

# Five Simple Everyday Spelling Tips



In everyday spelling, we all make some common mistakes. Here are 5 quick things you can do **now** to improve your writing.

## 1. Master these 10 commonly-misspelled words:

*a lot, because, definite, doesn't, friend, necessary, occasion, separate, sincerely, and tomorrow* (For a longer list, please see our list of **102 Frequently Misspelled Words.**)

### Quick Tip:

You may have **a lot** of work to do, or **a lot** of bills to pay. You may be planning to have **a lot** of fun over the weekend.

But you will not (correctly) be doing *alot* of any of these things. A *lot* is spelled with TWO words.

This is not alot of money...

...but it is *a lot* of money!



Please note that there is a word *allot*. It is a verb that means to assign or reserve something.

For example, a company might *allot* one locker to each employee. Or, you might *allot* two shelves in your garage to food storage.



## 2. Use the right word.

Study these commonly confused word pairs, and any others that are confusing to you.

### accept/except

accept – to receive, agree to or believe. *He couldn't accept the fact that he was fired.*

except – not including. *Everyone went to the store except Sally.*

### are/our

are – helping verb. *We are happy that it's snowing.*

our – belonging to us. *This is our new car.*



### desert/dessert

desert – dry region. *Few plants grow in the desert.*

dessert – sweet course at the end of the meal. *Mary likes to serve pie for dessert.*

## 3. Master the apostrophe.

The poor apostrophe is greatly abused in many everyday spelling situations!

An apostrophe is used correctly in contractions, such as *don't*, *I'll*, and *they're*. The apostrophe in *it's* says the word means *it is*. In which sentence is the apostrophe used correctly?



It's time to eat lunch. (It is time to eat lunch.)

The cat finished it's food. (The cat finished it is food.)

Clearly, the apostrophe belongs only in the first sentence.



*The apostrophe is also used in many possessive words. It is not used in plurals.*

How many times have you seen signs like this?

*We make the best burrito's.*

Wrong. (Actually, the restaurant may, in fact, make the best *burritos*.) But if there is an apostrophe, something must belong *to* the burrito. It would be correct to say,

*My burrito's flavor is out of this world!*

The flavor belongs to the burrito.

#### 4. Use the correct homonym.

Our **list of 50 sets of frequently-confused homonyms** covers the ever popular *their/there/they're*, *to/too/two*, and 48 more sets.

#### 5. Proofread everything you write.



You will catch many of your own everyday spelling errors when you take just a couple of minutes to read your work over. Better yet, read it aloud. Best tip of all? Let someone else read it. The more important the document, the more crucial it is to proofread it.

