If you read the following two versions of the first verse of the poem Ode to a Spellchecker[[1]](#footnote-1) aloud, they will *sound* the same, but some of the words in the first version are clearly incorrect.

**Ode to a Spellchecker**

Eye halve a spelling check her;  
It came with my pea sea.  
It plane lee marks four my revue   
Miss steaks aye kin knot sea.

**Ode to a Spellchecker (corrected)**

I have a spelling checker,  
It came with my PC;  
It plainly marks for my review,   
Mistakes I cannot see.

**Use *Word*’s spell checker to spell check this document.**

*Word* does not find any spelling mistakes – not even in the first version!

You cannot rely on *Word*’s built-in spell checker to find these kinds of mistakes. You must *proofread* a document – read it with your own eyes and understanding – to check that each word ‘makes sense’ as it is used.

1. Jerrold H. Zar, 1994. “Ode to a Spellchecker” *Journal of Irreproducible Results* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)