

## Using the *Oxford Wordpower Dictionary* for checking written work

<b>Level</b>	Intermediate
<b>Approx. total time</b>	55–65 mins
<b>Aim</b>	To help students improve their own written work with the help of a dictionary.
<b>Materials</b>	Photocopies of the worksheet; <i>Oxford Wordpower Dictionary</i>

Students could often improve the accuracy of their work by using the dictionary to help them check it. Searching for mistakes is much more fruitful if you concentrate on one type of error at a time. Many students will need guidance as to how to go about this in a methodical way, targeting different areas in turn such as spelling, grammar, choice of words, and so on.

### Preparation

Make one copy of the worksheet for each student.

They will need access to the *Oxford Wordpower Dictionary*.

### Procedure

**A** Give out the worksheet and make sure that students have a dictionary to look at.

Tell the students that they and the dictionary are better than a spellchecker on a computer, because a spellchecking program can only tell you when something that you write is not a word. Explain that in the letter in **Activity 1** there are a number of words that often cause problems. The spellchecker would allow you to spell all of these words wrongly, but if you check them in the dictionary, you will quickly see which is correct. This activity could be done in pairs or individually.

**Activity length: 20-30 mins**

**Answers:** write, flu, life, weak, two, sore, lose, would, quiet, ring, through, there, meet, dinner

**B** Divide the class into groups and ask each group to look for a particular kind of mistake in the text in **Activity 2**. The text on the worksheet is an example with errors of each type mentioned below.

**Group A:** Verbs – explain that they must look at the forms of the verbs.

**Group B:** Grammar – explain that they have to look for any grammar mistakes apart from the forms of verbs.

**Group C:** Spelling – this group should check for spelling errors.

**Group D:** Words – explain that they should look for cases where the writer has chosen the wrong word, perhaps because it is in the wrong combination, or perhaps because a word from their own language has led them astray.

**Activity length: 20 mins**

**Answers:** Spelling mistakes – *really*, not *reatly*; *popular*, not *popolar*; *restaurants*, not *restorants*  
Verbs forms – *an article I read*, not *readed*; I *thought*, not *thinked*;  
*I found*, not *finded*  
Grammar – *this information*, not *these informations*; *people have stopped going*,  
not *to-go*; *more people are opting for*, not *at*  
Wrong word – *at the moment* or *currently*, not *actually*; *I was interested*, not  
*interesting*; *make a reservation*, not *do*

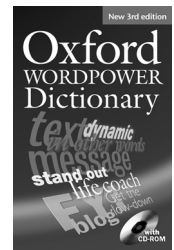
**Variation:** To get students to focus on their own errors, you could collect in from the class a piece of written work, such as a letter or essay, and make a note of some of the common errors. Do not at this stage mark the papers. You should look for errors that fall into a number of categories, for example, spelling mistakes, mistakes with verbs, wrong constructions, or wrong choice of words. Then hand back the papers and ask them in pairs to find certain types of errors. If you wish to make it less personal, make a composite task incorporating a number of each type of error. Then proceed as in Activity 2.

**C Activity 3** could be done individually or in pairs. If students look up *live* and *die* in the dictionary, they will quickly find the correct phrasal verbs to use. You could make this a competition to see who can finish first.

**Activity length: 15 mins**

**Answers:**

- a They had to live **on** Fred's small pension
- b He lived **out** his last years in a small house by the sea.
- c Jessica married a millionaire and now they're living it **up** in Monte Carlo!
- d The tradition of making lace has almost died **out** in this country.
- e The music died **away** and the village became quiet again.
- f There are very few people who remember those days. They have died **off** over the last decade.



## Checking written work

- 1 The spellchecker on your computer won't help with the mistakes in this letter. Choose the right word from each pair.

Dear Chris

Sorry I couldn't right/write before. I've been off work with flu/flew and I have never felt so ill in my live/life! I still feel really weak/week. For the first too/to/two days, I had a terribly sore/soar throat and I thought I was going to loose/lose my voice. Jane said at least it would/wood be nice and quite/quiet in the house! She tried to wring/ring you but she couldn't get threw/through/thorough. Was there/their a problem with your phone? Perhaps we can meat/meet next weekend. Would you like to come to diner/dinner on Sunday?

Love

Angela

- 2 There are four kinds of mistake in the following text, and there are three of each kind: three spelling mistakes, three mistakes with verb forms, three grammatical mistakes, and three cases with the wrong word.

*According to an article I readed in the newspaper, actually in Britain there is a new fashion for afternoon tea. Of course, this is not realy a new trend, but an old tradition that is becoming more popolar again. I was interesting in these informations because before I came to Britain, I thinked that it was normal for everyone to have tea at 5 o'clock, but when I got here all I finded were coffee shops!*

*It's not the case that people have stopped to go to restorants, but more and more people are opting at afternoon tea as a special treat. Getting a table is very difficult – at expensive hotels in London, you have to do a reservation weeks in advance!*

- 3 Check your phrasal verbs!

Choose the right preposition to fill the gaps:

- They had to live \_\_\_\_\_ Fred's small pension.
- He lived \_\_\_\_\_ his last years in a small house by the sea.
- Jessica married a millionaire and now they're living it \_\_\_\_\_ in Monte Carlo!
- The tradition of making lace has almost died \_\_\_\_\_ in this country.
- The music died \_\_\_\_\_ and the village became quiet again.
- There are very few people who remember those days. They have died \_\_\_\_\_ over the last decade.

