

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING LITERATE

The article deals with the importance of English spelling. A number of particular aspects of difficulty in this sphere as well as the ways of solving these problems are presented. Some practical recommendations for making the learning process more entertaining are also given here.

To be literate means to know the meaning of the word and to know how to spell it. (We don't deny the importance of the other aspects of English grammar as it is obvious.) Some people can object that there is no sense to waste time remembering correct spelling as almost all of them have the computer programme of spelling. But one can't use the computer everywhere and in many situations the computer is unable to help as literate English has a lot of metaphors. And of course, if someone wants to fill out an application, it should be remembered that the errors don't make a good impression. Schools, including graduate schools and technical institutes, are demanding that their applicants have more and better preparation in the language arts. Moreover, these schools are requiring students to take an increased amount of instruction in speaking and writing. A vocabulary test is a standard part of all qualifying examinations for colleges, for positions in civil service and many businesses and for license to practice many professions [2].

So, if a problem is identified and understood it is quite possible to look for and find the ways out. Here are some major complications which may arise in learning word spelling.

1. Even if you know the meaning of the word you can be trapped by a number of words-homophones, which are pronounced alike but are different in spelling, meaning, or both. For example:

- Aisle - I'll - isle*
- Accept - except*
- Adapt - adopt*
- Advice - advise*
- Affect - effect*
- Everyday - every day*
- May be - maybe*
- Abandoned - abundant*
- Profit - prophet, etc. [1].*

2. At the same time one should be aware of one more snare in studying language - homographs - the words with the same spelling but different pronunciation and meaning. Exposing such examples on the black-board at the lesson might be quite entertaining.

- The bandage was wound around the wound.*
- We must polish the Polish furniture.*
- He could lead if he would get the lead out.*
- The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.*
- The insurance was invalid for the invalid.*
- There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.*

They were too close to the door to close it.
Also, one shouldn't forget about the derivatives - different parts of speech (like nouns and verbs) which have the same spelling and origin but differ in stress, precise meaning and sometimes in pronunciation.

- The 'produce — to pro 'duce*
- The 'refuse - to re fuse*
- The 'present— to pre'sent*
- The 'object — to ob ject*
- The 'subject — to sub ject*
- The 'conduct - to con 'duct*
- The 'contact - to con 'tact*
- The 'impact - to im 'pact*
- The 'intimate \-mit\ — to 'intimate \-meit*

So, in order not to make a spelling mistake one has to know and remember the difference in the meaning of the doubtful words.

3. And finally we should mention the difference in spelling and vocabulary between British and American variants of English. A historical study of any language proves that languages are always changing. Some lexical items become extinct. New concepts and ideas are created, new lexical items are coined. Grammatical rules are violated, then changed, new rules are created and, if they survive, they become standard after some time. There is a good number of such varieties in modern English, though there exists a stable tendency of unification of the two varieties and it seems likely the number of discrepancies will be further decreasing.

But as the differences still exist one must clearly distinguish and remember them:

American English	British English
honor	honour
labor	labour

behavior	behaviour
neighbor	neighbour
theater	theatre
center	centre
defense	defence
license	licence
offense	offence
inquiry	enquiry
dialog	dialogue
catalog	catalogue
program	programme
mustache	moustache
judgment	judgement [4]

There is no simple way of learning words. Vocabulary study must begin with an interest in words and must be diligently pursued in the following ways:

1) **A brief study of the origin, development and nature of the English language.** Knowledge of this kind provides helpful information about words themselves and especially about how they are related to form a system of communication.

2) **A study of the origins and development of words.**

3) **A study of the use of words.**

4) **A study of the pronunciation, spelling, and inflectional forms of words.** One should learn to spell and pronounce words as they are acquired. Spelling and pronouncing words will help in remembering them. One must also learn how new words are inflected for number, case, and person [1].

To solve the problems of spelling and memorizing word **lists can be helpful.** They present words students should know and they lead them gradually to higher levels of difficulty. Using the word lists, students can save time by passing quickly from familiar words to unfamiliar ones and concentrating on them.

It is useful to keep a vocabulary note-book which helps you to restudy words. Thus, you can methodically refresh your memory and prevent words from slipping away. In such vocabulary you ought to indicate the word itself, pronunciation, part of speech, and meaning. A vocabulary list may be kept on index cards which have the advantage of being more flexible than a notebook. Write the word on one side and the full entry on the other [2].

Nevertheless, studying word lists is not a satisfactory way of learning words. A list presents words out of context; each word has to be looked up in the dictionary and memorized. The task is slow, tedious, and dull. Without a guiding context, students must study each word with extraordinary care and find examples of its use. A word list is helpful as a

guide and a check, but it is otherwise of little use as a learning device. **Words should be studied in context [2]. Spelling is inseparably linked to the meaning of the word and the context.**

Though spelling is an important aspect of written communication, instructors seldom have the opportunity to spend adequate classroom time on the subject. The responsibility for the mastery of spelling rests almost solely on the individual student [3]. The task of the teacher is to make this process easier and a little bit more entertaining. Here are a few practical suggestions on how to approach the problem of spelling:

1. Always use the dictionary when you are in doubt about the spelling of a word.

2. If there is a rule applicable to the type of words that you misspell, learn that rule.

3. Employ any "tricks" that might assist you in remembering the spelling of particular words giving you trouble. If, for example, you confuse the meaning and hence the spelling of *statue* and *stature*, remember that the longer word refers to bodily "longness." Certain troublesome words can be spelled correctly if you remember their prefixes (as in *dis/appoint*) or their suffixes (as in *cool/ly*). Besides, it might help you to remember that there are only three *-ceed* words: *exceed*, *proceed*, and *succeed*.

