult to study when it's such a nice day outside.
- Ⓐ "That dog is hurt!" exclaimed Jenny. "Look, its cut its paw."  
Ⓑ "That dog is hurt!" exclaimed Jenny. "Look, it's cut it's paw."  
Ⓒ "That dog is hurt!" exclaimed Jenny. "Look, it's cut its paw."  
Ⓓ "That dog is hurt!" exclaimed Jenny. "Look, its cut it's paw."
- Ⓐ I love the new soccer field. Its so green, and its right next to the park.  
Ⓑ I love the new soccer field. It's so green, and it's right next to the park.  
Ⓒ I love the new soccer field. It's so green, and its right next to the park.  
Ⓓ I love the new soccer field. Its so green, and it's right next to the park.
- Ⓐ Its hard to believe that plant has already outgrown its pot.  
Ⓑ It's hard to believe that plant has already outgrown it's pot.  
Ⓒ It's hard to believe that plant has already outgrown its pot.  
Ⓓ Its hard to believe that plant has already outgrown it's pot.

**Directions:** Fill in each blank with *its* or *it's*. Then write your own sentence using *its* or *it's*—or both!

5. "\_\_\_\_\_ never been this warm on my birthday before," remarked Sharon.

6. The parrot rearranged \_\_\_\_\_ feathers using \_\_\_\_\_ beak.

7. The cruise ship was on \_\_\_\_\_ way to the Bahamas.

8. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Vocabulary Practice

## "Deadly Hits"

Directions: Choose the word that is most similar in meaning to each word in bold.

1. **initial**

- Ⓐ original
- Ⓑ final

2. **sustain**

- Ⓐ experience
- Ⓑ avoid

3. **frantic**

- Ⓐ upset
- Ⓑ calm

4. **traumatic**

- Ⓐ disturbing
- Ⓑ pleasant

Directions: Fill in the circle next to the best answer choice.

5. Which news article is about Facebook facing scrutiny?

- Ⓐ "Six new smiley emojis added to Facebook!"
- Ⓑ "Facebook under investigation for how it shares its users' data"

6. Which sentence uses feverishly correctly?

- Ⓐ The team worked feverishly to complete the obstacle course for the million-dollar prize.
- Ⓑ I talked to the puppy feverishly to make it feel more at ease.

7. Someone who helps people in comas might work in a \_\_\_\_\_.

- Ⓐ hospital
- Ⓑ high school

**Directions:** In each pair of boldfaced words, underline the word that best completes the sentence.

8. Christina made a **frantic/traumatic** dash for the departing school bus.
9. After making it halfway up the hill, Darren could no longer **sustain/glamorize** his speed.
10. After being in a **coma/scrutiny** for three days, Mr. Goldberg woke up and made a full recovery.
11. The show **glamorized/sustained** the celebrity's life, leaving out the challenges of being so famous.
12. My parents plan to **implement/glamorize** my new curfew at the beginning of summer break.

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# Close-Reading Questions

## "Deadly Hits"

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1. In the introduction, how does author Lauren Tarshis help you understand that a concussion is a serious injury? (author's craft, imagery)

2. On page 6, Tarshis describes Zack's brain as a "ticking time bomb." What kind of figurative language is she using? What purpose does it serve? (figurative language)

3. Why did Zack's coach allow Zack to re-enter the game after he hit his head the first time? (key ideas)

4. In the section "What If?," Tarshis asks a series of questions. What purpose do these questions serve? (author's craft, text structure)
5. On page 7, while explaining how a new version of the video game *Madden NFL* was created, Tarshis writes, "No longer are injured players glamorized." What does she mean? (interpreting text)
6. What is Tarshis's attitude toward Zack, his coach, and his parents? Do you think she blames any of them for Zack's injury? Explain. (tone)

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# Read, Think, Explain

## Identifying Nonfiction Elements

Use this activity with “Deadly Hits.” See *Scope’s* “Glossary of Nonfiction Terms” for definitions of the words that appear in bold.

### Before Reading Text Features, Mood

1. Read the **headline** and **subheading** and study the image on pages 4-5. What **mood** do these features create?

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2. Read the sidebar on page 7. What does this information help you understand about professional football?

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3. Read the infographic on page 8. What does this information reveal about concussions?

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4. Read the section titles throughout the article. Based on your preview of the article, write one sentence predicting what the article is mainly about.

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**During Reading**  
**Text Structure, Inference, Tone**

5. A. Check (✓) the statement that BEST describes the **text structure** (the way the author organizes information) in the section “What If?”

- The author compares Zack’s brain injury with other types of brain injuries.
- The author gives a chronological account of Zack’s brain injury and early recovery.
- The author presents the problems that led to Zack’s traumatic brain injury, then presents solutions to those problems.

