

## SPELLING ESSENTIALS

Many of the spelling errors that make a writer seem uneducated are caused by several dozen common words. In student writing, these are misspelled over and over again. To make your writing live up to the minimum standards for educated written English, make sure you do not misspell any words that are predictable spelling problems. Work on such words until the correct spelling has become absolutely automatic for you.

(1) **Master** the true “**unforgivables.**” **Never** misspell one of the following words.

<u>SPELLING WORD</u>	<u>RELATED WORDS</u>	<u>MEMORY HELP</u>
athlete	athletics	The <i>athlete</i> studied <i>math</i> .
believe	belief, believer	Her <i>belief</i> caused <i>grief</i> .
business	businesslike	We stayed in <i>business</i> .
definite	definitely	He was <i>definitely finished</i> .
perform	performance	a <i>perfect performance</i>
probably	improbable	She will <i>probably</i> perform <i>ably</i> .
receive	receipt, receiving	He <i>deceived</i> the <i>receiver</i> .
separate	separation	the <i>rate</i> for <i>separate</i> rooms
similar	similarity	A <i>similar</i> song was <i>popular</i> .
surprise	surprising	The <i>surfer surprised</i> us.
used to		He <i>used to</i> sell <i>used</i> cars.

(2) **Master** the most predictable confusing pairs. **Never** confuse its and it's, there and their, accept and except, affect and effect.

<b>Whose?</b>	its	a bee and <i>its</i> sting; the council and <i>its</i> members; the school and <i>its</i> football team; the dog and <i>its</i> bone
<b>What is it?</b>	it's (it is)	<i>it's</i> a bird; <i>it's</i> a shame; <i>it's</i> true; <i>it's</i> not likely; <i>it's</i> my first try
<b>Whose?</b>	their	they and <i>their</i> friends; people and <i>their</i> dogs; travelers with <i>their</i> luggage; stores and <i>their</i> customers
<b>Where?</b>	there	here and <i>there</i> ; we left it <i>there</i> ; be <i>there</i> at eight; <i>there</i> are few lakes here; <i>there</i> is little hope
<b>Take on</b>	accept	I <i>accepted</i> the job; we will not <i>accept</i> responsibility; her resignation was <i>accepted</i> ; an <i>acceptance</i> speech
<b>Take out</b>	except	the rules <i>except</i> senior citizens; present company <i>excepted</i> ; we made an <i>exception</i>

<b>Change</b>	affect	it <i>affected</i> my grade; the chemical <i>affects</i> people's health; the worries have <i>affected</i> his performance
<b>Result</b>	effect	the treatment had no <i>effect</i> ; the skin showed the <i>effects</i> of radiation; an <i>effective</i> cure

(3) **Know** the different spellings of closely related words. Pairs like the following show an important spelling change as we go from one word to the other:

- writing:** I was *writing* a check; she had been *writing* to me
- written:** we need *written* confirmation; he had *written* a letter
- pronounce:** a word hard to *pronounce*; he *pronounced* it differently
- pronunciation:** the right *pronunciation*; a different *pronunciation*
- argue:** he always *argued* with me; don't *argue*
- argument:** we settled the *argument*; we heard all the *arguments*

In each of the following sentences, a spelling word that is one of the “unforgivables” has been left incomplete. Write the completed word in the space on the right.

1. The host \_\_\_\_\_cepted my apologies. \_\_\_\_\_
2. We need a defin\_\_\_\_\_ answer by next week. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The team includes several outstanding ath\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_
4. We saw a very simi\_\_\_\_\_ movie last week. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The crew was proud of it\_\_\_\_\_ record. \_\_\_\_\_
6. The customers rec\_\_\_\_\_ved a refund. \_\_\_\_\_
7. The change will not \_\_\_\_\_fect that price. \_\_\_\_\_
8. The waiter gave us separ\_\_\_\_\_ checks. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Her grandfather us\_\_\_\_\_ to herd sheep in Wyoming. \_\_\_\_\_
10. She laughed at my pron\_\_\_\_\_tion of the word. \_\_\_\_\_
11. We need a promise in wri\_\_\_\_\_ing. \_\_\_\_\_
12. The tax cuts benefited industry and bus\_\_\_\_\_ss. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Our teachers seldom bel\_\_\_\_\_ved our excuses. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Carl had gone to a s\_\_\_\_\_prise party. \_\_\_\_\_
15. The surgeon hesitated to p\_\_\_\_\_form the operation. \_\_\_\_\_