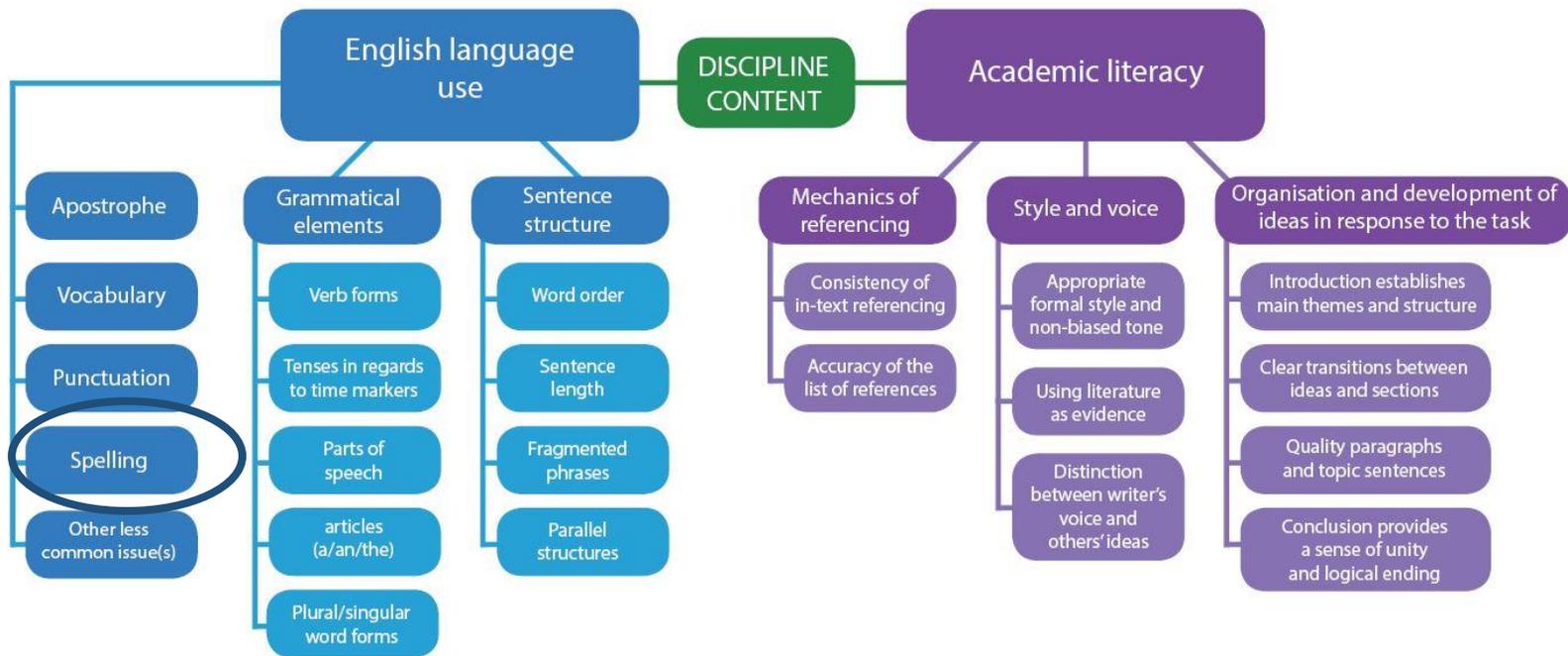


Spelling

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE FEEDBACK GUIDE



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Updated 6 February 2017

Re-visit

Spelling is important because it can change the meaning of a word. If you misspell a word it gives the impression that you do not understand or care about the content of what you are writing.

Many spelling mistakes are actually typing errors where letters are left out or repeated. For example:

commonlyy		commonly	
my self		myself	
therefor		therefore	

It is very important that you proofread carefully and use the spelling and grammar check on your word processor which will pick up these mistakes very quickly.

