Suggestions for improving your spelling:

Memorize a list comprising the little words that cause the most difficulty.

Learn or recall the basic rules of English phonetic spelling.

Master the three basic spelling rules:

Vowels--a, e, i, o, u--are sounded as short vowels when followed by just one consonant (as in rat, get, it, pot, nut) but sound “like their names” when followed by one consonant plus a vowel (as in rate, Pete, site, vote).

Therefore, if you want the short sound preserved in an action word or adjective, you must double the final consonant (as in flabby, getting, sitting, popping, nutty).

In reverse, you drop the silent e when the word is changed so that you get another vowel after the consonant (as in rating, likable, voting, salable, depleting).

There is only one spelling for almost all consonant sounds. The great exceptions are e and g when sounded hard (as in call and gall), or when sounded soft before i and e (as in cent and gentle).

Remember the old jingle: i before e except after c or when sounded like a as in neighbor and weigh.

Find ways to remember the exceptions to the rules. Mnemonic devices (gimmicks to help you remember by association) are often helpful.

The two following sentences contain most of the exceptions:

“Neither financier seized either form of weird leisure.”

The foreign sheik made a science of counterfeiting weirs, seismographs and kaleidoscopes, which was the height of sleight.”

Get a notebook and divide it into three sections. Set aside the first section for words you misspell almost all the time. Use the second section of words you would like to know. Save the final section for words you have mastered, and review this section often.

The secret of success is this: Don’t rush. Work at it slowly and steadily. Make spelling review a part of every day.
According to Normal Lewis's "Be A Perfect Speller in 30 Minutes," 95% of our spelling mistakes occur in just 100 words. Start with the 20 troublesome words listed below. In addition to the correct spelling of each of the words, you will find the simple mnemonic (pronounced nemonic) which should help set that correct spelling indelibly in your memory.

1. All right
   Two words, no matter what it means. Keep in mind that it is the opposite of all wrong.

2. Repetition
   The first four letters are the same as those in repeat.

3. Irritable, inimitable
   Think of allied forms, irritate and (in)imitate.

4. Recommend
   Recommend, which is easy to spell, plus the prefix re-

5. Ridiculous
   Think of the allied form, ridicule, which is usually spelled correctly, thus avoiding the misspelling rediculous.

6. Despair
   Again think of another form --desperate--and so avoid the misspelling dispair.

7. Stationery
   This means standing still, so notice the a in stand, corresponding to the er in stationery.

8. Stationary
   This means standing still, so notice the a in stand, corresponding to the a in stationary.

9. Superintendent
   The superintendent in an apartment house collects the rent--thus you avoid the misspelling -ant.

10. Coolly
    You can spell cool--simply add the adverbial ending -ly.

11. Separate, comparative
    Look for "a rat" in both words

12. Supersede
    The only word in the language ending in -sede.
Succeed, proceed, exceed
The only three words in the language ending in *ceed* in the order given here, the first letters of the three words from the first 3 letters in *spell*.

Cede, recede, precede, etc.
All other words (except those listed in #12 and #14) with a final syllable sounding similar and in -cede.

Procedure
One of the double g’s in *proceed* moves to the end in *procedure*.

Absence
Think of the allied form *absent*, and you will not be tempted to misspell it *absence*.

Conscience
*Science*, plus the prefix *con*.

Anoint
Think of an ointment, hence on double n.

Ecstasy
To sy (sigh) with ecstasy.

Analyze, paralyze
The only two non-technical words in the language ending in -yze.

The only way to learn to spell the words that now plague you is to devise a mnemonic for each one.

**EXAMPLE**: *indispensable*
Say to yourself: “Able men are generally indispensable.”

The sillier the mnemonic, the easier it will be to recall in an emergency.

**EXAMPLE**: *Tranquility*
Say to yourself: “In the old days, life was more tranquil, and people wrote with quills instead of fountain pens.