4. Keep a list of the words that you misspell. In writing down these words, observe their syllabication and any peculiarities of construction. Try to "see" - that is, to have a mental picture of - these words.

5. Practice the correct pronunciation of troublesome words. Misspelling is often the result of mispronunciation.

Of the many rules governing spelling, these four are particularly useful since they are widely applicable.

1) **Final e (drops or retains)**

Drop the final **e** before a suffix beginning with a vowel (-ing, -ous, etc.) but retain the final **e** before a suffix beginning with a consonant (-ment, -ly, etc.).

Come + ing = coming

Fame + ous = famous

Move + ment = movement

Fate + ful = fateful

Exceptions: *Acknowledge - acknowledgment, abridge - abridgment, judge - judgment, dye - dyeing, singe - singeing, hoe - hoeing, mile - mileage, due - duly, awe - awful, whole - wholly.* The final **e** is retained after **c** or **g** when the suffix begins with **a** or **o**: *peace - peaceable, courage - courageous.*

2) **Final consonant (doubles or not)**

Double a final consonant before a suffix beginning with a vowel (1) in words of one syllable

containing a single vowel, or (2) in words of more than one syllable whose accent falls on the last syllable:

Stop + ed = stopped

Occur + ence = occurrence

Do not double a final consonant before a suffix beginning with a vowel (1) in words of one syllable but two vowels, or (2) in words of more than one syllable whose last syllable is unaccented:

Shout + ing = shouting

Benefit + ed = benefited

3) *ei* or *ie* in the root of the word

When *ei* and *ie* have the long *ee* sound (as in *keep*), use *i* before **e** except after *c*; *i* follows all consonants except *c*, and **e** follows *c*

ie	ei (after <i>c</i>)
<i>chief</i>	<i>ceiling</i>
<i>field</i>	<i>receive</i>
<i>niece</i>	<i>deceive</i>
<i>siege</i>	<i>conceit</i>

Exceptions (grouped to form a sentence): *Neither financier seized either species of weird leisure.*

4) **Final,;**

In words ending in *y* preceded by a consonant, change the *y* to *i* before any suffix except one beginning with *i*.

Suffix beginning with a letter other than <i>i</i>	Suffix beginning with <i>i</i>
-------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

Fly + es = flies

fly + ing = flying

Easy + ly = easily

study + ing = studying

Mercy + ful = merciful

Study + ous = studious [3].

From our own experience and that of our colleagues we can recommend the following aids:

1. In order to "help" you, ask the students to spell the words you are writing on the black-board.

2. Play the game "Shark" when the students are asked to guess the word calling different letters one by one. They know only the number of the letters that make the word. If the students fail they will be "eaten by the shark".

3. Dictate the first form of the irregular verbs and ask the students to write the other two forms. After that the neighbours exchange their copy-books and correct spelling if it is needed. The students evaluate the work of their mates.

4. Distribute cards with proverbs on the walls, divide the students in two groups and ask the members of one group to read them, remember and go back to their places to dictate them to their partners. Later they discuss the proverbs and look up the unfamiliar words in the dictionary.

5. Organize a competition between two groups of students. Two members of the opposite groups write as many idioms on a certain theme as they remember. Their groups help them and check the spelling without looking into the note-books. Then the expressions are explained by the members of the groups.

6. Each lesson find five minutes for a short dictation.

Spokesmen for business and industry are now declaring that the ability to speak and write is even more important to them than ability in technical matters. And finally, a number of vocabulary studies made in recent years have shown that there is a high degree of correlation between the size of one's vocabulary and success in life, regardless of how success is defined.

In the face of this evidence it is impossible for anyone to doubt the efficacy of a strong vocabulary. Knowledge of words and the ability to speak and write with proficiency are essential to one's intellectual development, achievement, and employment [2].

1. *Deborah K. Williams*. NTC's Dictionary of Easily Confused Words. NTC Publishing Group, 1995.

2. *Murray Bromberg, Cedric Gale*. Vocabulary Success. Barron's, 1998.

3. *Butler E., Hickman M. A., McAlexander P. J., Overby L.* Correct Writing. D. C Heath and Company, 1995.

Fedorichenko L. Elements of British and American English. Наукові записки НаУКМА. Філологічні науки, - Т. 19.- К.: Вид. дім «КМ Академія», 2001.

О. Духота

ПРОБЛЕМА ГРАМОТНОСТІ В АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ

У статті йдеться про важливість і необхідність уміння грамотно писати для сучасної людини, яка хоче досягти успіху. Досліджено певну кількість складних ситуацій англійського правопису та лексики, а також надано конкретні рекомендації щодо полегшення вивчення проблемних слів та сполучень.