Homographs - One written word, two different pronunciations

(from Latin: "homo"="same", "graph"="written")

Sometimes in English, one written word can have two meanings and **different pronunciations**. These words are called "homographs". Sometimes the meanings are similar, but sometimes they are completely different. Here are some examples:

1a. John **lives** in California.
1b. Doctors save many **lives**.

2a. I **read** the news every day.
2b. Have you **read** the news today?

3a. The Sahara **desert** is enormous.
3b. I will never **desert** you.

4a. I received a birthday **present**.
4b. I would like to **present** my wife, Alice.

5a. He can **lead** people very well.
5b. I think that the metal **lead** is very heavy.

6a. He always **does** his homework.
6b. The bucks are chasing the **does**.

7a. The **wind** is very strong today.
7b. Please **wind** the bandage around his leg.

8a. I must **polish** the table.
8b. I have a **Polish** table.

9a. Your English is almost **perfect**.
9b. I need to **perfect** my English.

10a. The streets are full of **refuse**.
10b. I **refuse** to cooperate.

For nouns or adjectives, the first syllable is stressed, but for verbs, the second syllable.

Noun	Verb
protest	to protest
record	to record
suspect	to suspect
import	to import
contract	to contract
conflict	to conflict

Exercise 1. Say the following words, firstly as a verb and secondly as a noun or adjective:

insult	**desert**	**increase**	**subject**
reject	**present**	**progress**	**produce**
convict	**object**	**refuse**	**perfect**

Exercise 2. Read these sentences:

The lawyer did not **object** to the new **object**.
I had to **subject** each **subject** to a series of tests.
The dump was so full that it had to **refuse** more **refuse**.
The soldier decided to **desert** when he was in the **desert**.
This is a good time to **present** a birthday **present** to my wife.
The farm used to **produce** many different kinds of **produce**.

Exercise 3. Read these sentences:

I need to **perfect** my almost **perfect** English.

My doctor is fantastic! He **lives** to save **lives**!

He can **lead** people very well and he uses **lead** bullets.

He released a white **dove** into the air. (Note: “dove” rhymes with “love”)
The bird **dove** into the sea.

The nurse **wound** the bandage around the **wound**.

My neighbors always **row** late at night.
I always sit in the back **row** of the cinema.

The buck **does** strange things when the **does** are around.

The **wind** was so strong, that he couldn’t **wind** the sail.

The **Polish** maid must always **polish** the furniture. (Note: the verb “to polish” breaks the rule of “Verbs have stress on the second syllable”.)

I caught a sea **bass** yesterday.
John plays the lead guitar and Martin plays the **bass** guitar.

Just a **minute** please.
Here are the **minutes** of the meeting.
My cell phone chip is **minute**.

The insurance was **invalid** because he was an **invalid**.

As you are **close** to the door, can you please **close** it?

When I **tear** my shirt, I cry a **tear**.

How can I **intimate** this to my most **intimate** friend?

Please take a **bow**, then you can tie a **bow** in your shoelace.

Are you **content** with the **content** of the report?

Russia has more than one **defect**, which is why many Russians **defect**.

Suggested videos: https://www.youtube.com/shorts/ATPtszTO6mc (short)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozqluN8Eg0s (15 mins)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1VYBbsKgmE (15 mins)

Notes: The verbs “find/found” and “wind/wound” have similar pronunciations.
The verbs “wear/wore/worn” and “tear/tore/torn” have similar pronunciations.

Homographs don’t exist in Portuguese, because there are accents to help with pronunciation. For example: sabia / sábia / sabiá