***University of* *M'sila Department of English***

***Second Year LMD Students Written* *Expression Courses***

**LESSON SIX: SPELLING**

**3.DICTION**

**3.1.SPELLING**

It is evident that spelling is a highly individual problem, so it should be solved by a careful attention to one's own particular difficulties

**Improving your spelling** : This lecture suggests a number of things you can follow to better your spelling :

1.Be careful

2 .Use dictionary

3.Keep a list of your own spelling errors

4.Do not allow mispronunciation to cause misspelling

5.Learn to spell words by syllables

6.Learn some helpful spelling tips ( rules)

7.Learn to distinguish between homonyms

**Good spelling habits**

**1.Be careful :** Proofreading your composition will eliminate errors in the spelling of simple words like *" to, there, its"* which count a lot for teachers' corrections. Ignorance of the right spelling of ordinary words is now, and will probably continue to be ,the universally accepted sign of the uneducated person.

**2.Use dictionary :** Some students think themselves allergic to the dictionary. But the only sure safe way to find out how to spell a word is to look it up.

**3.Keep a list of your own spelling errors :**By writing down in your *individual spelling list* all the words you misspell during your composition , your spelling skill will be steadily improved. Although it may seem a difficult habit,recording – in your notebook - the words you misspell will pay you a large return on the investment of time and patience .

**4.Don't allow mispronunciation to cause misspelling :** Two problems may arise when one uses pronunciation as a guide to a correct spelling. First, changes in pronunciation take place more rapidly than changes in spelling. Second, one spelling form may symbolize a half dozen sounds like " *ough*" in *"though, rough*, and *through ",* and one sound may have numerous spellings like the sound *"sh"* in *"ration, tissue,* and *ocean".* In spite of this , however , the mispronunciation can cause the misspelling as in "*occasional****l****y ,us****u****ally ,or can****d****idate"* ( careless *omission*) ,and inpronouncing the word *" light****e****ning "* instead of *lightning"* (careless *addition* of letters or syllables )

**5.** **Learn to spell words by syllables :** Dividing the word into its pronounceable parts ( syllables) will assist you to pronounce and to spell it correctly. For example, the above errors in pronunciation are the result of ignoring the exact syllables in the word

**6.Learn some helpful spelling tips (rules) :** Study the following rules and use them whenever possible :

**a) -** **cede ,ceed, and sede**

Only one English word ends in *" sede"* : supersede ; only three words end in *" ceed"* : exceed ,proceed, succeed ; all other words of similar sounds end in *"cede"* : precede ,recede, secede, accede ,concede.

**b)-** **Distinguish between the prefix and the root ( adding prefixes)**

A prefix is one or more letters ( syllable) added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning.A root word is the base to which prefix or suffix are added .Notice in the following that when a prefix is added to a root word, its spelling remains the same :

**Examples** : il + legal = illegal , im + movable = immovable , mis + understood = misunderstood over + run=overrun

**c).Adding suffixes :**

A suffix is a syllable that is added to the end of a word to change its meaning or its class.

* When the suffixes *" ness "* and *" ly"* are added to a word, the spelling of the word itself is not changed .**E.g.** care + ness = careness , final+ly = finally

**Exceptions :** Words ending in *"y"* usually change the *"y"* to *"i"* before *"ness"* and *"ly"* as in : read**y** = read**i**ly; heav**y** = heav**i**ness ; happ**y**= happ**i**ness.

One –syllable adjectives ending in "y" ,however, generally follow the rule above : dr**y** = dr**y**ness; sh**y**= sh**y**ness

* Drop the final *"e"* before a suffix beginning with *a vowel* .E.g. combin**e** + **a**tion = combination ;

brid**e** +**a**l=bridal ; fam**e**+**o**us = famous; com**e**+ **i**ng = coming

**Exceptions:** keep the final *"e"* before *" a"* or *"o"* if necessary to retain the soft sound of "c" or "g" preceding the *"e"* as in : notic**ea**ble, courag**eo**us, but there is : despi**ca**ble, analo**go**us .

* Keep the final *"e"* before a suffix beginning with *a consonant*. E.g.car**e** + **f**ul = careful ;

entir**e** + **l**y = entirely ; acknowledg**e** + **m**ent = acknowledgement

**Exercise 01** : For each word below cite the rule governing dropping or retaining final **"e"**

Confine + ing = ……………………….....……………………………………………………………………

Confine+ment =…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Love+ing =………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Love+ly =………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Like+ness =……………………………………………………………………………………………………...

Like+ing =……………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Like+ly =………………………………………………………………………………………………………...

