

[Home](#)**ThoughtCo.**

The 201 Most Commonly Misspelled Words in English

Memory tricks can help you spell the words correctly

By **Richard Nordquist**

Updated November 04, 2019

With a little practice, you can improve your [spelling](#). Begin by reviewing this list of 201 of some of the most commonly misspelled words in [English](#), including advice on how to remember the correct spelling and how to use the words in a [sentence](#). When you're done, test your ability to spell these words with [spelling review exercises](#) and a [quiz on 25 commonly misspelled words](#).

Commonly Misspelled Words

The following table includes the word in the first column, tips such as advice or [mnemonic devices](#) for remembering the [correct spelling](#) in column two, and the word used correctly in a sentence in column three. Where appropriate, some letters are intentionally [uppercased](#) while others are [lowercased](#) to make the [mnemonic device](#) more useful.

Word	Spelling Tip	Use in a Sentence
accommodate	This word can accommodate a double "c" and a double "m."	I would like to accommodate his wishes.

achieve	Remember <u>"i" before "e" except after "c."</u>	He achieved all his dreams.
acquire	I "c" that you want to acquire it.	The team <u>acquired</u> three new players this year.
across	Let "Ross" row across.	Let's row the boat across the pond.
address	Deliver the double "d" to the right address.	Make sure you have the right <u>address</u> before you send the package.
advertise	The ADVERT was revlSEd.	Madison Avenue knows it pays to advertise.
advice	I "c" that you gave me advice.	Good <u>advice</u> is as good as gold.
among	A "monk" was among the worshipers.	He was among the living.
apparent	The AP ate with his PARENT.	It's apparent that he made a mistake.
argument	Gumbo lost an "e" in an argument.	The two politicians got into a heated argument.

athlete	Don't delete the "l" in athlete.	Tom Brady is one of the country's top athletes.
awful	Something that is <u>full of aw</u> is always very bad.	That food smelled awful. It must have spoiled in the fridge.
balance	The BAd man used a LANCE.	Try to strike a balance between diet and exercise.
basically	It's BASIC that I have an ALLY.	He is <u>basically</u> dishonest.
becoming	BEes will be COMING to flowers near you.	The boy is quickly becoming a man.
before	BEe went to the FORE when called upon.	He'll be going away to college before you know it.
beginning	Add an "n" and "ing" to begin to get beginning.	In the beginning, there was the heaven and the Earth.
believe	<u>Do not believe a lie.</u>	I believe in magic.
benefit	BENE is very FIT.	The benefit raised quite a bit of money for

		charity.
breathe	Take an extra “e” when you breathe.	I can’t breathe; I need some air.
brilliant	The BRILLo pad was gIANT.	Einstein’s theory of relativity was brilliant.
business	The BUS IN the terminal was a mESS.	<u>It’s not personal; it’s just business.</u>
calendar	Dara checked the calendar every day.	Look at the calendar to see what date Thanksgiving is on this year.
careful	Careful not to add an extra “l” to careful.	Be careful when crossing the street.
category	The CAT’s Ear is GORY.	When you play <u>jeopardy</u> , pick the right category.
ceiling	Remember “i” before “e” except after “c.”	Do you know how to install a ceiling fan?
cemetery	Eileen found herself at e’s in the cemetery.	Many horror stories take place in a cemetery.
certain	He’s CERebral, so	I’m certain I left my

	don't TAINt it.	keys by the door.
chief	Remember "i" before "e" except after "c."	The chief of police just took over the job last month.
citizen	Don't CITE It; practice ZEN.	The good citizen <u>votes</u> in every election.
coming	Coming is too short to have two "m's."	I'll be coming home soon.
competition	COMe PET IT, ION.	The competition at the track meet was fierce.
convenience	Remember "i" before "e" except after "c."	The convenience store opened at 7 a.m.
criticize	There's no "s" in criticize.	I don't mean to criticize, but you did the problem wrong.
decide	Clide, remove the "l" and spell decide.	You need to decide which man to marry.
definite	DEb had a FINITE spending limit.	I'll need a definite answer today.
deposit	DEb POSITed that we deposit the money.	Don't forgot to deposit the check at the bank.

describe	DEb hired a SCRIBE.	Please describe the man who attacked you.
desperate	DES, PER your direction, rATED it.	I am desperate to find a new place to live.
develop	Lop off the “e” in develop.	They used to develop film in a darkroom.
difference	We DIFFER about pENCE.	What’s the difference between pink and mauve?
dilemma	Emma faced a dilemma.	I’m in a terrible dilemma; I don’t know what to do.
disappear	It takes two “p’s” but only one “s” to spell disappear.	The boy just disappeared. I hope he wasn’t kidnapped.
disappoint	You have a point; add the second “p” in disappoint.	I hate to disappoint my mother.
discipline	The DISC Is Perfectly in LINE.	He is a believer in strong discipline.
does	The DOE Sang.	Does she want to come with us?

