

SPELLING

Do you think you **are** good at spelling or do you have a mental block when you **see** unfamiliar words and try to ascertain if they are spelled **correctly?** You are **not** alone. Spare a thought for foreign **students** when they are learning English as a second language. They are confronted with **our** homophones **(words)** that sound the same but have **a** different meaning) **eg** there/their, here/hear, cite/sight/site.

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What are you doing about **improving** your spelling? One way of improving is to keep a small **notebook** in your bag and every time you see a word you are unfamiliar **with**, write it down and look up the meaning in a **dictionary** when you get time. This method requires discipline and the attitude to succeed and improve your knowledge of the **English** language. Words which you **know** the meaning of, but are unsure of the spelling, write the word down in such a way that you will remember the spelling. Many people get confused with the words **'occurred'** and 'referred' and often miss one of the double consonants. If you **write** the words down with a small space **between** the syllables eg 'occur red', 'refer red' and say what you **see**, you will **hear** the second 'r' and not have trouble spelling these words in future.

A **candidate's** success in an exam may depend on **their** ability to be able to spell correctly. It is sad to see candidates fail **(too much space)** exams by a few marks through lack of English grammar skills.

There is a saying that 'good readers make good writers' and this is probably true. When you **read** your brain will take in **sentence** construction, **grammar**, when to use punctuation correctly, how to use paragraphs, layout and of **course** spelling. It does not matter what you read as long as you read and repeat the words in your head rather **than** just giving a cursory glance and skimming **your** eyes over words. Read the cornflake packet when having **breakfast**, read the **advertisements** on the bus and textbooks when you are at college. Do not skip words but read for meaning and **understanding**. If you see words you do not **know** how to spell, keep a list and ask someone in the family to test you on these **words**. Learn them by sticking up post-it notes in your bedroom so that you are **constantly** looking at these problem spellings and when you know them, **put** up another couple of **post-it** notes with different words on them. Each time you **have** replaced the **words** then you have

expanded your knowledge of spelling and **vocabulary**. Think how much quicker your typing speed **becomes** if you do not have to look up words in a dictionary. Do not **rely** on spellcheckers on computers as they are usually the American version of words eg 'color' whereas the British version 'colour'.

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Some **people's** **spelling** skills come naturally. If you are not one of these fortunate people, decide how you are going to **improve** your ability. To ignore the fact that your spelling is letting you down means you will go through life with less confidence, perhaps miss out on promotion in your job and sending out **correspondence** from a legal office containing spelling errors is **unforgivable**.

541 words