**DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AND GENERAL STUDIES**

**UDS –WA**

**LANGUAGE AND STUDY SKILLS**

***SPELLING***

English spelling is arbitrary and at variance with its pronunciation. Different reasons account for this:

* English has drawn its words from many different sources; e.g. sell’ (Old English); ‘certain’ (French); ‘psychology’ (Greek).
* Some of its pronunciations have changed
* Same sound represented by different spellings

1. The same sound /i:/ can be represented in different ways as in:b*e*, s*ea*, k*ey*, q*uay*, sk*i*, espr*it*, am*oe*ba/ameba, *aeo*n/*eo*n, p*eo*ple, l*ea*ve, th*e*se, etc.

The same /i:/ sound is also spelt *ie*:

niece, priest, siege, believe, f*ie*ld

Exceptions – seize, weird.

After *c* it is spelt *ei:*

deceive, dec*ei*t, receive, ceiling, receipt, conceive, etc.

1. The sound /s/ is represented by different spellings:

pa**ss**, **c**ell, **sc**ience, lap**se**, **ps**alm, whi**stl**e, **sw**ord.

1. There may also be different pronunciations the same combination of letters as in the different sounds of ***ough*** in***:***

c**ough**, r**ough**, b**ough**, th**ough**, th**ough**t, thr**ough**

1. ***c*** before ***a/o/u*** is hard –

**cat, cot, cut, come, cup, can...**

but before *e/i* it is soft –

* + **cent, center, certificate, cite, city,...** except **façade**

***British and American Spelling***

There are differences in spelling between British and American English. In some cases the two occur. Both systems of spelling are accepted but it is important to use only one consistently in a single document.

American British

catalog catalogue

check cheque

offense offence

program programme

color colour

neighbor neighbour

labor labour

flavor flavour

honor honour

vigor labour

center centre

meter metre

fiber fibre

liter litre

ameba amoeba

diarrhea diarrhoea

esophagus oesophagus

archeology archaeology

gynecology gynaecology

encyclopedia encyclopaedia

***-ise/-ize***

Both *ise/ize*endings are acceptable in some words:

* + -ize: capsize, seize,
  + -ise: advise, surprise,

civilise/civilize, civilisation/civilization organise/organize organisation/organization

analyse/analyze paralyse/paralyze

BUT analysis/paralysis

Some words have *–ise form only*:

advertise advise

comprise compromise

disenfranchise enterprise

franchise improvise

merchandise revise

supervise televise, etc.

***Spelling guidelines***

There are only a few spelling guidelines for the English language, but like all other rules of the language there are always exceptions. The best approach to mastering English spelling is to internalize the correct spelling of words as you meet them.

1. **dropping –e before suffix**

If a word ends with a silent *–e (fame)* the *–e* is dropped when a suffix beginning with a vowel is added (*-ous, -ing, -able, -al*)

*fame - famous \*fameous\**

*have - having \*haveing\**

*cure – curable \*cureable\**

*refuse – refusal \*refuseal\**

In 4 words ending in –*ie,* the *i* is changed to *y*

* + *die, tie lie, vie*

*die – dying*

*lie – lying*

*tie- tying*

*vie –vying*

*BUT*

*dye – dyeing*

*singe – singeing (cf singing)*

*swinge- swingeing (cf swinging)*

**(b) Change y to i before suffix**

Ford words ending ***consonant + y*** (e.g. hap***py***); change the ***y*** to ***i*** before any suffix is added:

*happy – happ****ily***

*beauty – beaut****iful****, beautify, beautified*

*mystery – myster****ious***

*amplify – amplif****ication****, amplifier*

*empty – empt****iness****, emptied*

*deny – den****ial****, de****nies*** *den****ied***

However, words that end with a ***vowel*+***y*(e.g. b***oy***) retain the ***y***when a suffix is added.

*toy - toys*

*obey - obeying, obeyed*

*destroy - destroyer*

*play - player*

*buy - buyer, buying*

*employ - employed, employer, employee*

**Exceptions**

There are some exceptions to the above rule. The *y* is retained before –***ness*** in the following:

dryness, shyness, slyness

The y is also retained before *–ing* in:

studying, enjoying.

