With texting, instant messaging, Twitter, email, and other forms of electronic communication, spelling has taken a backseat to people’s desire to connect quickly and yet be understood. For example, look at the following conversation between two people:

m4c? *$? miss u :-(  
k c u @ 2

That same conversation written formally would read:

“Do you want to meet for coffee? How about Starbucks? I’m sad because I miss you.”

“Okay. I will see you at 2 o’clock.”

Taking shortcuts with spelling (and proper capitalization) is fine when you are texting, but in academic and business writing, spelling counts, and you should avoid using informal spelling, including the lower case i and abbreviated words, such as c for see, u for you, k for okay, or 4 for for.

This appendix and “Appendix E: Confusing and Misused Word Pairs” will help you communicate more effectively when you are required to write formal academic essays, scientific reports, personal resumes, reference letters, application letters, and job applications.

**KEEPING TRACK OF SPELLING ERRORS**

You should know what words you consistently misspell. Once you start to keep track of the words you misspell, you may notice that your misspellings follow patterns. Knowing only a few spelling rules can help you correct the majority of your spelling mistakes.

A simple way to track misspellings is to keep a chart of any word marked as misspelled in any paper you write. Use the chart at the end of this appendix to record the misspelled word, provide the correct spelling, and supply the spelling rule that corrects the error.
You can use the following example as a model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misspelled Word</th>
<th>Correct Spelling</th>
<th>General Rule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>received</td>
<td>received</td>
<td>/i before e except after c/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diging</td>
<td>digging</td>
<td>/In one syllable words, double the final consonant when a single vowel precedes last consonant/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hopeing</td>
<td>hoping</td>
<td>/Drop the final e with a suffix that starts with a vowel/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seize</td>
<td>seize</td>
<td>/i before e except after c/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbor</td>
<td>neighbor</td>
<td>/i before e except after c/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USING A DICTIONARY
When you write, you should follow the three-foot rule: keep a dictionary within three feet of you. The dictionary may be a traditional paper dictionary or an electronic dictionary; regardless, you should have a dictionary within reach when you write.

If you look a word up in a paper dictionary, place a small check mark by the word. If you use an electronic dictionary, keep a list of those words you repeatedly look up in your electronic spell-checker on a 3 x 5 card so that you can slip the card into the spell-checker’s case. Whether you use a paper dictionary and/or an electronic dictionary, if you find yourself coming back to the same word regularly, you need to make a concentrated effort to learn to spell the word.

USING ELECTRONIC SPELLING AIDS
Most everyone who composes with a word processor uses the spell-checker that accompanies the software, and while the word processor can save you time by changing simply misspelled words to their correct spelling as you type and identifying misspellings that the dictionary program may not recognize, you need to take the time to proofread your own writing because spell-checkers do not recognize homophones, words that sound similar, but are spelled differently, for example, are and our or to, too, and two or their, there, and they’re.

In 1992, Mark Eckman composed the following poem to caution people not to rely on only spell-checkers. The poem, as Mr. Eckman originally composed it, contains eight spelling errors, which are italicized, that a spell-checker does not recognize.

I have a spelling checker
It came with my PC
It highlights for my review
Mistakes I cannot sea.
I ran this poem thru it
Since 1992, multiple versions of the above poem have appeared on the Internet; to see many of the variations, type “I have a spelling checker poem” into your favorite search engine.

In addition to a word processor’s spell-checker, you also have access to electronic dictionaries and online dictionaries. Electronic dictionaries are essentially handheld computers on which you can type a word as you think it is spelled. The electronic dictionary will provide a selection of words from which you may choose. Most electronic dictionaries even pronounce the words. An electronic dictionary may hold up to 500,000 words as well as their synonyms and antonyms. They may also include multiple language guides, including Spanish, Italian, German, and French. Some of the dictionaries also include an English usage guide.

Online dictionaries, such as dictionary.com or Merriam-Webster.com, can also provide you the proper spelling of a word as well as the opportunity to listen to how the word is pronounced and how to use the word in a sentence. The word entry also provides the word’s part of speech and a brief etymology of the word. So as long as you have access to the Internet, you will always have ready access to a dictionary.

THE ENGLISH ALPHABET

The English alphabet has twenty-six letters, and they fall into two categories: vowels and consonants. The vowels are a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y can also act as a vowel. The consonants are b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, and z. When y is not behaving as a vowel (as in the word sky), then it is a consonant (as in the word yellow).

Vowel sounds can be long or short. A long vowel sounds like the vowels when you recite the alphabet. For example, the word cake has the a sound; it is like the sound of an a when you recite the alphabet. The short vowel sound of an a is the sound in mask, cat, and brag.

When the sound a letter or combination of letters makes is discussed, virgules (//) are placed around the description of the sound. For instance, when discussing the ci in physician, you would say the ci makes the /sh/ sound.