B. Explain your answer.

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6. Consider this quote from page 6:

*“So when Zack said he felt fine, his coach did what many coaches did when a star player said he felt well enough to play: He sent Zack back to the field.”*

Based on information from the article, why is a similar scenario less likely to happen today?

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7. What is the author’s **tone** as she writes about Zack and his family in the section “The Road to Recovery”? Explain your answer.

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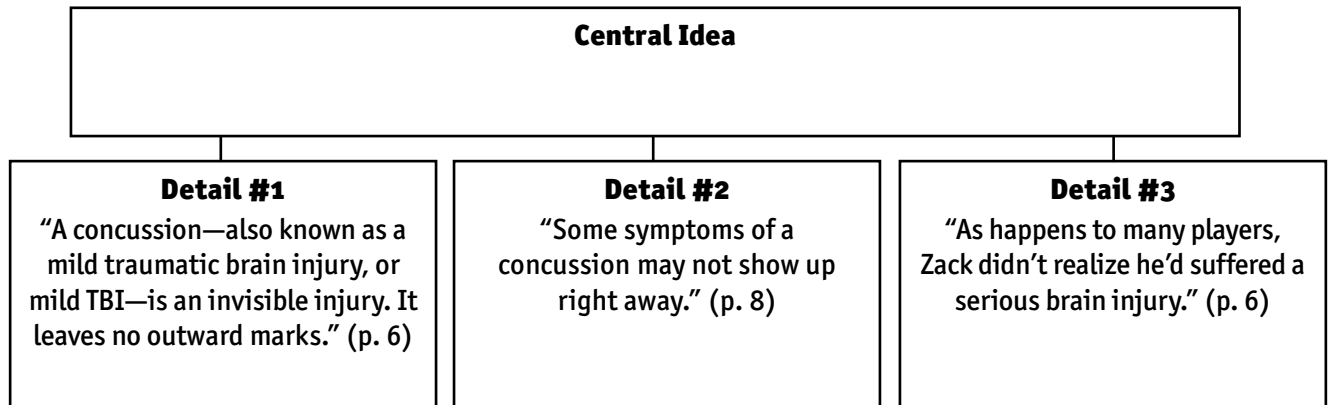
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**After Reading**  
**Central Idea/Details and Objective Summary**

8. Below are three **supporting details** for a **central idea** of the article. In the space provided, write a central idea that these details support.



9. Write an **objective summary** of "Deadly Hits." (Hint: Think about what you would say to a friend who asks, "What is this article about?")

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## Nonfiction Quiz

**Directions:** Read “Deadly Hits.” Then answer the questions below.

- On page 6, Lauren Tarshis writes that Zack’s brain “was a ticking time bomb.” This line contains
  - a simile that shows how severe Zack’s pain was.
  - a metaphor that emphasizes how slowly the second half of the game passed.
  - a metaphor that expresses how dangerous it is to continue playing a sport with a concussion.
  - hyperbole that shows how explosive Tahoma’s tackles were.
- Which is a central idea of the article?
  - Concussion rates in the NFL are decreasing.
  - There are ways to reduce athletes’ risk of serious head injury.
  - The NFL contributes millions of dollars to brain injury research.
  - Madden NFL* is a popular video game.
- How does the infographic “What to Know About Concussions” contribute to the article?
  - It helps readers understand how common concussions are and how to stay safe.
  - It summarizes how the sport of football has evolved over time.
  - It explains how Zack’s brain injury could have been prevented.
  - It describes the most popular sports among kids and teens today.
- On page 8, Tarshis writes that in therapy, Zack works “with the same gritty strength that made him a star on the field.” Based on context clues, what is the definition of *gritty*?
  - showing courage and determination
  - containing bits of sand
  - feeling or showing pride
  - soft and delicate
- On page 7, Tarshis writes of *Madden NFL*, “No longer are injured players glamorized.” Which line provides an example of football injuries being glamorized?
  - “Late in the game’s first half, Zack tackled a runner rushing toward the end zone.” (p. 5)
  - “When his head hit the ground, his brain shook violently against the inside of his skull.” (p. 5)
  - “Sportscasters ran highlight reels that celebrated the most brutal hits of the week in college and professional football.” (p. 6)
  - “Zack and his family remain advocates for safety in youth sports.” (p. 8)
- Tarshis most likely wrote “Deadly Hits” to
  - help inform readers about the dangers of concussions.
  - share the latest brain science research.
  - compare and contrast football and soccer.
  - show how school sports instill discipline.

### Constructed-Response Questions

**Directions:** Write your answers in a well-organized response.

- How does the author develop the idea that head injuries can be serious even if they seem to be minor? Support your answer with details from the article.
- According to the article, in what ways has the sport of football changed in recent years? Support your answer with details from the article.



