**Learning Objectives**

You will learn basic rules concerning the spelling and punctuation of the English and Czech language in contrast. This unit also includes a short list of commonly misspelled words in English.

**Keywords**

* spelling, spell-check, punctuation, misspelled words in English, periods, commas, semicolons, apostrophes, hyphens

**General Spelling Rules in English**

The English language combines words from many different languages, and they do not always look the way they sound. If you know another language, such as Spanish, French, Greek, or Latin, that will help you spell in English because many English words are derived from those languages. It will also help you practice spelling correctly like you must practice increasing your vocabulary. When you learn a new word, concentrate not only on what it means, but how to spell it. There are also many rules to help you spell, and almost as many exceptions. Knowing the rules will help you when you write a word that you are not sure how to spell.

For the list of commonly misspelled words in British English see the file with the same name.

The **spelling and grammar checking tool** in Microsoft Word and other word processing programs, often referred to as **"spell-check"** or **"the spell-checker,"** can be immensely helpful as you proofread a piece of writing. However, spell-check is not foolproof; using it incorrectly can even lead to errors in your translation that you never would have committed on your own.

**Spell-check can help with:**

- basic spelling mistakes

- typos

- punctuation errors

- simple grammar problems

- subject-verb agreement.

**Spell-check cannot be trusted when:**

**-** your misspelling of one word happens to be the correct spelling of another word

- you are writing in a specific context or for a specific audience, and therefore with specific rules

- the errors involve capitalization

- you have written something that simply does not make any sense.

Some sound-alike words that readers often confuse include: **there, their**, and **they're**; **your** and **you're**; **our** and **are**; **then** and **than**; **its** and **it's**; **loose** and **lose**. Spell-check will not catch your mistake if you choose the wrong one of these words. Sometimes even reading aloud will not help you catch errors like these, because they will sound "right" to your ear. When you are unsure whether you have used the right word, use a dictionary to look it up.

TASK 1: Comprehension check:

**Decide whether the following statement is true or false.**

Spell-check can help you not only with spelling mistakes and typos but also with complex grammar problems.

True False 

**Tips for making spell-check helpful:**

  It is usually most efficient to run spell-check as part of your final editing process, after you have made major content revisions. Thus, you will not be constantly interrupting your translation (or revising) process by thinking over spelling and punctuation.

* Customize your Microsoft Word dictionary. You can tell spell-check to add a word to your dictionary. It will leave you alone as long as you spell this word correctly. If you spell the word incorrectly, it will suggest how you can fix the error.
* Spell-check can support you, but it cannot do your job for you. It is there to help you use your writing and editing skills by giving you reminders and suggestions about spelling, grammar, and so on. But do not expect spell-check to steer you to a perfect translation. If you are not confident about your spelling, grammar, or punctuation and look words up.

TASK 2: Comprehension check:

**Decide whether the following statement is true or false.**

Word dictionary is fixed. Once you start it, you cannot change the number of words in it.

True False 

**How to run spell-check:**

Make sure your word processing program is set up to run spelling and grammar checks. In Microsoft Word, go to the "**Tools**" menu and choose "**Options**." Click on the tab that says "**Spelling & Grammar**." You can now decide what you would like to spell-check.

When the program is set up, you are ready to use it to check your document. Open up your paper. On the "**Tools**" menu, select "**Spelling and Grammar**." (There may also be a button on your toolbar that says "**ABC**"—if so, you can click this instead.) A window will pop up and display a highlighted word or portion of your text. This window is where spell-check will point out words and phrases that may be incorrect. It may also explain what is wrong and/or propose a solution, in the lower box under the heading "**Suggestions**."

The buttons on the right represent your options about how to respond to spell-check's comments. Not all of these will appear every time; which ones show up depends on the nature of the (possible) error. You need to decide whether to accept its advice.

Chose the correct word.

**Options:**

* **"Ignore Once"** means you choose to leave this particular word or phrase as it is, but if spell-check notices something similar again later, you want to know about it.
* **"Ignore All"** means that you want to leave the word or phrase alone here and in any other place where it may show up in this document.
* **"Change"** means that you are taking spell-check's advice and want to switch the current spelling or grammatical construction to one of the suggestions it has generated for you. If you press change, the spelling or construction that is highlighted under "Suggestions" will be automatically substituted into your paper.
* **"Change All"** performs the same function instantly in every place the error appears throughout the document.
* **"Ignore Rule"** means that you do not want to hear any more about this particular issue anywhere in the paper.
* **"Explain"** will make spell-check tell you why it thinks there is a problem here. This option is usually only available for grammatical or punctuation issues.
* **"Add to Dictionary"** means to leave a word exactly as you typed it, and to add it to your personal dictionary in Word. Once a word has been added, spell-check will always count this word as correct, and will even try to correct you if you misspell it in the future.

You may notice as you work that coloured squiggly lines appear under certain words or phrases that you write. That is spell-check trying to call your attention to something it thinks may be problematic. If you right-click on the squiggly line, a pop-up window will give you an abbreviated menu of the above options.

[On-line spell-check available via: http://www.spellchecker.net/spellcheck/.](http://www.spellchecker.net/spellcheck/)

(http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word-help/check-spelling-and-grammar-HP010117963.aspx)

TASK 3: Comprehension check:

**Read the sentences below and fill in the missing options.**

1. When you do not want to accept the advice this time - .

2. When you agree with the suggestion - .

3. If you want the new word to be included in the database - .

**Overview of the punctuation rules in English (E) and Czech (C):**

**E+C1. Periods**

Use a period at the end of a complete sentence that is a statement. If the last word in the sentence ends in a period, do not follow it with another period. The rules are common for both languages.

