Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from Grammar Keepers by Gretchen Bernabei. These two-page lesson plans on they’re, their, and there will help your students learn once and for all how to avoid misusing these homonyms.

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Teach it

1. Write this on the board

**They're**

Proof:

they're = they are

Ex:

(they are)

They're leaving.

PRÁCTICE THE CONVERSATION:

A: Who'd like to read the sentence?
B: They're leaving.
A: Perfect! And how do you spell they're?
B: T-h-e-y-apostrophe-r-e.
A: I think you have the wrong they're.
B: I'm pretty sure it's the right one.
A: Can you prove it?
B: Yes I can. They are leaving.
A: You're so right! It's the right one.

2. Explain:

So many people have trouble with this word!

What does they're mean?

That's right. It means “they are.”

So when you use t-h-e-y-'-r-e, you could substitute the words they are for it and listen. If it makes sense, then you have the right word.

When you write they're, here is how you prove it:

• Underline the word.

• Write the proof over it—write they are in parentheses over the word they're.

The underline means I intentionally made a grammatical choice here. The proof above the word means that it’s the correct choice.

3. Ask: Now, who will try out this proof with me? (Enact the conversation.)

4. Say: Open to your grammar chart and find they're. Let’s jot down the proof on the chart.

Model it

5. Project the journal entry and read it.

6. Ask volunteers to read the sentences with they're aloud. Enact the conversation with several of them. Ask the others to explain why it’s the right word.
I think that tomorrow, Thursday, the U.S. will attack Syria. There is a lot of bloodshed, and they’re killing each other. And Assad used chemical weapons. They’re killing their own people. Syria is a dangerous country right now. So many civilians have died over there, people are dying without a scratch or a drop of blood, which is a sign of chemical weapons. There is also no way of getting out except for escaping. Syria said if the U.S. attacks Syria, they’re going to attack Israel, and so will Iran. They might be bluffing, but nobody really knows what they’re thinking. They’re aware that it has happened before, but I think Syria knows it will get destroyed by Israel, and I hope Iran knows, too.

—Ilan Sonsino
Grade 8
Teach it

1. Write this on the board

There

Proof:

there = here

Ex:

(here)

There they are.

2. Explain:

So many people have trouble with this word!

If you use *there*, you can test it by substituting the word *here* for it and listen. If it makes sense, then you have the right word.

So when you write *there*, here is how you prove it:

Underline the word and write the proof over it.

Write *here* in parentheses over the word *there*.

The underline means I intentionally made a grammatical choice *here*. The proof above the word means that it’s the correct choice.

3. Ask: Now, who will try out this proof with me? (Enact the conversation.)

4. Say: Open to your grammar chart and find *there*. Let’s jot down the proof on the chart.

Model it

5. Project the journal entry and read it.

6. Ask volunteers to read the sentences with *there* aloud. Enact the conversation with each of them.
**Practice it**

7. **Say:** In your own journal, try to use the word *there* at least five times, underlining each use. Write the proof over each one.

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**February 14**

**Valentine’s Day**

So yesterday we took the writing benchmark and it was broken into two parts. *There* was a multiple choice section and two essays. On the multiple choice section there were passages and they all had mistakes in them. While reading them, I wrote proofs if the words were wrong and I highlighted misspelled words. *There* were questions that asked if *there* needed to be semi-colons put in, and since I don’t know where and how to use them, that confused me.

On the two essays, I did a kernel before to organize my essay. While writing them, I used dialogue, images, and AAAWUBBIS. However, I didn’t use Ba-Da-Bings or pitchforks.

More Monday

BYE!

—Maggie Davis  
Grade 7
Teach it

1. Write this on the board

Their

Proof:

their = our

Ex:
(our)

Their friends moved to California.

2. Explain:

Many people choose the wrong form of this word.
What does their mean?
That’s right; it shows possession. Something belongs to someone.
Take a look at the substitute word. When you use their, you can substitute the word our for it and listen. If it makes sense, then you have the right word.
When you write their, here is how you prove it:
Underline the word and write the proof over it.
Write our in parentheses over the word their.
The underline means I intentionally made a grammatical choice here. The proof above the word means that it’s the correct choice.

3. Ask: Who will volunteer to try out this proof with me? (Enact the conversation.)

4. Say: Open to your grammar chart and find their. Let’s jot down the proof on the chart.

Model it

5. Project the journal entry and read it.

6. Ask volunteers to read the sentences with their aloud. Enact the conversation with several students. Ask others to explain why it’s the correct word, using the proof.
Practice it

7. **Say:** In your journal today, see if you can use the word **their** at least five times, underlining each use. Write the proof over each one.

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**September 2**

**Pet Peeves of Facebook**

Something I can’t stand in life is when I go on my Facebook and I check my news feed and some girls will post a picture of themselves (also known as a selfie) and put as their caption, “I look so ugly . . .” I know that is just their way of asking for attention. (Or, fishing for attention.) They know that people will comment saying, “Oh, you’re not ugly, you’re beautiful!” Which is what they want. Whenever I see their posts I always think, “If you think you look so ugly, then why would you post it for the public to see!”

Another thing on Facebook that annoys me is when people post statuses every few seconds and they don’t even have a reason for them. For example, they will post something like, “Eating at Olive Garden!” Then they add a bunch of hashtags and a picture of their food, “#food, #yummy #Olive #Garden #hungry #delicious.” Seeing this, all I think is, “#No one cares!” They’re just wasting their own precious time on these constant, worthless, statuses.

—Alyssa Rico

Grade 8