

SPELLING

You are more likely to misspell common words than uncommon ones. That happens because you probably look up the spellings of hard words but assume that you know how to spell the easy ones.

Frequently Misspelled Words

The commonly used words in the following list are among the most frequently misspelled. Review them and master them.

ache	broccoli	excitement	meant
accommodate	built	exhilarate	minute
accumulate	business	experience	necessary
acquaint	captain	feasible	noticeable
across	certain	foreign	occasion
agreeable	character	friend	occurred
a lot (<i>not</i> alot)	coming	grammar	occurrence
all right (<i>not</i> alright)	committee	handkerchief	often
almost	correspondence	having	omitted
always	cough	heard	once
among	course	hospital	piece
another	describe	immediately	pleasant
appreciate	disappear	indispensable	principal [school]
asked	disappoint	inoculate	privilege
athletic	doctor	instead	probably
beautiful	doesn't	irresistible	realize
before	dropped	knew	really
believe	embarrass	knowledge	receive
benefit	enough	library	recommend
boundary	every	lightning	resistance
break	exception	maintenance	rhythm
says	straight	though	until
scene	studying	thought	weird
secretary	success	threw	which

separate	supersede	together	woman
since	surely	toward	writing
speech	surprise		

Words Often Confused

In addition to words that are tricky to spell, English also has its share of words that are easily—and often—confused. Note the correct spelling of the words in boldface type.

I'll **accept** every package **except** the one with the torn wrapping.

We looked at old pictures. **Then** Peter was taller **than** Matthew.

She's **too** late **to** enter the race.

Because of all the trees surrounding our house, it is **quite quiet**.

Your earring is **loose**. Don't **lose** it.

Whether we go or not depends on the **weather**.

It's time to give the cat **its** lunch.

You're leading **your** opponent in the election.

They're going **there** with **their** hopes high.

Where can I **wear** this vintage dress I found in the attic?

Seven Helpful Spelling Rules

These following simple rules can help you to spell a great many words correctly.

1. ei, ie. Put **i** before **e** except after **c**, or when sounded like **a** as in *neighbor* and *weigh*.

i before **e**: *believe*, *chief*, *niece*, **field**, **shield**

except after **c**: *ceiling*, *receive*, *deceit*, *conceit*, *perceive*

sounded like **a**: *weight*, *veil*, *vein*, **reign**, **rein**

Exceptions: *foreigner*, *leisure*, **either**, **neither**, **height**

2. ly. Keep the original **l** when adding **ly** to a word ending in **l**.

actually, **beautifully**, **cheerfully**, **finally**, **really**

3. Final e before vowel. Drop silent **e** before a suffix beginning with a vowel.

admire/able, *argue/ing*, *large/est*, *enclose/ing*, *scarce/ity*

4. Final e before consonant. Keep final silent **e** before a suffix beginning with a consonant.

amazement, *atonement*, *hopeful*, *fortunately*, *useful*

Exceptions: *acknowledgment*, *argument*, *awful*, *duly*, *judgment*, *ninth*, *truly*, *wholly*

5. Final Y. If final **y** is preceded by a consonant, change **y** to **i** when you add a suffix.

apply + ed = applied (**Y** changed to **i**.)

friendly + er = friendlier

noisy + est = noisiest

But notice the following forms:

apply + ing = applying

(**Y** does not change to **i** if the suffix begins with **i**.)

play + er = player

(**Y** does not change to **i** if **y** is preceded by a vowel.)

6. Doubling Final Consonant—One-Syllable Words. Note the following correct forms. Each final consonant is preceded by a single vowel.

bat + er = batter

(The final consonant, **t**, is doubled.)

big + est = biggest

drop + ing = dropping

grin + ed = grinned

What happens when the final consonant is preceded by more than one vowel?

beat + en = beaten

(The final consonant, **t**, is not doubled.)

sail + ed = sailed

dream + er = dreamer

fool + ish = foolish

foam + ing = foaming

7. Doubling Final Consonant—Words of More Than One Syllable. If a word has more than one syllable and the accent is on the last syllable, the same rule applies as for a one-syllable word.

commit + ed = committed

(The accent is on the last syllable **t** is doubled.)

control + ing = controlling

equip + ed = equipped

propel + er = propeller

refer + ed = referred

What happens if the word is not accented on the last syllable?

refer + ence = reference

(The accent is not on **er**; **r** is not doubled.)

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