Tips for Spelling Problems

Spelling is one of the most idiosyncratic writing problems and a particularly difficult one if you were cursed by nature as a bad speller. Hence, I don’t have much help. Here is what I do have:

• Pay attention to the mistakes you make and look for patterns.

• Then, look at the spelling section of a handbook (350-358 in Rules for Writers, 7th ed., or 345-53 in 8th ed.), or any book on spelling, and find rules or tips that apply to your problem areas. See if they help.

• Include in your sentence-level editing strategies a double-checking of your known problem words.