

10 THINGS THAT A SPELL CHECKER WON'T CATCH

Source: <http://www.admissionsconsultants.com/mba/spellchecker.asp>, 19 Jan 2012

We always tell applicants to have their applications proofread carefully before hitting the “submit” key on the application website. That means printing out your application and having it checked for errors “by eye” rather than trusting a spell checker to do the job for you. In case you’re wondering why, here are some examples of mistakes that most spell checkers will not catch:

- **Homonyms** (words that sound the same but mean different things depending on their spelling and use): Spell checkers won’t realize that you intended to write “pair” instead of “pare” or “pear,” or “there” instead of “their.”
- **Incorrectly divided compound words:** Spell checkers won’t tell you that “court yard” should be spelled “courtyard,” or that “inter net” should be “internet.”
- **Incorrect pronouns:** Spell checkers won’t realize that you typed in “his” or – worse – “its” when you should have typed “hers,” or “she” when it should have been “he.”
- **Usage errors:** Spell checkers probably won’t alert you to typos involving “its” and “it’s.”
- **Missing words:** Spell checkers probably won’t catch the missing word in a phrase like, "I attended University of Michigan..."
- **Wrong words:** Spell checkers won’t alert you to a gaffe like, "My supervisory experience sensitized me to the martial difficulties that married employees can encounter when pressed to work overtime."
- **Wrong dates:** Spell checkers won’t question a statement like, "Entering the workforce in the late 0200s, I learned..."
- **Misspelled names:** Spell checkers won’t catch mistakes with people’s names or with most place names.
- **Incorrect verb tenses:** Spell checkers won’t warn you that you mixed up past and present verb tenses.
- **Repetition:** Spell checkers will alert you if you’ve typed the same word twice in a row, but they won’t catch other kinds of repetition, like typing the same phrase or sentence twice in a row – or saying the same exact thing twice, in different words.

Spell checkers are a handy tool for screening out many of the small mistakes we all make when we write. They can’t catch every mistake, however, and they’re not able to catch the really big mistakes, which can be recognized and corrected only by careful editing. Use a spell checker as a first step in proofing your document, but don’t count on it to do the entire job for you.