# Vocabulary Practice

## "The Roach"

**Directions:** Rewrite each sentence using a form of one of the words in the box. There are two words you will not use.

infest      skitter      inevitable      dinky      stowaway      protrude

1. "I need more than this one tiny piece of pizza for lunch!" said Tina.

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2. Mason had a bad fall off his bike that left him with a bone sticking out of his arm.

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3. Lydia's little brother tried to sneak into her luggage as a hitchhiker before she left for her trip.

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4. It seemed certain that Sydney and Alexa would become friends—they had so much in common!

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**Directions:** Choose the best answer to each question.

5. Which would more likely skitter?

- Ⓐ a mouse
- Ⓑ a bear

6. Which would more likely create a frenzy?

- Ⓐ a celebrity sighted walking through a store
- Ⓑ a discount on bananas at the grocery store

7. Which has an exoskeleton?

- Ⓐ a rhinoceros
- Ⓑ a ladybug

**Directions:** Choose the word or phrase that is MOST similar in meaning to each word in bold.

8. **inevitable**

- Ⓐ unavoidable
- Ⓑ unlikely

9. **infest**

- Ⓐ escape
- Ⓑ overrun

10. **frenzy**

- Ⓐ peace
- Ⓑ craziness

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# Figurative Language

Authors use figurative language to bring their writing to life. This activity focuses on three types of figurative language: onomatopoeia, metaphor, and simile. **Directions:** Read "The Roach." Then fill in the charts below.

An **ONOMATOPOEIA** is a word that when spoken aloud imitates the sound it is describing.

**Example:**

*Aaron dropped the pot with a clang.*

The onomatopoeia *clang* imitates the sound of a metal pot hitting the floor.

A **METAPHOR** is a comparison of two unlike things to illuminate a particular quality or aspect of one of those things.

**Example:**

*Karen is a ray of sunshine.*

This metaphor compares Karen to a ray of sunshine. It suggests that Karen is cheerful, happy, warm, hopeful—qualities we associate with the sun.

Metaphors state that one thing *is* something else; they do not use the words *like* or *as*.

A **SIMILE** is a comparison of two unlike things to illuminate a particular quality or aspect of one of those things; similes use *like* or *as*.

**Example:**

*Randy's singing voice is like melted chocolate.*

This simile compares Randy's voice to melted chocolate. It suggests that Randy's voice is rich, smooth, sweet, warm—qualities we associate with melted chocolate.

## Onomatopoeia

**1A.** Find three lines in "The Roach" that contain onomatopoeia. Write them down and circle the onomatopoeia in each.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**B.** How does the use of onomatopoeia add to the story?

**2.** Write a sentence of your own that contains onomatopoeia.

<b>Metaphor</b>	
<p><b>3A.</b> Find a metaphor in “The Roach” and write it here.</p>	<p><b>B.</b> What two things does the metaphor you found compare? What quality or aspect of one of the things does the comparison illuminate?</p>
<p><b>4A.</b> Complete the sentence below to write your own metaphor.</p> <p><b>The snow</b> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>B.</b> What two things does your metaphor compare? What quality or aspect of snow does the comparison illuminate?</p>

<b>Simile</b>	
<p><b>5A.</b> Find a simile in “The Roach” and write it here.</p>	<p><b>B.</b> What two things does the simile you found compare? What quality or aspect of one of the things does the comparison illuminate?</p>
<p><b>6A.</b> Complete the sentence below to write your own simile.</p> <p><b>Lee moved across the room</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>B.</b> What two things does your simile compare? What quality or aspect of how Lee moved does the comparison illuminate?</p>

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# Scene Planner

Fill in the boxes below to help you plan a scene that takes place after the events of the story "The Roach."

## Characters

Who appears in your scene? Will you introduce any new characters?

## Setting

Describe the time and place in which your scene takes place.

## Plot

Make an outline of the events that will occur your scene.

On your own sheet of paper or on a computer, write the first draft of your scene, using the ideas you have written in the boxes above. Your scene must include at least one example of each of the following types of figurative language:

- onomatopoeia
- simile
- metaphor

**Tip:** If it's easier, you can add the figurative language after you've written your first draft. Look for places where you could add a sound effect, make a comparison, add emphasis, or say something in a fresh and creative way.

# Story Planner

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Genre:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Point of View:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Setting:** Describe the time, place, and social conditions in which your characters exist.

**Characters:** Who is your main character? Secondary characters? What are their traits?

**Conflict:** What challenge or problem does your main character face?

**Plot:** Jot down ideas about what happens to create an outline or mini-summary of the events in your story.

**Beginning:**

**Middle:**

**End:**

**Theme:** What broader topic is your story about (e.g., trust, courage, nature)? What will your story say about that topic?