* Double the final consonant before a suffix beginning with *a vowel* if the two conditions exist :

1-The word has only *one syllable* or is *accented on the last syllable* (for e.g. a word with two syllables and stressed on its second one)*.*

2-The word ends in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel.

**Exmaples** : pla**n**+**i**ng == pla**nn**ing ; dro**p**+**i**ng== dro**pp**ing ( one syllable word)

for 'ge**t** +ing== for 'ge**tt**ing ( accent on the last syllable ; which contains a single consonant preceded by a single vowel).

**Exceptions** : cance**l**+**e**d= cance**l**ed , benefi**t** +**e**d = benefi**t**ed ( the accent is not on the last syllable, so the "t" consonant is not doubled) ; prefe**r** +**a**ble = prefe**r**able ( accent shifts ; not kept on the last syllable)

* Notice the importance of this rule in forming the present participle (stem+ing) and the past tense of regular verbs.

**Exercise 02:** Supply the present participle for each of the following verbs. Justify your answer

appear, compel ,scoop ,occur ,remit, differ.

* Except before *"ing"* final "*y"* is usually changed to *" i".* E.g *.*def**y** + *ance*= def**i**ance

modif**y** + *er* = modif**i**er , modif**y** + *ing*= modif**y**ing ( not changed before "ing".

* Verbs ending in "y" preceded by a vowel *do not change* the "y" to form the third person singular of the present tense or the past participle as in : arra**y**, arra**y**s, arra**y**ed .**BUT**, lay== laid ,say == said.

**e)-** **Formation of plural nouns :** Observe the following rules :

1-The regular way to form the plural of a noun is to add **"s" or "es".** E.g. chair == chair**s**, book==book**s**, radi**o**=radio**s** ,dre**ss**=dress**es**, bo**x**= box**es**, wat**ch**=watch**es**, bu**sh**=bush**es**, her**o**=hero**es**

**Exceptions** :The plural of words which end in "o" and refer to music is with **" s"** : piano =piano**s**, solo=solo**s**

2- The plural of nouns ending in *"y"* preceded by *a consonant* is formed by changing the *"y"* to *"i"* and adding **" es"** as in fl**y**=fl**ies**, lad**y**=lad**ies** , but in case of *a vowel* only **"s"** is added as in donke**y**=donke**ys**.

3-The plural of nouns ending in " *f*, or *fe*" is formed by adding **"s**" or changing " f" to *"v"* and adding "s or es". E.g. roof = roofs, chief = chiefs. **BUT** knife= knives, calf = calves

4-**Ireegular plural** : Some words in English do not follow the above regular patterns like : child== children, mouce == mice, tooth == teeth, woman == women…

5-The plural of compound nouns written as one word is formed by adding "s or es" like : cupful== cupful**s** , leftover=leftover**s**

6-The plural of compound nouns consisting of noun + modifier is formed by making the noun itself plural.

**E.g***. mother*-in-law = mother**s**-in –law; *man*-of-war=**men**-of-war, *passer*-by= passer**s**-by

* Notice that " in-law" ,"of-war" ,and " by" are all modifiers .i.e. it is the nouns modified by them which are made plural

7- Some words have the same form for singular and plural as : sheep ,species ,Chinese…

8-The plural of some foreign words is formed as in the original language as : alumnus (man) = alumni (men)

alumna (woman)= alumnae (women), datum = data .

9-The plural of other foreign words may be formed either as in the foreign language or by simply adding " s or es". E.g. Index = indi**ces** or index**es** ; appendix = appendi**ces** or appendix**es**.

* In certain words the English plural is the preferred one , for example *formulas* not *formulae.*

**Exercise 03:** Supply plural forms for words listed below :

Ox, valley, son-in-law, cup ,leaf, goose, radius, cameo, comedy, Negro.

**7. Learn to distinguish between homonyms / homophones**

Words that sound alike cause hurdles. Though they may have the same sound patterns, the same spellings but with different meanings ( homonyms) ,or they may have the same pronunciation with different spellings and different meanings ( homophone) , you need to learn about them. You may have problems to distinguish between *" principle*" and *"principal*, or "*capital* and *capitol*", and other pairs. The eye is the chief aid in avoiding such misspelling. The following words sound alike :

Already / all ready, altar / alter , altogether / all together, born / borne, brake / break, cloths / clothes, coarse / course, complement / compliment, its / it's, later / latter, moral / morale, piece / peace, plane / plain, their / there….

**Exercise 04**: Think of ten words (pairs) as the previous ones (homonyms / homophones), check their meaning, and write them down.