**E2. Semicolons**

Use a semicolon:

- in place of a period to separate two sentences where the conjunction has been left out

- before introductory words such as *namely, however, therefore, that is, i.e., for example, e.g.,* or *for instance* when they introduce a complete sentence

- after the introductory word

- to separate units of a series when one or more of the units contain commas

- between two sentences joined by a coordinating conjunction when one or more commas appear in the first sentence.

(Smith, Brady. *Proofreading, Revising, and Editing Skills Success*, New York: LearningExpress, LLC, 2003.)

**C2. Semicolons**

Use a semicolon:

- in coordinated sentences

- when listing groups of words.

(Hlavsa, Zdeněk, et al. Pravidla českého pravopisu. Praha: Academia, 2010.)

TASK 1: Comprehension check:

**Read the sentences below and fill in the missing punctuation.**

1. Hnědé uhlí se těží lomovým způsobem spaluje se v místních elektrárnách lisují se z něho brikety slouží k výrobě plynu a rozváží se do jiných částí republiky 

2. Do skupiny západoslovanských jazyků patří čeština a slovenština horní a dolní lužická srbština polština vymřelá polabština a pomořanština 

**E3. Commas**

Use commas:

- to **separate words** and word groups with a series of three or more

- to separate two adjectives when the word *and* can be inserted between them

- when an *-ly* adjective is used with other adjectives

- before or surrounding the name or title of a person directly addressed

- to surround degrees or titles used with names.

Use commas:

- to set off expressions that **interrupt sentence flow**. If something or someone is sufficiently identified, the description following it is considered nonessential and should be surrounded by commas.

- after phrases of more than three words that begin a sentence.

- to separate two strong clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction--*and, or, but, for, nor*

- to separate two sentences if it will help avoid confusion.

- to separate a statement from a question.

- to separate contrasting parts of a sentence

- when beginning sentences with introductory words such as *well*, *now*, or *yes*

- surrounding words such as *therefore* and *however* when they are used as interrupters.

  (Smith, Brady. *Proofreading, Revising, and Editing Skills Success*, New York: LearningExpress, LLC, 2003.)

**C3. Commas**

The basic rules are the same as in English.

Use commas:

- to **separate words** and groups of words

- to **separate sentences,** unless they are connected by conjunctions **a, i, ani, nebo**

- to **separate subordinated** sentences from coordinated ones

- to separate interjections.

  (Hlavsa, Zdeněk, et al. Pravidla českého pravopisu. Praha: Academia, 2010.)

TASK 2: Comprehension check:

**Read the following sentences and fill in the missing punctuation.**

1. V úrodných nížinách se pěstuje pšenice žito ječmen a kukuřice.

2. Růst obyvatelstva rychlý rozvoj těžby nerostných surovin i zpracovatelského průmyslu výstavba sídel a dopravních sítí intenzifikace a koncentrace zemědělství jsou hlavní činitelé ovlivňující stav krajiny.

**E4. Apostrophes**

Use the apostrophe:

- with **contractions**

- to show **possession**

- before the *s* to show singular possession. Although names ending in *s* or an *s* sound are not required to have the second *s* added in possessive form, it is preferred.

**Do not** use an apostrophe for the plural of a name. Never use an apostrophe with possessive pronouns: *his, hers, its, theirs, ours, yours, whose*. They already show possession so they do not require an apostrophe. The only time an apostrophe is used for *it's* is when it is a contraction for *it is* or *it has*.

Use the possessive case in front of a gerund *(-ing word).* If the gerund has a pronoun in front of it, use the possessive form of that pronoun.

**E5. Hyphens**

**Between words**: To check whether a compound noun is two words, one word, or hyphenated, you may need to look it up in the dictionary. Phrases that have verb, noun, and adjective forms should appear as separate words when used as verbs and as one word when used as nouns or adjectives. Compound verbs are either hyphenated or appear as one word. Generally, hyphenate between two or more adjectives when they come before a noun and act as a single idea. When adverbs not ending in *-ly* are used as compound words in front of a noun, hyphenate. Hyphenate all compound numbers from *twenty-one* through *ninety-nine*.

In Czech, there is dash used more often than hyphen.

(Smith, Brady. *Proofreading, Revising, and Editing Skills Success*, New York: LearningExpress, LLC, 2003.)

TASK 3: Comprehension check:

**Read the following sentences and fill in the missing punctuation.**

1. Ústředním bodem strategie EU pro boj proti změně klimatu je systém obchodování s emisemi v jehož rámci se odměňují společnosti které emise CO2 snižují a penalizují ty které překračují jejich limity

2. EU má především zájem o rozšíření sítě Natura 2000 která sdružuje oblast, kde se povinně chrání rostlinné a živočišné druhy i jejich biotop

3. Hluk voda ke koupání vzácné druhy a reakce na mimořádné události to je jen ukázka z mnoha témat na něž se vztahuje rozsáhlá environmentální legislativa kterou EU za několik desetiletí vytvořila

Points to remember

Concerning spelling rules in English and Czech, refer to **dictionaries**. The list of commonly misspelled words in English is included in this unit.

When you are not sure about the grammar, refer to **grammar books**.

Rules for the Czech spelling and some basic grammar can be found in *Pravidla českého pravopisu*, which is updated every year.

You can also use **spell-check** for basic spelling mistakes, typos, punctuation errors, simple grammar problems and subject-verb agreement. But do not rely on it too much!

On-line reference book of Czech grammar and spelling rules: <http://prirucka.ujc.cas.cz/>

Glossary of terms

**Punctuation** (interpunkce) – the way the words and sentences are connected following the set rules in grammar.

**Spelling** (pravopis) – the way the words are written according to the set rules.

**Spell-check** (kontrola pravopisu) – the tool in word processing programs that checks spelling errors and basic grammar mistakes.