

Words Most Frequently Misspelled by High School Students

A study published in *The English Journal* in October 1971 showed that 1.5% of the words used by students in grades 9–12 accounted for 28% of the misspellings. Just 6% of the words accounted for 51% of the misspellings! The 388 words which accounted for over half of the misspellings are listed below, in order of frequency of misspelling.

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|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 1. their | 46. convenient(ce) | 90. appreciate(ion) | 135. professor |
| 2. too | 47. occurred(ing) | 91. especially | 136. scene(s) |
| 3. receive | 48. similar | 92. recognize | 137. beauty |
| 4. there | 49. tragedy | 93. shining | 138. before |
| 5. all right | 50. acquaint | 94. speech | 139. library |
| 6. separate | 51. among | 95. existence | 140. suspense |
| 7. believe | 52. experience | 96. during | 141. independent(ence) |
| 8. until | 53. pleasant | 97. excellent(ce) | 142. prejudice |
| 9. coming | 54. thought | 98. really | 143. accommodate |
| 10. whether | 55. conscious | 99. village | 144. benefit |
| 11. interest(ing) | 56. government | 100. opinion | 145. niece |
| 12. writing | 57. always | 101. accidentally | 146. parliament |
| 13. tried(s) | 58. describe | 102. quite | 147. chose(n) |
| 14. privilege | 59. immediately | 103. you're | 148. know |
| 15. decide(d) | 60. rhythm | 104. certain | 149. written |
| 16. finally | 61. athletic | 105. imagine | 150. and |
| 17. beginning | 62. disappear | 106. mischievous | 151. dropped(ing) |
| 18. character | 63. sophomore | 107. realize | 152. enough |
| 19. surprise | 64. sincerely | 108. secretary | 153. two |
| 20. humor(ous) | 65. piece | 109. villain | 154. doctor |
| 21. business | 66. because | 110. cemetery | 155. everybody (day,
one, thing, where) |
| 22. grammar | 67. across | 111. succeed | 156. equipment |
| 23. definite | 68. appearance | 112. thorough(ly) | 157. magazine |
| 24. disappoint | 69. it's | 113. through | 158. ninety (teen) |
| 25. description(ive) | 70. restaurant | 114. weather | 159. against |
| 26. studying | 71. success | 115. were | 160. commit |
| 27. friend | 72. principal | 116. article | 161. February |
| 28. college | 73. then | 117. environment | 162. safety(ly) |
| 29. quiet | 74. course | 118. literature | 163. equipped |
| 30. occasion | 75. planned(ing) | 119. stories | 164. forearm (cast,
fathers, going, head,
man, most, noon,
saw, see, seen,
shadow, sight, tell) |
| 31. to | 76. possess(ed, ion,
ive) | 120. captain | 165. hungry |
| 32. truly | 77. usual | 121. author | 166. jealous |
| 33. does | 78. which | 122. foreign | 167. marriage |
| 34. stopped(ing) | 79. sense | 123. soldier | 168. prison |
| 35. recommend | 80. together | 124. suppose | 169. sentence |
| 36. embarrass | 81. criticism | 125. exaggerate | 170. carrying |
| 37. lose | 82. minute(s) | 126. excitement | 171. first |
| 38. necessary | 83. whose | 127. perform | 172. prairie |
| 39. woman | 84. paid | 128. since | 173. descend(t) |
| 40. different(ce) | 85. fascinate | 129. laboratory | 174. familiar |
| 41. probably | 86. forty | 130. meant | |
| 42. than | 87. opportunity | 131. escape | |
| 43. where | 88. writer | 132. remember | |
| 44. its | 89. accept | 133. argument | |
| 45. clothes | | 134. profession | |

175. governor	229. went	283. led	337. break
176. laid	230. children	284. sponsor	338. corner
177. parallel	231. didn't	285. swimming	339. happen
178. possible	232. effect	286. tomorrow	340. interrupt
179. already	233. hoping	287. wreck	341. motor
180. intelligent(ce)	234. passed	288. again	342. relative
181. leisure	235. seize	289. bicycle	343. strengthen
182. principle	236. straight	290. calendar	344. themselves
183. usually	237. apology	291. conscientious	345. wonderful
184. almost	238. appear(ed)	292. extremely	346. accuse(d)
185. amateur	239. lonely	293. guarantee	347. achieve
186. disease	240. very	294. identify(ty)	348. arctic
187. knew	241. Britain	295. loose(n, r)	349. associate
188. chief(s)	242. conscience	296. many	350. concentrate
189. diner(ing)	243. immediate	297. maybe	351. dissatisfy
190. month(s)	244. lightning	298. out	352. entertain
191. they	245. peculiar	299. relief(ve)	353. experiment
193. happier(est, ly, ness)	246. practically	300. sergeant	354. horse
194. proceed	247. running	301. something	355. night
195. servant	248. trouble	302. brilliant(ce)	356. omitted
196. they're	249. afraid	303. Christian	357. persuade
197. athlete	250. control	304. definitely	358. physical
198. deceit(ve, ved)	251. criticize	305. etc.	359. preparation
199. grateful	252. fourth	306. front	360. psychology(ical, ist)
200. guard	253. innocent	307. hear	361. secret
201. occur(s)	254. prophecy	308. medicine(s)	362. wait
202. weird	255. repetition	309. noticeable	363. address
203. career	256. search	310. procedure	364. aggression(ive, or)
204. decision	257. committee	311. reference	365. attendant(ce)
205. group	258. completely	312. studied(s)	366. attitude
206. misspell	259. courageous	313. those	367. continuous
207. no	260. field	314. beautiful	368. destroy
208. occurrence	261. hospital	315. complete	369. difficult
209. off	262. knowledge	316. countries	370. formerly
210. pastime	263. mountain	317. favorite	371. hurrying
211. acquire	264. pronunciation	318. further	372. immensely
212. affect	265. wonder	319. getting	373. miniature
213. approach	266. women	320. heroes	374. model
214. easily(er, est)	267. challenge	321. receipt	375. neighbor
215. height	268. cried(s)	322. speak	376. nervous
216. later	269. discuss(ed, ion)	323. stepped(ing)	377. now
217. quantity	270. families	324. think	378. obstacle
218. squirrel	271. fictitious	325. around	379. other
219. summary(ize)	272. forest	326. awful	380. parents
220. incident	273. grabbed	327. climb(ed, ing)	381. period
221. narrative(ion)	274. modern	328. discipline	382. permanent
222. particular	275. precede	329. Henry	383. poem(s)
223. pilot	276. shepherd	330. instead	384. pursue(it)
224. schedule(s)	277. stretch	331. interpret	385. suspicion
225. excited(ing)	278. buy	332. opposite	386. temperament
226. family	279. choose	333. pamphlet	387. thief
227. referred(ing)	280. courteous	334. poison	388. write
228. religion(ous)	281. curiosity	335. pretty	
	282. enemy	336. answer	