

American and British English spelling differences

Despite the various English dialects spoken from country to country and within different regions of the same country, there are only slight regional variations in English orthography, the two most notable variations being British and American spelling. Many of the differences between American and British or Commonwealth English date back to a time before spelling standards were developed. For instance, some spellings seen as "American" were once commonly used in the United Kingdom, and some spellings seen as "British" were once commonly used in the United States.

A "British standard" began to emerge following the 1755 publication of Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*, and an "American standard" started following the work of Noah Webster and, in particular, his *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, first published in 1828.^[1] Webster's efforts at spelling reform were effective in his native country, resulting in certain well-known patterns of spelling differences between the American and British varieties of English.

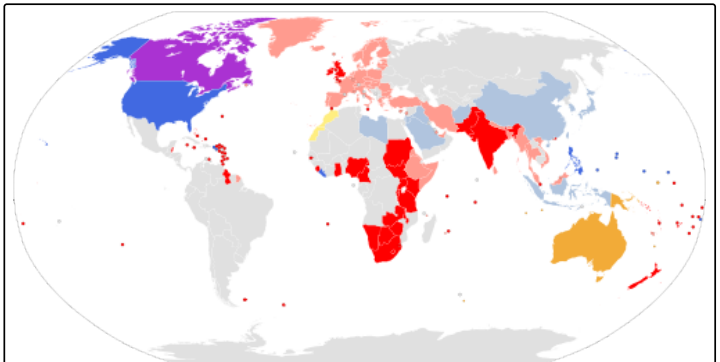
Historical origins

In the early 18th century, English spelling was inconsistent. These differences became noticeable after the publication of influential dictionaries. British English spellings mostly follow Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), while many American English spellings follow Webster's *An American Dictionary of the English Language* ("ADEL", "Webster's Dictionary", 1828).^[2]

Webster was a proponent of English spelling reform for reasons both philological and nationalistic. In *A Companion to the American Revolution* (2008), John Algeo notes:

it is often assumed that characteristically American spellings were invented by Noah Webster. He was very influential in popularizing certain spellings in the United States, but he did not originate them. Rather [...] he chose already existing options such as *center*, *color* and *check* for the simplicity, analogy or etymology.^[3]

William Shakespeare's first folios, for example, used spellings such as *center* and *color* as much as *centre* and *colour*.^{[4][5]} Webster did attempt to introduce some reformed spellings, as did the Simplified Spelling Board in the early 20th century, but most were not adopted. In the United Kingdom, the influence of those who preferred the Norman (or Anglo-French) spellings of words proved to be decisive. Later spelling adjustments in the United Kingdom had little effect on American spellings and vice versa.



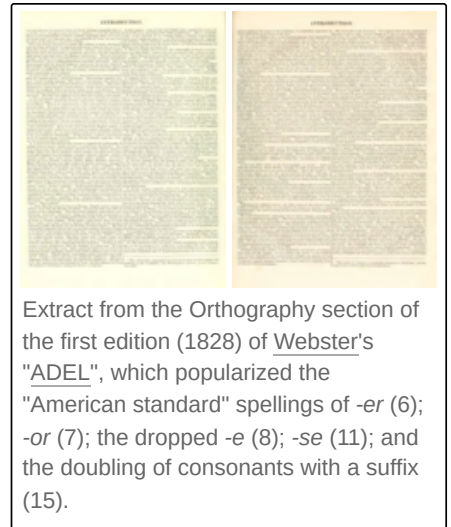
British and American spellings around the world:

- British *analyse/crystallise* (*crystallize* in Oxford spelling)/*centre/defence/labour/programme* (except for *computer program*) dominant; English is an official or majority language
- American *analyze/crystallize* (less commonly *crystalize*)/*center* (except for some place names, e.g. *Centre County*)/*defense/labor* (except for some names, e.g. *Living Colour*)/*program* dominant; English is an official or majority language
- Canadian *analyse/crystallize/centre/defence/labour/program* dominant; English is one of two official languages along with French
- Australian *analyse/crystallise/centre/defence/labour* (except for *Labor Party*)/*program* dominant; English is an official or majority language
- English is not an official or majority language; British spelling is dominant
- English is not an official or majority language; American spelling is dominant
- English is not an official or majority language; inconsistent use of American and British spelling

The term *tubera* is used by Dr. Farre to denote tumours of a cellular structure and fungous nature, producing, in general, remarkable elevations on the surfaces of the affected parts. The tubera circumscribed are chiefly confined to the liver itself; their colour inclines to a yellowish white; they elevate the peritoneal tunic of the liver, and their projecting surfaces are marked with a white indentation near their centres. At commencement they are minute, but eventually each tuber acquires a diameter of more than an inch. They adhere to the liver closely, and their figure is well defined. The different tubera ultimately coalesce so as to form immenso morbid masses, occupying nearly the whole substance of the liver, and filling a great part of the abdomen. The symptoms, according to Dr. Farre, are pain in the

