Spellcheck Outlaws

Your spellcheck program tells you only that a word is misspelled.

Spellcheck does not tell you whether it is the right word.

Affect
- This word is always a verb:
  - The noisy student lounge affects her concentration.

Effect
- This word is usually a noun:
  - The wretched effect of the noisy students on her concentration frustrates her.

Tip: affect = action

Exceptions
- Effect is sometimes (though rarely) a verb.
  - I did not imagine the noise alone would effect such a change on her study patterns.
- In the jargon of psychology only, affect is a noun synonym for feeling.

Compliment
- This word means to praise:
  - He complimented my new green mohawk.

Complement
- This word means to complete:
  - The wine perfectly complemented the entrée.

Tip: complement = complete
Each word has two e's.

Everyday
- This word means routine:
  - My grandmother wore her everyday housedress while she cleaned.

Every day
- These words mean each day:
  - I attend class every day.

Tip: Each day and every day have two words. If you can substitute each day, use every day.
**Spellchecker outlaws**

**Its**
- This pronoun shows possession.
- The dog has been in the woods. *Its* coat is filled with burrs.

**Tip:** Always test your use of this term by reading *its* or *it's* as *it is*. If *it is* makes sense, use the contraction *it's*.

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**It’s**
- This word is a contraction for *it is* or *it has*.
- *It’s* never too late to begin all over.

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**Past**
- This word is *never* a verb.
- In a *past* life, I could spell like a pro!

**Passed**
- This word is *always* a verb (the past tense of *to pass*).
- In the distant past, I often passed this way.

**Tip:** Each form of the verb *to pass* has two *s*.

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**Lay**
- This word means *to place*.
- Please *lay* your books on the table.

**Lie**
- This word means *to recline*.
- I feel ill and must *lie* down.

**Tip:** Associate the vowel sounds of each word with its synonym. *lay = place    lie = recline*

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**Then**
- This word refers to time.
- If we go now, *then* we’ll get to the film on time!

**Than**
- This word compares one thing to another.
- Would you rather have tea *than* coffee?

**Tip:** *Then* is related to *when*.

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**Comprise**
- This word means *to consist of*.
- The whole comprises its parts.
- The new handbook comprises only five sections.

**Compose**
- This word means *to make up*.
- The parts compose the whole.
- Only five sections compose the new handbook.

**Comprise** should *never* be followed by *of*.

**Not:**
The plan *is comprised* of two sections.

**But:**
The plan *is composed* of two sections.

The plan *comprises* two sections.
A few more quick tips …

- **Accept or Except?**
  - *Except* means *excluding*.
- **Know or No?**
  - All words for negatives begin with *a* (*no*, *nor*, *not*, etc.).
- **There, Their, or They’re?**
  - *There* and *here* both indicate location.
  - *They’re* is a contraction for *they are*.
- **To or Too?**
  - *Too* means *in addition*. It adds an *o*.

One final tip …

- For more tips on word use, visit the Word Usage Dictionary at this site: [http://ww2.nscc.edu/think/writing_resources.htm](http://ww2.nscc.edu/think/writing_resources.htm).