

Teaching Your and You're

I realize that “your” and “you’re” have over time become interchangeable. It seems to be very commonly accepted that “your” can be used both for possessive as well as when a person’s trying to say “you are,” but I’m going to confess right now that seeing the words mixed up does make me wince! So here are a couple of ideas on helping your students remember the difference between “your” and “you’re.”

Teaching “You’re”

To introduce “you’re,” [you are] let’s [let us] refer to the lesson on teaching contractions where “you’re” will join the ranks of words transformed by the swift witch’s kick.



Using a visual to show the difference will definitely make the experience memorable! As we can plainly see, our outgoing, shouting, pointing friend is back. (Does he not remind you of the guy on TV that yells exuberantly about miracle cleaning solutions you can get for \$19.99?)

He’s apparently overwhelmed by the beauty of the lady in red and is trying very hard to convince her that he finds her more than attractive. The “re” and the word “are” both are printed in blue to show their close relationship.

Teaching “Your”

Now, Gilbert is back to shout and point.



This time he’s indignant because apparently someone assumed he was part owner of a big gray rat. He wants to make it crystal clear that the rat is NOT his, it is NOT ours, but it IS yours! If you point out that both “OUR” and “YOUR” are words that show belonging or possession, and as “YOUR” contains “OUR,” it might be easier for your children to remember when to use this word correctly.

So, to recap this oh-so-brief lesson, just remember that the little black toe in contractions means that a letter or more have been kicked out of a word making for an interesting situation. You have a full word, then the toe, then a partial word – all huddled up together to make a new word. When speaking of belonging or possession, the little black witch’s toe does not come into play at all.