

TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR SPELLING

- **Purchase a collegiate dictionary and take the time to look up the correct spellings of unfamiliar words.**
- **Use your word processor's spell-checker function.** Be sure to take advantage of the spell-checker as you edit and proofread your drafts. However, keep in mind that this function will not catch all spelling errors; for example, it cannot detect the incorrect use of *it's* versus *its* or of homonyms such as *there* versus *their* and *weather* versus *whether*. (See 25d for a list of homonyms.)
- **Proofread your drafts for spelling errors.** To avoid being distracted by the flow of ideas in your essays, proofread them backward, from the last word to the first, looking only for misspellings. For words that sound alike but have different spellings (*to/too/two*, *their/there*), stop to check their use in the sentence and determine whether you have used the correct word.
- **Keep a list of words you commonly misspell.** Whenever you catch spelling errors in a draft or see misspellings marked by your instructor in papers returned to you, add the words to your list. Use your dictionary to locate the correct spelling and pronunciation of each word in the list. Review your list of words periodically, and practice pronouncing and writing the words until you master their correct spellings and usage.
- **Develop a spelling awareness.** As you read and write, pay attention to words and how they are spelled. When you encounter a new word, pronounce it slowly and carefully while taking note of its spelling. Try to create a mental image of each word, especially words with silent letters or unusual spellings.