An 1814 American medical text showing British spellings that were still in use (*tumours*, *colour*, *centres*)

For the most part, the spelling systems of most Commonwealth countries and Ireland closely resemble the British system. In Canada, the spelling system can be said to follow both British and American forms,^[6] and Canadians are somewhat more tolerant of foreign spellings than are other English-speaking nationalities.^[7] Australian English mostly follows British spelling norms but has strayed slightly, with some American spellings incorporated as standard.^[8] New Zealand English is almost identical to British spelling, except in the word *fiord* (instead of *fjord*). There is an increasing use of macrons in words that originated in Māori and an unambiguous preference for *-ise* endings (see below).



Latin-derived spellings (often through Romance)

-our, -or

Most words ending in an unstressed *-our* in British English (e.g., *behaviour*, *colour*, *favour*, *flavour*, *harbour*, *honour*, *humour*, *labour*, *neighbour*, *rumour*, *splendour*) end in *-or* in American English (*behavior*, *color*, *favor*, *flavor*, *harbor*, *honor*, *humor*, *labor*, *neighbor*, *rumor*, *splendor*). Wherever the vowel is unreduced in pronunciation (e.g., *devour*, *contour*, *flour*, *hour*, *paramour*, *tour*, *troubadour*, and *velour*), the spelling is uniform everywhere.

Most words of this kind came from Latin, where the ending was spelled *-or*. They were first adopted into English from early Old French, and the ending was spelled *-our*, *-or* or *-ur*.^[9] After the Norman Conquest, the ending became *-our* to match the later Old French spelling.^[10] The *-our* ending was used not only in new English borrowings, but was also applied to the earlier borrowings that had used *-or*.^[9] However, *-or* was still sometimes found.^[11] The first three folios of Shakespeare's plays used both spellings before they were standardised to *-our* in the Fourth Folio of 1685.^[4]

After the Renaissance, new borrowings from Latin were taken up with their original *-or* ending, and many words once ending in *-our* (for example, *chancellour* and *governour*) reverted to *-or*. A few words of the *-our/or* group do not have a Latin counterpart that ends in *-or*; for example, *armo(u)r*, *behavio(u)r*, *harbo(u)r*, *neighbo(u)r*; also *arbo(u)r*, meaning "shelter", though senses "tree" and "tool" are always *arbor*, a false cognate of the other word. The word *arbor* would be more accurately spelled *arber* or *arbre* in the US and the UK, respectively, the latter of which is the French word for "tree". Some 16th- and early 17th-century British scholars indeed insisted that *-or* be used for words from Latin (e.g., *color*)^[11] and *-our* for French loans; however, in many cases, the etymology was not clear, and therefore some scholars advocated *-or* only and others *-our* only.^[12]

Webster's 1828 dictionary had only *-or* and is given much of the credit for the adoption of this form in the United States. By contrast, Johnson's 1755 (pre-US independence and establishment) dictionary used *-our* for all words still so spelled in the United Kingdom (like *colour*), but also for words where the *u* has since been dropped: *ambassadour*, *emperour*, *errour*, *governour*, *horror*, *inferiour*, *mirrour*, *perturbatour*, *superiour*, *tenour*, *terroure*, *tremour*. Johnson, unlike Webster, was not an advocate of spelling reform, but chose the spelling best derived, as he saw it, from among the variations in his sources. He preferred French over Latin spellings because, as he put it, "the French generally supplied us".^[13] English speakers who moved to the United States took these preferences with them. In the early 20th century, H. L. Mencken notes that "*honor* appears in the 1776 Declaration of Independence, but it seems to have been put there rather by accident than by design". In Jefferson's original draft it is spelled "honour".^[14] In the United Kingdom, examples of *behavior*, *color*, *flavor*, *harbor*, and *neighbor* rarely appear in Old Bailey court records from the 17th and 18th centuries, whereas there are thousands of examples of their *-our* counterparts.^[15] One notable exception is *honor*. *Honor* and *honour* were equally frequent in the United Kingdom until the 17th century;^[16] *honor* only exists in the UK now as the spelling of Honor Oak, a district of London, and of the occasional given name Honor.

Derivatives and inflected forms

In derivatives and inflected forms of the *-our/or* words, British usage depends on the nature of the suffix used. The *u* is kept before English suffixes that are freely attachable to English words (for example in *humourless*, *neighbourhood*, and *savoury*) and suffixes of Greek or Latin origin that have been adopted into English (for example in *behaviourism*, *favourite*, and *honourable*). However, before Latin suffixes that are not freely attachable to English words, the *u*:

- may be dropped, for example in *honorary*, *honorific*, *humorist*, *humorous*, *invigorate*, *laborious*, and *vigorous*;

- may be either dropped or kept, for example in *colo(u)ration* and *colo(u)rize* or *colo(u)rise*; or
- may be kept, for example in *colourist*.^[9]

In American usage, derivatives and inflected forms are built by simply adding the suffix in all cases (for example, *favorite*, *savory* etc.) since the *u* is absent to begin with.