SPELLING RULES

As stated earlier, the following rules will come in handy when you are adding words to your chart of misspelled words. Write the applicable rules in the right-hand column, and you will see that you will begin to internalize the rules and apply them to your spelling.
RULE 1: *i* before *e* except after *c*
Learn the following poem in order to remember what order an *i* and an *e* are placed within words:

*i* before *e* **except** after *c*
**unless** it says *a* as in *neighbor* and *weigh.*

Basically, the verse tells you if the *i* and *e* come after a *c*, then the *e* comes first as in *receive.* It also tells you that if the vowel sound in the word sounds like a long *a*, then the *e* comes first again, as in *neighbor* and *weigh* and *vein.* In all other cases, the *i* will precede the *e* as in *niece,* *friend,* *believe,* and *achieve.*

Of course, there are exceptions to this rule; it wouldn’t be English if there weren’t exceptions. Here is a list of words that do not follow this rule; **learn them.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>either</th>
<th>protein</th>
<th>sovereign</th>
<th>forfeited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>neither</td>
<td>heifer</td>
<td>seized</td>
<td>leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weird</td>
<td>foreign</td>
<td>counterfeit</td>
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</table>

RULE 2: When adding *-ing* to a word, if the word is a one-syllable word that follows the consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern, double the final consonant before adding the *-ing.*

*dig* = digging
*mop* = mopping
*nap* = napping
*run* = running
*pet* = petting

This rule also applies to words that have two syllables and the second syllable follows the CVC pattern and is also the accented (emphasized) syllable.

*remit* = remittance
*refer* = referred
*concur* = concurrent

RULE 3: When adding *-ing* (or any other suffix that begins with a vowel) to a word that ends in a silent *e*, drop the *e* before adding the *-ing.*

*hope* = hoping
*ache* = aching
*fame* = famous
*globe* = global
*offense* = offensive
However, if the suffix begins with a consonant, such as *-ful*, you leave the final _e_ on the base word.

\[\text{hope} = \text{hopeful} \]
\[\text{spite} = \text{spiteful} \]
\[\text{love} = \text{loveless} \]
\[\text{age} = \text{ageless} \]

**But**, if the word ends in *-ce* or *-ge* and the incoming vowel is an _a_, _o_, or _u_, you cannot omit the silent _e_.

\[\text{manage} = \text{manageable} \]
\[\text{courage} = \text{courageous} \]
\[\text{notice} = \text{noticeable} \]

**RULE 4:** Words that end in _y_ must have the _y_ changed to _i_ before adding any suffix.

\[\text{body} = \text{bodily} \]
\[\text{happy} = \text{happiness} \]
\[\text{puppy} = \text{puppies} \]
\[\text{vary} = \text{various} \]
\[\text{merry} = \text{merriment} \]

**RULE 5:** When deciding whether to use *-le*, *-el*, or *-al* at the end of a word, look carefully at the letter that precedes these endings.

*Table*, *local*, and *towel* all sound as if they have the same ending, yet each one has a different spelling for the ending sound. How can you tell which ending to use?

Look at these groups of letters: \(b\,d\,f\,h\,k\,l\,t\) and \(g\,j\,p\,q\,y\)

The first group all have lines that go upward; the second group all have lines that point downward. Lines that point up are called ascenders, and lines that point down are called descendents. If a word has an ascender or a descender preceding the /el/ sound, then the _-le_ ending is used most of the time.

\[\text{table} \]
\[\text{apple} \]
\[\text{candle} \]
\[\text{single} \]
\[\text{rifle} \]

If the word _does NOT_ have an ascender or a descender preceding the last /el/ sound, then you use _-le_ or _-al_. 
With these two options, how do you know which one to use? While there is not a hard and fast rule, some helpful information does exist. The -al ending is used for mostly adjectives, but some nouns. The -le ending is the least common ending (so you won’t be using it much), and it is used mostly for nouns and verbs.

usual (adjective)
local (adjective)
tunnel (noun)
camel (noun)
travel (verb)

**RULE 6:** The /ch/ sound has two spellings. Use *tch* after a short vowel and *ch* anywhere else.

**Short vowel:**
- witch
- catch
- botch
- kitchen
- sketch

**Exceptions:**
- which
- rich
- much
- bachelor
- ostrich

**Anywhere else:**
- chapter
- church
- munch

**Exception:** If the /ch/ sound is followed by *ure*, use a *t* for the /ch/ sound as in *picture* and *rapture*.

**RULE 7:** When the /sh/ sound occurs before a suffix that begins with a vowel, it is spelled with a *ti, si, or ci.*

- partial
- cautious
- patient
- vacation
- nutrition
- quotient
- inertia
- suction
- pension
- suspension
- tension
- expulsion
- special
- deficient
- suspicion
- musician
- physician
- optician
- electrician

When deciding whether to use *-cian, -tion, or -sion*, remember these helpful hints.

- *-cian* is always used when the word refers to a person, and *-tion* and *-sion* are never used for people.

- musician, electrician, physician
- If the root word ends in a /t/, then use -tion.
  complete = completion
  vacate = vacation

- If the root word ends in an s or d, then use sion.
  suppress = suppression
  extend = extension

- If the sound of the last syllable is the heavy sound /zhun/ and not the soft sound /shun/, then use -sion.
  confusion, vision, adhesion

**RULE 8:** When the consonants b, d, g, m, n, or p are after a short vowel in a word with two syllables, you must double that consonant.
  manner
  rabbit
  banner
  dinner

**RULE 9:** Do not confuse the -ed of a past tense verb with the letter t because of the /t/ sound.

*Mist and missed and passed and past sound exactly alike when you speak, but the spellings are quite different. When you are writing, you must be careful to pay attention to the part of speech you are using. If you are writing a past tense verb, add -ed. If you are writing a noun (such as mist or past) or an adjective (such as the other usage of past), then use a t.*

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