

### English spelling can be difficult but it matters!

Spell checkers are sometimes handy but don't spot all mistakes. If you are studying for the new Functional Skills English qualifications, spelling is tested at all levels.

The good news is that you don't have to learn a dictionary. There are a few tricks (or 'rules') which can help you spell a huge number of words but there are also some words which – sorry! – you just have to..... learn. These are often words which sound slightly different from the way they are spelled, e.g. Wednesday.

If you 'sound out' the word in your head you can break it down until you've 'got it' forever. Wednesday becomes Wed-nez-day. Machine becomes Mack-hine. February becomes Feb-roo-are-ee. And so on!

Everyone has their own personal 'monster' spellings. Here are a few from the official Functional Skills word list which just have to be fought head on!

Autumn, bargain, college, definite, enough, fasten, guarantee, island, knee, listen, minute, occasion, purpose, qualify, receive, scheme, thorough, various, whistle.

#### Other tips for learning spellings:

- Make yourself a spelling notebook. Writing down any words you seem to use a lot in a handy little book can save you time when you're looking them up and help you learn them.
- Buy a good, well laid-out dictionary.
- Think up your own silly sentences for tricky words like **secretary** ('A secretary can keep a secret') and **necessary** (one **C**up of tea and two **S**ugar**S**).
- Always check your work to make sure you haven't made any careless mistakes.

*Regards, Kate*