**Strategy 26 Spelling:**

Note anecdote—student was asked to spell “accommodate” and “liaison” during a job interview. [Agreed. ]

Read each word when editing. [One trick is to read aloud. You might feel silly, but you’ll get used to it.] We read by how words look—their shape in effect (See also News page). So learning when a word “looks” odd is the primary objective, as opposed to memorizing spellings. Spell check does usually work.

Note familiar examples of homonyms (or close to them): stanch (verb) vs. staunch (adjective).  
affect/effect  
Lots of others in your Style handouts—flak(criticism)/flack(press agent); hangar(airplane storage)/hanger (clothes)

Spelling can be learned. [Most of these are mine.]

1. Voice or over-pronounce troublesome words [I might say lee-a-ee-son to remember that it’s liaison. Note that it’s odd because it’s of French origin. Same trick as with “effect” and “affect.”].
2. Keep or look at lists of misspelled words (including the word “misspelled”). There’s a good list in Davis on pp. 173–174. I posted another.
3. Go ahead and use any mnemonics you have (“I” before “E” …). [These can include the fact that some words are foreign, e.g. to run amok is an Asian (Indonesian?) word, whereas we would think it’s “amuck.” I also remember that weird is weird (doesn’t follow that rhyme).]
4. Force yourself to learn and recognize unfamiliar words (as with the Journal entries). [Did you notice how after you learn a new word it seems to show up a lot?]
5. Think of root words—it’s “consensus” because it means a shared “sense” of something.
6. Think of confusing pairs—it’s “embarrass” but then “harass.”
7. Keep a list (mentally is fine) of odd names. It’s Nicolas Cage, Katharine Hepburn, Barbra Streisand, Dwyane Wade, Isiah Thomas (not his son), Courteney Cox, Brett Favre. Also ones like Lynyrd Skynyrd, e.e. cummings, Jay-Z.