during	DU bought a RING.	It happened during the night.
easily	The bEASt Is loveLY.	My mom is so easily fooled.
eight	There's an eight in height.	"Eight Is Enough" was the name for a TV show.
either	Ed Is THERE.	Either he goes, or I do.
embarrass	It's hard to EMBArrass Really Righteous And Serious Students.	I don't want to embarrass you, but your pants have a rip.
environment	A new environment will iron me out.	Many people are concerned about the environment.
equipped	Emphatically, hE QUIPPED that he had the gear for the job.	The plane is equipped with many of the modern luxuries and comforts.
exaggerate	Goofy Greg loved to exaggerate.	Don't exaggerate; the fish you caught was only three inches long.
excellent	The EXact CELL is bENT.	The meal was excellent.

except	My EX is Certain I'm inEPT.	The student completed all the problems except the last one.
exercise	I EXERt and I'm preCISE when I exercise.	To lose weight, you need to eat nutritious foods and exercise.
existence	I EXIST with mike pENCE.	Many have debated the existence of an all- powerful being.
expect	I met my EX in PE, what did you expeCT?	What did you expect?
experience	My EX said that PER Irv we'll invite mike pENCE.	The trip was a great experience for the kids.
experiment	PER my EX, I MENTored him.	Scientists perform many experiments to find the truth.
explanation	My EX had a PLAN AT the unION.	I think he deserves an honest explanation.
familiar	That liar looks familiar.	The surroundings look familiar, but I'm still lost.

fascinating	It's "s" before "c" in fascinating.	Mr. Spock found many things to be fascinating.
finally	In the end, there are two "l's" in finally.	He has finally arrived; now we can eat our Thanksgiving meal.
foreign	FOR EIGght, the Nation said they were foreign dignitaries.	He grew up in a foreign country.
forty	There's no "u" in forty.	The punt return specialist ran the ball back forty yards.
forward	FOR sam, he was a WARD of the court.	Be optimistic; always look forward.
friend	Don't be a fiend; insert the "r" in friend.	He was a dedicated and loyal friend.
fundamental	Fundamental is just FUN, DAMEN, and TAL.	We have fundamental differences of opinion.
generally	Generally, a general is your best ally.	The teacher was generally correct.
government	The GOVERNor was deMENTed.	The government might shut down if the parties

		don't reach a deal.
grammar	GRAM didn't want to MAR our grammar.	I try, but my grammar is atrocious.
guarantee	The GUARd ANd the TEE n guaranteed it.	The car has a 100,000-mile guarantee.
guidance	The GUIDe was in a trance because there's only one "e" in guidance.	The guidance counselor advised the student not to attend college.
happiness	Drop the "y" and replace it with an "i" to achieve happiness.	Jefferson wrote that all people are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
heroes	HE ROPed an E for hiS heroes.	World War II produced many heroes.
humorous	He HUMs fOR the mOUSE.	The author was very humorous. His books displayed great wit.
identity	There is an "ID" in identity.	It's easy to have your identity stolen.
imaginary	IMAGINe there's no heaven. It's eAsy if you tRY.	The little girl had an imaginary friend.

imitation	Don't imitate. There's only one "m" in imitation.	Imitation is the greatest form of flattery.
immediately	Mom ate immediately.	Come here immediately.
incidentally	He INCIted by DENTing the car of his ALLY.	Incidentally, I borrowed your car last night.
independent	There is a dent in independent.	The young man was very independent.
intelligent	IN TELLing the GENT, he showed he was intelligent.	She is extremely intelligent; she scored 1,600 on her SAT.
interesting	The INTERN was bEST at showING he was interesting.	This article is very interesting.
interfere	The INTERN watered the FERn, I sEe.	Please do not interfere.
interpretation	The INTERN PRETended that stATION was near.	The two had very different interpretations as to what happened.
interruption	Don't interrupt:	The interruption