Other words in the troublesome 100 are:

- surprise
- inoculate
- definitely
- privilege
- incidentally
- balloon
- noticeable
- truly
- vicious
- misspelling
- vacillate
- cancellate
- forty
- dilettante
- changeable
- rhythmical
- vacuum
- benefitted
- committee
- grievous
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More than half of all misspellings on college papers occur in the list of 25 words and word groups below. Keep this list beside you and refer to it frequently when writing.

Their, they’re, there
Their: possessive cause of the pronoun they.
They’re: contraction for they are.
There: an adverb meaning in or at that place. Used also in sentences in which the verb comes before the subject: There is hope of a quick solution.

Too, to, two
Too: an adverb meaning in addition or to an excessive extent or degree.
To: a preposition expressing motion or direction toward something.
Two: a number.

Receive, receiving
Remember the rule: i before e except after c. Not all English words with ei or ie follow the rule, but receive and receiving do.

Exist, existence, existent
Memorize the exact sequence of letters in exist and remember that the other two forms are spelled with e: existence and existent.

Occur, occurred, occurring, occurrence
Remember the basic form occur and remember that any suffix added required that the final r be double.

Definite, definitely, definition, define
There is no a in any of these words and only one i in each of them. Pronounce each word carefully and use the i before the t in the first three forms.

Separate, separation
Remember the a (not e) which always follows p in these words.

Believe, belief
These words also follow the i before e rule.

Occasion
Two c’s and one s.

Lose, losing
Memorize lose and remember that the e drops out to form losing. These words should not be confused with loose, losing, whose general meaning is to free from bonds or not firm.

Write, writing, writer
The long i sound requires just one t; note the difference in pronunciation of writer and
written. The short i sound in written requires a double ɹ.

**Description, describe**
Always an ɹ in the first syllable.

**Benefit, benefitted, beneficial**
Benef is Latin for well; English has kept the Latin spelling. The short ɹ sound in benefitted does not require a double ɹ because the primary accent is not on that syllable.

14. **Precede**
Misspelling of this word results from confusion with proceed, meaning to move forward or to carry on an action. Precede means to go before in time or rank or importance. You'll simply have to learn these spellings and meanings and then commit to memory the fact that procedure, a word used frequently in business writing, is a maverick in its spelling.

**Referring**
Refer ends with one ɹ, but the participle doubles the ɹ. Since referring occurs frequently in business reports, letters and memos, you should learn its spelling.

**Success, succeed, succession**
Keep your attention on the two ɹ’s, which cause most of the trouble in spelling these words.

**Its, it’s**
Its: the possessive case of the pronoun it.
It’s: a contraction of it is.

**Privilege**
The ɹ before the ɹ and the ɹ after the ɹ are the trouble spots in this word.

**Environment**
Careless pronunciation causes most misspellings of this word. Sound the word carefully, syllable by syllable--en-vi-ron-ment.

**Personal, personnel**
Your personal hopes for attaining a career in business will probably start on the road to reality in a personnel office. Note that these two words are pronounced and spelled differently.

**Than, then**
Than: a conjunction used after an adjective or adverb in the comparative degree. (This report is better than last year’s.)
Occasionally than is a preposition followed by a noun or pronoun. (I like this one better than that one.)

As either part of speech, than always indicates some kind of comparison.

Then: An adverb indicating at that time or soon afterward.

**Principle, Principal**
These two words are really three in their functions, and to use them correctly you must know their functions and meanings.

Principle: can be used only as a noun meaning an accepted or professional rule of action or conduct. (He is a man of principles.)

Principal: can be used as an adjective or as a noun. As a noun, principal means a governing official such as the principal of a school or a capital sum of money. (He drew 4% interest on the principal.

**Choose, chose, choice**
Choose is the present tense; chose is the past tense; choice is a noun or an adjective, depending upon its use.

**Perform, performance**
Careful pronunciation will eliminate much of the possibility of error here. The word is not preform but perform.

**Similar**
Here, too, exact pronunciation will help; the most frequent misspelling is a similar, which would have to be pronounced sim-il-yar. The word is properly pronounced sim-i-lar. Remember that the last vowel is an a even though it does not sound like one.