**PRACTICE**

For each of these words addas many suffixes as you think they can take. e.g. dry - dries, drying, dried, drier, driest.

scanty fancy

handy candy

shabby funny

dry lazy

candy crazy

bounty scary

country infantry

ready heavy

**(c) Place *i* before *e* except after *c***

If the sound is /ee/the spelling is *ie*

*niece, priest, siege, belief, believe, reprieve*

**Exceptions**: *seize, weird,* also *either, neither*

After *c* the /ee/ sound is spelt *ei:*

*deceive, ceiling, perceive, conceive.*

***Using the Dictionary***

A dictionary gives us a lot of information about the vocabulary of a language including;

* Spelling(s): including variant forms; e.g. *judgment, judgement*.
* Definition(s): may include several different senses of a word.
* Parts of speech
* Pronunciation
* Inflectional forms and derivatives
* Synonyms/antonyms
* Usage

*Examples of some entries from the Advanced Learner’s Dictionary.*

**eject**/i'dʒekt/ *v* 1 ̴ sb/sth (from sth) *(fml)* to force sb to leave a place. [Vn] *eject an invading army*[Vnpr] *The police ejected a number of violent protesters from the hall*. 2. ̴ sth (from sth) to force sth out usu violently or suddenly. [Vnpr] *lava ejected from a volcano* ‖ [Vn] *Press ‘Eject’ to release the cassette from the recorder.* 3. ....

►ejection /i'dʒekʃn/ *n* [U, C].

**bank1**/bæŋk/ *n* 1 the land sloping up along each side of a river, or canal......2. a raised slope at the edge of sth. or dividing sth....3......etc.

**bank2**/bæŋk/ *v* 1(of an aircraft) to travel with one side higher than the other, usu when turning......

**bank3** /bæŋk/ *n* an organization or a place that provides a financial service. Customers keep their money in the bank safely and it is paid out ....

**bank4**

**bank5**

ride1/raɪd/ *n* journey or part of a journey on a vehicle....

ride2 /raɪd/ *v* (*pt* **rode***/*rəυd/; *pp* **ridden** /rɪdn/

greed /grɪ:d/ *n ̴* (for sth) *(derog)* 1...

► greedy *adj* (-ier, -iest)...

*The Thesaurus*

A dictionary gives the meanings of words; a thesaurus helps you

* Find the most suitable word for an idea.
* Avoid over using a word
* Find the most specific word
* Replace an abstract term with a more precise one.

*Electronic Dictionary and Thesaurus*:

When you are using a computer to write, the MS Word software program has a dictionary and a thesaurus that can help you find synonyms for words or alternative terms to express yourself. For a word like ‘kind’, put your cursor on the word, right click and a pop-up window appears. Scroll down to “synonyms” left click and the following list appears.

* kind ˃ synonyms ˃ caring

nice

sympathetic

generous

gentle

thoughtful

compassionate

benevolent

Thesaurus

If none of these is suitable you can right click on the word “Thesaurus” and a pane appears on the right of your screen with the following lists. In case you are not looking for *kind* as an adjective you will find several alternative words for *kind* as a noun. The MS Word Thesaurus list for *kind* is illustrated below.

Thesaurus˃ **caring (adj)**

**+** kindhearted

humane

considerate

benign

humanitarian

kindly

**kind**

**type (n.)**

type

class

variety

brand

category

breed

manner

style

nature

hue

caste

sort

form

genre

make

**SPELLING CHECKER**

You can also use the MS Word software to checkyour spelling. The program identifies words that are not in its built-in dictionary, e.g. non-words such as *ther*, for *there*. However when you make confuse between two words like *there* and *their* this cannot be detected.

***Homographs, homonyms and homophones***

**Homographs** are **w**ords that have the **same spelling** but different sound (pronunciations) and meaning.

* I **refuse** your offer of apology. (refuse – *v*)
* Place the **refuse** in the garbage din. (refuse –*n*)
* **bow** (*n)* [bow and arrow]
* **bow** (*v*) [bow down your heads]

**Homonyms** are **w**ords that have the **same spelling,** the **same sound** (pronunciations) but different, but closely related meaning.

‘cool’ (*v*) – Let the machine to cool for an hour.

‘cool’ (*adj*) – The weather is cool.

‘cool’ (*n*) - Don’t panic; keep your cool.

**Look up the following words**

quail/quail bank/bank

book/book ring/ring

fine/fine class/class

**Homophones**

* Two or more words thathave the **SAME** sound (pronunciation) but are **SPELTDIFFERENTLY**. More importantly they have **different meanings**:
  + **residence** - place
  + **residents** – people

‘All the **residence** have been ordered to vacate the town because of the strange disease’.

* + **incidence** – frequency, occurrence, prevalence
  + **incidents** – events, happenings, occasions

There are over 600 pairs in English (*The Oxford Companion of the English Language,* 1992).