	Interruption has two “r’s.”	couldn’t be helped; his wife was having a baby.
invitation	INVITe me to offer a rATIONale.	He received an invitation to the birthday party.
irrelevant	Don’t make the second “r” in irrelevant irrelevant. And there’s an “ant” at the end.	The information he provided was irrelevant.
irritable	It would irritate me if you forgot the second “r” in irritable, and set the table at the end.	After the operation, she was very irritable.
island	An island IS LAND surrounded by water.	Hawaii is made up of a group of islands.
jealous	JEAn’s a LOUSe to be jealous.	He was jealous of her former lover.
judgment	Unlike judge, there is no “e” after the “g” in judgment.	He showed bad judgment by putting that story in the paper.
knowledge	I KNOW you can reach the LEDGE.	How do you measure the sum of all knowledge?

laboratory	I had to LABOR at orATORY.	The scientist labored away in her laboratory.
length	Make it longer by putting a “g” between the “n” and “t” in length.	He ran the kickoff return the length of the football field.
lesson	Listen to the lesson, and spend LESS time ON studying.	The teacher gave a lesson on World War II.
library	Take the liberty of putting two "r's" in library.	You'll find many books in the library.
license	To say he had LICE is nenseNSE.	That's not a license to steal.
loneliness	The LONE LINE did have SS at the end.	Emily Dickenson suffered from great loneliness.
losing	I like to hear LO SINGers.	Coach Vince Lombardi hated losing.
lying, laying	Truthfully, there's a “y” but no “ie” in lying.	I was lying on my back, while he was laying the book down.
marriage	He MARRied her in a carrIAGE.	Their marriage is on the rocks.

mathematics	MATH plus E equals matheMATICS.	The professor was an expert in mathematics.
medicine	Club MED Is at the CINEmA.	All medical doctors practice medicine in one form or another.
miniature	MINI A has no staTURE.	Legoland has many miniature scenes built from the interlocking blocks.
minute	Minute is MINU and TE.	It only takes a minute.
mysterious	MY STERIO is for US.	She was very mysterious.
naturally	NATURE has an ALLY.	She is naturally blond.
necessary	It's necessary to remember the CESSpool in the middle.	Is that really necessary?
neighbor	The horse NEIGHed at the BORing man.	My neighbor lends me his tools.
neither	NEII Is THERE.	It's neither here nor there to me.

noticeable	The notice is able to help.	His gray hair was very noticeable.
occasion	It's an occasion to remember that occasion has two "c's" and one "s."	Christmas is a special occasion.
occurred	It occurred to him that there are two "c's" and two "r's" in occurred.	It never occurred to her to change the light bulb.
official	Old Frank Finklestein Is Cute In A Loving way.	It's official: He's now the president.
often	OF mice and men there were TEN.	I don't come here very often.
omission	Omit the second "m" but not the second "s" in omission.	Forgetting the wine was an omission on my part.
operate	I hOPE to RATE it.	The doctor decided to operate.
optimism	Let's hOP with TIM into the schISM.	I have great optimism that better days are ahead.

original	ORIGAmI is NAL's favorite.	His work wasn't very original.
ought	Ought is "bought" minus the "b."	He ought to have told you.
paid	PA Is Done with work.	When do you get paid?
parallel	Two "l's" form parallel lines in parallel.	Parallel parking can be difficult.
particularly	PART Is in the CULt with ARLY.	His error was particularly egregious.
peculiar	It's peculiar the PECU is a LIAR.	That bird is very peculiar.
perceive	It's "i" before "e" except after "c."	I perceive things differently from you.
perform	PER the directions they FORMed a line.	Will the band perform tonight?
permanent	The PERM on the mAN cost just a cENT.	That change was permanent.
persevere	PER the directions, he SEVEREd it.	The only way to succeed is to persevere.

personally	The PERSON was an ALLY.	Personally, I don't like it.
persuade	PER the SUn, he had it mADE.	I tried to persuade him that he is wrong.
picture	The PIC was taken at the right aperTURE.	That's a beautiful picture.
piece	Have a piece of the pie.	He was eating a piece of chicken.
planning	Plan to put two "n's" in planning.	I was planning to come later.
pleasant	He tried to PLEASE the ANT.	The visit has been very pleasant.
political	The POL Is noT ethICAL.	Everything is so political these days.
possess	Remember to possess two double "s's" in possess.	You don't possess an ounce of dignity.
possible	The POSSe Is BLESSed.	It's not possible to get the assignment completed in time.
practical	PRACTICE to replace the "e" with "AL" in	It's not practical to rely on magic.

	practical.	
prefer	PREP the FERn.	I prefer orange juice to lemonade.
prejudice	Don't PREJUDGE; think twICE.	The racist was full of prejudice.
presence	The PRESident chose pENCE.	He made his presence known.
privilege	Privilege is just PRIVI with a LEG and an E.	It's been a privilege to meet you.
probably	He handled the PROBLEM ABLY.	I could probably meet for lunch next week.
professional	The PROFESSor said there are two "s's" in professional, too.	He was very professional in his conduct at work.
promise	The PROM date was a surprise.	I will never promise you a rose garden.
proof	I have proof that there are two "o's" in proof.	Einstein showed proof of his theory of relativity.
psychology	<u>Please Say You Can Hit Old Ladies, Or Get Yogurt.</u>	He practiced psychology for many years.

