

# Current English Usage

*homage* is best pronounced /**hom**-ij/. It is a silly (but quite common) pretension to omit the /h/ sound. Cf. **herb & humble**.

**home**. See **house**.

**home in**, not *\*hone in*, is the correct phrase. In the early 20th century, the METAPHOR referred to what homing pigeons do; by the early 20th century, it referred also to what aircraft and missiles do.

And by the late 20th century, some writers had begun mistaking the phrase by using the wrong verb, *hone* (= to sharpen) instead of *home*—e.g.:

- “While Mr. Bradley *honed* [read *homed*] in on healthcare, Mr. Gore scolded his opponent as lacking a comprehensive education plan and for supporting a school voucher program when he was in the Senate.” Richard L. Berke, “Bradley, in Debate with Gore, Goes on the Attack,” *N.Y. Times*, 18 Dec. 1999, at A12.
- “The knowledge gained from these conferences informs the intervention and helps the instructional team *hone* [read *home*] in on the specific strategies that will help the

the full key, see front matter pp. xxxi, l-li.)  
read but . . . **Stage 4**: Ubiquitous but . . . **Stage 5**: Fully accepted.  
present frequency of prevalent forms vs. variants in current books.

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