

SPELLING

Use spell-check

Software programs are useful – learn how to use the version you have on your computer. But don't blame a spell-checker for failing to catch all misspelled words. That is your responsibility!

Use the dictionary

Keep a dictionary on your desk or use <http://dictionary.com> or <http://merriam-webster.com>

Use mnemonics

Mnemonics are memory aids to remember how to spell words. When you think of *stationery*, think of the *e* in *paper*. To remember *here* and *hear*, think of the word *ear* that you *hear* with.

Homonyms -- words that sound alike or nearly alike but have different meanings and different spellings (*affect-effect, they're-their-there*, etc.). Study the list of commonly confused words.

Plurals -- Usually, you just add *s* to the end of the word: *dog dogs*

Words that end in *-ch, x, s* or *s-like* sounds, take an *-es* for the plural: *witches boxes kisses*

Some are irregular in the plural: *child = children woman = women*

person = people goose = geese mouse = mice deer = deer

Some nouns maintain their Latin or Greek form in the plural: *medium = media*

alumnus = alumni nucleus = nuclei syllabus = syllabi crisis = crises

phenomenon = phenomena criterion = criteria datum = data

With words that end in a consonant and a *y*, change the *y* to an *i* and add *es*: *baby = babies*

gallery = galleries [This rule does not apply to proper nouns: *Kennedy = Kennedys*]

For some words that end in *o*, add an *s*: *memo = memos cello = cellos stereo = stereos*

For some add *-es*: *potato = potatoes hero = heroes*

Plurals of words that end in *-f* or *-fe* usually change the *f* sound to a *v* sound and add *s* or *-es*:

knife = knives leaf = leaves hoof = hooves life = lives self = selves

Exceptions: *dwarf = dwarfs roof = roofs*

I before E: *achieve, believe, brief, hygiene, grief, thief, friend, grieve, chief, fiend, pierce, priest*

Except after C or when sounded like ay as in neighbor and weigh: *ceiling conceive, deceive, perceive, receipt, receive, deceit, conceit, freight, beige, sleigh, weight, vein*

[A few exceptions: *either, neither, feint, foreign, forfeit, height, leisure, weird*]

Drop the final e

When adding an ending to a word that ends with a silent *e*, drop the final *e* if the ending begins with a vowel: *advancing, surprising*

However, if the ending begins with a consonant, keep the final *e*: *advancement, likeness*

If the silent *e* has a vowel before it, drop the *e*: *argument, argued, truly*

[To avoid mispronunciation, the final *e* is kept in words such as *mileage* and words where the final *e* is preceded by a soft *g* or *c*: *changeable, courageous, management, noticeable*.]

Drop the final Y

When a word ends in *y*, change the *y* to *i* when it is preceded by a consonant: *supply = supplies*

worry = worried merry = merrier

This does not apply to the ending *-ing*: *crying, studying*

Or when the final *y* is preceded by a vowel: *obeyed, saying*

Double final consonants

When adding an ending to a word that ends in a consonant, you usually double that consonant:

submit = submitting, submitted begin = beginner, beginning refer = referring, referral

[When the accent falls on the first syllable, don't double the consonant: *open = opening, opened*]