* pair/pare/pear
* right/rite/write/wright
* cent/scent/sent

In reading they present no problem, but in **writing** they require an effort of memorization as one word can easily be confused for the other; e.g. when **flair** is written for **flare** or **fare** for **fair.**

**Note:** Some words may not be true homophones; that is, they are not exactly the same in sound, but they are close enough in sound to cause confusion in spelling, e.g.

temporal/temporary;

loose/lose;

once/ones/one’s.

More examples:

affect/effect pail/pale breath/breadth/breathe temporary/temporal born/borne passed/past

boarder/border/bother adapt/adopt corps/corpse

brake/break damage/damages cent/scent/sent

been/being deceased/diseased dear/deer

road/rode fateful/faithful flour/flower

sail/sale formally/formerly read/red

weather/whether plain/plane feather/further/farther

*(Soft copy of Homonym packet) See also pp 92-93 of handout.*

***Word Families***

Words come in families. You can expand your vocabulary by becoming familiar with these word families. This can enable you to become a more fluent speaker and writer of English.

You can express yourself in a wider rage of ways. E.g. If you know the **verb** and the **noun** forms related to the adjective **boring,** you can say:

* The lesson was **boring**. (adj)
* The lesson **bored** me. (verb)
* The lesson was such a **bore**. (noun)

Many of the parts of speech or different members of the family are formed by adding prefixes and suffixes to common words: e.g. **accident – accidental – accidentally**

Sometimes the same form is used as a different part of speech:

**anger – anger**

* + He found it hard to control his **anger.**
  + He always **angers** me with his petty complaints.

Becoming familiar with these word families expands your vocabulary and can enable you to become a better speaker and writer of English.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Nouns** | **Adjectives** | **Verbs** | **Adverbs** |
| ability, disability, inability | able, unable, disabled | enable, disable | ably |
| acceptance | acceptable, unacceptable, accepted | accept | acceptably, unacceptably |
| accident | accidental |  | accidentally |
| accuracy, inaccuracy | accurate, inaccurate |  | accurately inaccurately |
| accusation, the accused, accuser | accusing | accuse | accusingly |
| achievement, achiever | achievable | achieve |  |
| act, action, inaction,  interaction, reaction, transaction | acting | act |  |
| activity, inactivity | active, inactive, interactive, proactive | activate | actively |
| addition | additional | add | additionally |
| avoidance | avoidable, unavoidable | avoid | avoidably |
| base, the basics, basis | baseless, basic | base | basically |
| bearer | bearable, unbearable | bear |  |
| blood, bleeding | bloodless, bloody | bleed |  |
| care, carer | careful, careless, caring, uncaring | care | carefully, carelessly |
| consideration | considerable, considerate, inconsiderate, considered | consider, reconsider | considerably, considerately |
| damage, damages | damaging, undamaged | damage |  |
| drink, drinker, drinking, drunk, drunkenness | drunk, drunken | drink | drunkenly |
| ease, unease, easiness | easy, uneasy | ease | easily, uneasily, easy |
| emphasis | emphatic | emphasize | emphatically |
| energy | energetic | energize | energetically |
| fame, infamy | famed, famous, infamous |  | famously, infamously |
| fashion | fashionable, unfashionable | fashion | fashionably, unfashionably |
| gratitude, ingratitude | grateful, ungrateful |  | gratefully |
| head, heading, headings | overhead, heady | head, behead | overhead |
| loser, loss | lost | lose |  |

**PRACTICE:**

Complete the table below by providing the **noun**, **adjective**, **verb** and **adverb** forms of the words given.As you see in the above examples above some words may have more than one form of a part of speech, while some may not have all four form. Consult a dictionary if you are in doubt.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Nouns** | **Adjectives** | **Verbs** | **Adverbs** |
|  |  | reward |  |
|  | rude |  |  |
| recognition |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | namely |
|  | generous |  |  |
| ground |  |  |  |
| habit |  |  |  |
|  |  | modernize |  |
|  | memorable |  |  |
|  |  | opt |  |
|  |  |  | necessarily |
|  |  |  | skillfully |
|  | strong |  |  |
|  |  | hurt |  |
|  | groundless |  |  |
| purification |  |  |  |
| accountability |  |  |  |
|  | temporary |  |  |
|  |  | lose |  |
|  | loose |  |  |
|  | sharp |  |  |
| gratitude |  |  |  |
|  |  | embolden |  |
|  |  |  | sadly |
|  |  | avoid |  |

Download spelling document [Academic Studies-Spelling Strategies] from:

<http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/academic/english/spelling/module3.pdf>