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# Vary Your Words

When you encounter the same word over and over again in a paragraph, you start to lose interest, right? Using a variety of words spices up your writing. Consider the following paragraph:

*I saw my brother Cal **running** down the street waving his arms. I **ran** after him, yelling, "Why are you **running** around like you're on fire?" He called back, "I'm **running** after the Wilsons' dog. She stole my hat and **ran** away!" It must have been a great hat. I've never seen Cal **run** so fast!*

A form of the word *run* appears six times. Yikes! Here are two things you can do to make the paragraph more interesting:

- 1 Look for places where you can be more specific.** For example, was Cal sprinting, speeding, or racing? Did the speaker rush or tear after him? Did the dog dart, bolt, or trot away?
- 2 Use a thesaurus to find words that have the same or a similar meaning as *run*, and replace the uses of *run* with those words.** Just remember that the thesaurus usually provides words that have *similar* meanings, not necessarily the *same* meanings—so be sure to look up the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Here's an example of how the paragraph above could be improved:

*I saw my brother Cal **sprinting** down the street waving his arms. I **tore** after him, yelling, "Why are you **racing** around like you're on fire?" He called back, "I'm running after the Wilsons' dog! She stole my hat and **bolted!**" It must have been a great hat. I've never seen Cal **move** so fast!*

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**Directions:** Read the paragraph below. Then rewrite it, looking for places where you can be more specific or substitute other words for any form of *amazing*.

Erin just called with some **amazing** news. Her family is planning a vacation to the island of St. Croix, and I'm invited! Erin says that St. Croix is an **amazing** place to visit, with **amazing** beaches and a lot of opportunities for snorkeling. She promises we'll see some truly **amazing** fish. Erin is an **amazing** friend, and her family is **amazing** too. I can hardly wait for our **amazing** island vacation together!

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# Vary Your Sentences

When every sentence in a paragraph is the same length, the reader gets bored. When every sentence in a paragraph starts with the same words, the reader gets bored. When every sentence in a paragraph has the same rhythm, the reader gets bored. When every sentence . . . well, you get the point. To add some pizzazz to your writing, you need to mix things up!

## Here are four ways to add variety to your sentences:

**1. Add an adverb to the beginning of a sentence.**

Eli picked his clothes off the floor and threw them in the closet.

*Hurriedly, Eli picked his clothes off the floor and threw them in the closet.*

**2. Move a prepositional phrase to the beginning of a sentence.**

Grace mixed the cake batter with a large wooden spoon.

*With a large wooden spoon, Grace mixed the cake batter.*

**3. Link two sentences to form a compound sentence.**

The water was freezing cold. Seth and Pete dove in anyway.

*The water was freezing cold, but Seth and Pete dove in anyway.*

**4. Combine two or more sentences.**

Siberian tigers are the world's largest cats. Siberian tigers are among the most-endangered species.

*Siberian tigers, the world's largest cats, are among the most-endangered species.*

**Directions:** Rewrite the paragraph below so that the sentences vary in length, structure, and rhythm. Use the tips in the box above to help you.

My brother Don and I made a pizza. We made the dough. We measured out the flour. We measured the salt. We measured the yeast. We measured the water. We measured the olive oil. We combined the ingredients. We made a ball of dough. Don kneaded the dough. I rolled out the dough. We put sauce on the pizza. We put toppings on the pizza. I put pepperoni on the pizza. Don put mushrooms on half of the pizza. I don't like mushrooms. We covered it all with cheese. We baked it in the oven. We ate the whole thing in 15 minutes.

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# Analyzing Poetry

**Directions:** Below is the poem "Your Dream Is" by Jason Reynolds. Read the poem a few times. Then answer the questions on the next page. This activity is meant to be completed by partners, in groups, or as a class.

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## Your Dream Is by Jason Reynolds

1 Your dream is the mole  
behind your ear,  
3 that chip in your  
front tooth,  
5 your freckles.

It's the thing that makes  
7 you special,  
but not the thing that makes  
9 you great.

The courage in trying,  
11 the passion in living,  
and the acknowledgement  
13 and appreciation of  
the beauty happening around  
15 you does that.

**1** Consider the things Reynolds lists in the first stanza: a mole behind your ear, a chip in your front tooth, your freckles. What kind of things are these?

**2** The poem is written in second person, addressing the reader as "you." Who do you think the poet is speaking to? Do you think he's addressing a particular person with a mole, a chipped tooth, and freckles? Explain.

**3** The poet compares your dream to a mole, a chip in a tooth, and freckles. Why do you think the poet uses this comparison? What idea is he expressing through it?

**4** In the last stanza, the poet lists three things that he says do make you great. In your own words, explain what you think the poet means by each of these three things.

**5** Do you agree with what the poet says about dreams and what makes you great?