

10 Steps to Better Spelling

1. Use look / cover / write / check

- Write down the word you are learning to spell in clear, legible handwriting.
- **Look** carefully at the word. Think how it's made up. Underline the tricky bits.
- **Say** the word slowly and aloud. Emphasise any slurred or unpronounced letters. Break longer words up into parts.
- **Cover** the word up and try to picture the letters.
- **Write** the word down slowly from memory.
- **Check** it against the original word letter by letter.

2. Break the word up and underline the key parts.

There is often a particular letter or part of the word that causes the problem. Write the word out and underline the problem part:

recognise

surprise

separate

undoubtedly

Break longer words up into syllables or small bits, especially if sounds are slurred or unpronounced:

se-cret-ary

lab-or-at-ory

un-nec-ess-ary part-ic-ul-arly

Overstress the silent or slurred part

Wednesday

veter-in-ary

twelfth

February

3. Use memory tips

- A good **secretary** keeps a secret.
- There's a **bus** in **business**.
- There are two **cups** and one **sugar** in **occasion**
- Chew on this: there's **gum** in **argument**.

4. Keep your vocabulary book up to date

When your English teacher identifies a spelling mistake in your exercise book, correct it in your exercise book and then add it to your vocabulary book.

5. Use a dictionary

Everybody needs to use a dictionary! When you are writing or checking your work and you feel that you have misspelt a word get a dictionary and look it up. There are even dictionary apps so there is no excuse.

6. Take notice of word-families and roots

Knowing the origin or root of the word can make sense of the spelling. The word biscuit contains the French word for cooked (cuit) and the word 'bis' which means twice.

Get to know the main prefixes and suffixes too and then you'll be able to connect the spelling of a word with its meaning. Antiseptic (anti- meaning against) acts against infection.

7. Drafting, proofreading and clear handwriting

Write neatly and clearly as this will help you spell more carefully.

Proof-read every piece of written work you do (in **every** subject) and correct any spelling mistakes (using a dictionary if necessary).

8. Read for pleasure

A comprehensive research study carried out by Dr Alice Sullivan which was based on 6,000 people found that those people who read regularly had better vocabulary, spelling and mathematical skills than those he did not read for pleasure. Ask your English teacher for book recommendations and get reading! Not only will your English improve but you'll get better at Maths too!

9. Learn the 250 key words

These are the most commonly misspelt words. Know them and you'll solve a high percentage of your spelling problems.

Refer to the list often and gradually work at all the key words using learning methods 1 & 2 from this guide.

10. Purchase a spelling workbook

There are many published spelling activity books available to buy. A good one is published by CPG and is reasonable priced. "Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar for GCSE" (ISBN 978 1 84762 891 6). This will help you to revise the spelling, punctuation and grammar spelling rules.

CPG also publish a spelling punctuation and grammar work book so that you can practise the key skills. The ISBN number for this publication is: 978 1 78294 219 1. Your English teacher will gladly mark any of the activities you do from this workbook.