Phonetic spelling

Phonetic spelling is when you try to spell a word the way it sounds. While you can do this with some words (cat, dog), you cannot do it with all words - especially those with silent letters. For example:

✓ *Concede/conceed* ✗

✓ *losing/loosing* ✗

✓ *accommodate/acomodate* ✗

✓ *government/goverment* ✗

The schwa (a vowel sound that is not pronounced strongly) can also cause phonetic spelling. For example:

✓ *separate/seperate* ✗

✓ *definitely/definatly* ✗

✓ *hospital/hospitul* ✗

Homophones are words that sound the same but are spelled differently. Spell check will not pick these up. For example:

your/you're

there/their/they're

leased/least

accept/except

write/right

principle/principal

Sometimes words with similar spelling are used incorrectly. Spell check will not pick these up either. For example:

would've/would of

college/collage

rogue/rouge

then/than

Spelling rules

Knowing spelling rules can be useful. For example, here are some spelling rules about adding suffixes:

Rule 1: Remove the silent *e* from the end of a word before adding a suffix that begins with a vowel.

reserve	+ ation =	reservation	
write	+ ing =	writing	
resource	+ ful =	resourceful	because the suffix begins with a consonant

Rule 2: Change *y* to *i* before adding a suffix if it is preceded by a consonant.

beauty	+ ful =	beautiful	
try	+ ed =	tried	
employ	+ ed =	employed	because the <i>y</i> is not preceded by a consonant.

Rule 3: Double the final consonant before adding a suffix if it is preceded by a vowel.

begin	+ ing =	beginning	
transmit	+ er =	transmitter	
publish	+ ed =	published	because the final consonant is not preceded by a vowel

Root words

English spelling is not always easy to work out from the sound of a word. The history and meaning of the word are often more important.

If you are having trouble spelling a word, the “root” of a word, to which prefixes and suffixes are added, is helpful to know.

Prefix	Root	Suffix	Word
re +	act		= react
	act	+ ivity	= activity
Inter +	act	+ ion	= interaction

For more information on root words, see the link to Gina Cooke’s resource in the ‘Learn more’ section of this module.

Ways to improve spelling

1. The Look, Cover, Write, Check method is an effective way to learn words you often spell incorrectly.

1. Copy down the correct spelling of the word and look at it for one minute – try to think of a way to remember the spelling

2. Cover the word

3. Write the word

4. Check whether you have spelled the word correctly.

5. Repeat five times.

2. Mnemonics

It often helps to make up a story about a word to help remember the spelling. Ask your friends if they know any. Here are some examples:

<i>Business</i>	Bus – i – ness. I take the <i>bus</i> to my <i>business</i> (break up a word into smaller parts)
<i>Family</i>	<i>F</i> ather and <i>m</i> other <i>I</i> love you
<i>Cemetery</i>	The lady screamed “ <i>e-e-e</i> ” as she walked past the <i>cemetery</i> (it has 3 “e”s)
<i>Believe</i>	Never <i>believe</i> a <i>lie</i> (smaller words inside larger words)
<i>Immediately</i>	<i>Mum ate immediately</i> (two <i>mm</i> and <i>ate</i>)

Quick tips

Quick tips

Use the spelling and grammar check in your word processor to help with your writing. Remember to check words like *their/there* or *effect/affect* as these may not be detected by the check.

When you read, pay attention to the way words are spelled. Try to make up or learn mnemonics to help you remember spelling.

Keep a list of words you commonly misspell and be aware of commonly misspelled words.

Learn more

Useful links on spelling:

[Oxford living dictionary – spelling](#)

[Oxford living dictionary – commonly](#)

[confused words](#)

[Logic of English – spelling rules](#)

[Gina Cooke, Making sense of spelling, TED-Ed](#)

[Using English for Academic Purposes –](#)

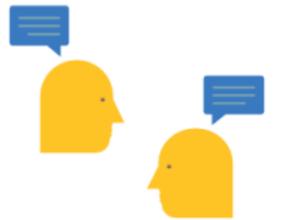
[Academic word list](#)

Face-to-face support

Who can help with English at Monash?

English Connect –

conversational circles,
peer feedback on your
writing and grammar
workshops



Grammar books

- Azar, B. S. & Hagen, S.A. (2009). *Understanding and using English grammar (4th ed.)*. USA: Pearson Longman.
- Borjars, K. & Burridge, K. *Introducing English grammar (2nd ed.)*. London: Hodder Education.
- Foley, M. & Hall, D. (2012). *MyGrammarLab (Advanced)*. England: Pearson.
- Hewings, M. (2012). *Advanced grammar in use: a reference and practice book for advanced students of English (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Murphy, R. (2011). *English Grammar in Use (Intermediate) (3 ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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