Spelling remains an important part of education in Oregon. In a letter to the Oregon Superintendent of Public Instruction, a recent graduate credited his 4th grade teacher for a solid foundation in spelling and writing and also the exceptional efforts of his many other teachers who built on that foundation. He felt it helped him become “a more productive member of society.” The importance of spelling never changes but technology does.

As in the past, students in Grade 4 taking the statewide on-line writing assessment may use a spell check feature that identifies spelling errors for individual words only. Spellcheckers that identify multiple spelling errors throughout a document are not allowed at this grade level. Asking that the student be responsible for self-identifying potentially misspelled words is particularly appropriate at the grade 4 level where the curriculum routinely focuses on a core of high frequency words. In addition, emphasizing spelling as an important part of the writing conventions score for Grade 4 supports spelling instruction and places a priority on accurately spelling common words.

Beginning in the 2010-11 school year, ODE will allow students in Grade 7 and high school taking the statewide on-line writing assessment to use a spell check feature that identifies potential spelling errors throughout a document. The spell check is available to older students because it is used extensively in written assignments and more closely replicates use in real life situations (college, post-secondary training, in the military, and in the work place). In addition, the spell check should reduce the number of typing errors in the assessment which are difficult for raters to distinguish from actual spelling errors, thus providing a more accurate insight into each student’s ability to identify correct spelling and use it in written work.

Using the spell check feature does not relieve students of their responsibility to learn to identify and use correct spelling. Oregon’s spelling standards require all students to demonstrate knowledge of spelling across the subject areas. A spell check will only highlight incorrectly spelled words. It is then up to the student to choose the correct option and proofread his or her essay for errors.
Spelling remains an important part of education in Oregon. In a letter to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, a recent graduate credited his 4th grade teacher for a solid foundation in spelling and writing which helped him become “a more productive member of society.”

Your Spelling Skills
All Oregon students must demonstrate their knowledge of spelling. Fourth graders are expected to correctly spell common words and bases (roots) of words. When taking the Oregon Writing Performance Assessment, you can use a spell check that checks for spelling of individual words.

During the assessment, make sure you identify:

- all misspelled words.
- any misspellings that lead to grammatical errors like “to” versus “too” and “their” versus “there.”
- mistakes in the use of other homophones (words that sound alike but are spelled differently with different meanings) such as “by” versus “buy” and “meat” versus “meet.”

Use the spell check that checks for spelling of individual words to help you develop the important skill of spelling!

Ideas to Consider:
How will I be sure that my spelling is correct in my writing?
Why is spelling correctly important in the fourth grade?
Why is spelling correctly important later in life?
Spelling remains an important part of education in Oregon. A recent graduate wrote a letter to the Superintendent of Public Instruction crediting his teachers for a solid foundation in spelling and writing which helped him become “a more productive member of society.”

Your Spelling Skills
All Oregon students must demonstrate their knowledge of spelling. At your level, common words should be spelled correctly, with possibly a few misspellings of more difficult words. Beginning this school year (2010-11), seventh graders and high school students will be able to use a spell check feature when taking the statewide writing assessment that identifies potential spelling errors throughout a document and provides possible spelling choices. This conventional spell check system is currently used in all computer environments.

Remember, however, you must still know how to spell! A spellchecker only highlights incorrectly spelled words. You must choose the correct option and proofread your writing for errors (e.g., misspellings which lead to errors in grammar such as confusion in the use of homophones, “there” versus “their” or “principle” versus “principal”).

Use the spellchecker to help master the important foundation skill of spelling. It can reveal your true spelling skills and eliminate simple typing errors.