quantity	The QUANT Is TinY.	That's a large quantity of grapes.
quarter	The QUARTEt is Ready.	Four quarters make a dollar.
quiet	Please keep quiet about my diet.	Just be quiet!
quit	Quiet lost its "e" and became quit.	No, I won't quit this job.
quite	Quit added an "e" and became quite.	That's quite a statement you made.
realize	The REAl man materialLIZEd.	I didn't realize I was being so loud.
receive	Remember "i" before "e" except after "c."	It's better to give than to receive.
recognize	Ryan Epping was COGent about having to orgaNIZE.	He was recognized for his bravery.
recommend	I recommend you put two "m's" in recommend.	I highly recommend the applicant.

reference	REFER it to mike pENCE.	I'd be happy to serve as a reference.
religious	RELIGate the task to the pIOUS man.	There's a great divide between religious and nonreligious people.
repetition	REPEaT IT In unisON.	Repetition is the best way to learn.
restaurant	REST before you and your AUnt start to RANT..	He ran a very clean restaurant.
rhythm	Rhythm Helps Your Two Hips Move.	Dance to the rhythm of the night.
ridiculous	RID the Island of CUrious LOUSes.	Your crazy plan is just ridiculous.
sacrifice	Use the SACK to RId the ofFICE of mice.	It was a great sacrifice for me to come here.
safety	Safely add "ty" to safe to get safety.	He needs to heed the safety rules.
scissors	Steve Cut Into the Seven Samurai on Orders from Rick Smith.	Never run with scissors.

secretary	Just add “ary” to secret to get secretary.	The secretary is very quick at taking dictation.
separate	There's A RAT in separate.	There are separate doors at the front and back of the house.
shining	Marty hurt his SHIN chopping wood.	The sun was shining brightly.
similar	SIMI valley has a lot of LARd.	The two theories are very similar.
sincerely	Pair SINCE and RELY to get sincerely.	Generally, end a letter by saying “sincerely.”
soldier	Sam Ordered Larry to DIE Respectfully for his country.	The soldier died in battle.
speech	Draw it out: Put two “e’s” in speech.	Martin Luther King Jr. gave a memorable speech in Washington.
stopping	STOP and hear the PING.	We’ll be stopping at the store on the way home.
strength	Schwarzenegger Trained REally Nicely	The athlete showed great strength and agility.

	at Gold's gym on The highway.	
studying	Just add "ing" to study to get studying.	I've been up all night studying.
succeed	To succeed requires two "c's" and two "e's."	If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.
successful	Be successful: Put two "c's" and two "s's" in successful.	The businesswoman is very successful.
surely	Sure, just add "ly" to get surely.	Surely you don't believe that!
surprise	The SURPlus caused inventory to RISE.	It was a wonderful surprise to see you here.
temperature	The TEMP, Ed, Realized Afterward That Umpire Rick Equivocated.	He had a temperature of 100.4 F.
temporary	The TEMP Or Rick Ate Real Yogurt.	Relax. This situation is only temporary.
through	Just add "hr" to tough to get through.	He counted every number from one through 10,000.

toward	I TOW an ARDvark.	Never run toward danger.
tries	Just switch the "i" and "r" in tires to get tries.	He tries so hard, but he rarely succeeds.
truly	Tom Really Understands Libby's Yeti.	I truly appreciate your help.
twelfth	The TWin ELF THought about it.	He worked until the twelfth of the month.
until	To spell until, just think untile without the "e."	He worked until the twelfth of the month.
unusual	UNUSed, Uni Asked Larry for a loan.	It's unusual to duplicate sentences, but sometimes it's called for.
using	Using is just like use, but replace the "e" with "ing."	I don't like using a computer.
usually	USU was his ALLY.	He usually arrives early.
village	It takes two "l's" to spell village.	It takes a village to solve problems.

weird	Moving the "e" turns wired into weird.	That man was weird.
welcome	WE Love COmmunists from MEndecino.	Welcome to the jungle.
Whether, weather	<u>Heather likes cold WEATHER, WHETHER or not anyone else does.</u>	Whether I want to accept it or not, the weather will soon turn to snow.
writing	To write writing, just drop the "e" and replace with "ing."	As of this writing, the information is correct.