Exceptions

American usage, in most cases, keeps the *u* in the word *glamour*, which comes from *Scots*, not Latin or French. *Glamor* is sometimes used in imitation of the spelling reform of other *-our* words to *-or*. Nevertheless, the adjective *glamorous* often drops the first "u". *Saviour* is a somewhat common variant of *savior* in the US. The British spelling is very common for *honour* (and *favour*) in the formal language of *wedding invitations* in the US.^[17] The name of the Space Shuttle *Endeavour* has a *u* in it because the spacecraft was named after British Captain James Cook's ship, *HMS Endeavour*. The (former) special car on Amtrak's *Coast Starlight* train is known as the Pacific Parlour car, not *Pacific Parlor*. Proper names such as *Pearl Harbor* or *Sydney Harbour* are usually spelled according to their native-variety spelling vocabulary.

The name of the herb *savory* is spelled thus everywhere, although the related adjective *savo(u)ry*, like *savo(u)r*, has a *u* in the UK. *Honor* (the name) and *arbor* (the tool) have *-or* in the United Kingdom, as mentioned above, as does the word *pallor*. As a general noun, *rigour* /'rɪɡər/ has a *u* in the UK; the medical term *rigor* (sometimes /'raɪɡər/)^[18] does not, such as in *rigor mortis*, which is Latin. Derivations of *rigour/rigor* such as *rigorous*, however, are typically spelled without a *u*, even in the UK. Words with the ending *-irior*, *-erior* or similar are spelled thus everywhere. *Junior* and *senior* were borrowed directly from Latin in the 13th century (as adjectives for father-son namesakes), and have never had *-our* forms anywhere.

The word *armour* was once somewhat common in American usage but has disappeared except in some brand names such as *Under Armour*.

The agent suffix *-or* (*separator*, *elevator*, *translator*, *animator*, etc.) is spelled thus both in American and British English.

Commonwealth usage

Commonwealth countries normally follow British usage. *Canadian English* most commonly uses the *-our* ending and *-our-* in derivatives and inflected forms. However, owing to the close geographic, historic, economic, and cultural relationship with the United States, *-or* endings are also sometimes used. Throughout the late 19th and early to mid-20th century, most Canadian newspapers chose to use the American usage of *-or* endings, originally to save time and money in the era of manual movable type.^[19] However, in the 1990s, the majority of Canadian newspapers officially updated their spelling policies to the British usage of *-our*. This coincided with a renewed interest in Canadian English, and the release of the updated *Gage Canadian Dictionary* in 1997 and the first *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* in 1998. Historically, most libraries and educational institutions in Canada have supported the use of the *Oxford English Dictionary* rather than the American *Webster's Dictionary*. The use of a distinctive set of Canadian English spellings is viewed by many Canadians as one of the unique aspects of Canadian culture (especially when compared to the United States).

In Australia, *-or* endings enjoyed some use throughout the 19th century and in the early 20th century. Like Canada, though, most major Australian newspapers have switched from *-or* endings to *-our* endings. The *-our* spelling is taught in schools nationwide as part of the Australian curriculum. The most notable countrywide use of the *-or* ending is for one of the country's major political parties, the *Australian Labor Party*, which was originally called "the Australian Labour Party" (name adopted in 1908), but was frequently referred to as both "Labour" and "Labor". The "Labor" spelling was adopted from 1912 onward due to the influence of the American labor movement^[20] and King O'Malley. On top of that, some place names in South Australia such as *Victor Harbor*, *Franklin Harbor* or *Outer Harbor* are usually spelled with the *-or* spellings. Aside from that, *-our* is now almost universal in Australia but the *-or* endings remain a minority variant. *New Zealand English*, while sharing some words and syntax with *Australian English*, follows British usage.

-re, -er

In British English, some words from French, Latin or Greek end with a consonant followed by an unstressed *-re* (pronounced /ə(r)/). In modern American English, most of these words have the ending *-er*.^{[21][22]} The difference is most common for words ending in *-bre* or *-tre*: British spellings *accoutre* (see exceptions), *calibre*, *centre*, *fibre*, *goitre*, *litre*, *louvre*, *lustre*, *manoeuvre*, *meagre*, *metre*

(length), *mitre*, *nitre*, *ochre*, *reconnoitre*, *sabre*, *saltpetre*, *sepulchre*, *sombre*, *spectre*, *theatre* (see exceptions) and *titre* all have -er in American spelling.

In the United Kingdom, both -re and -er spellings were common before Johnson's 1755 dictionary was published. Following this, -re became the most common usage in the United Kingdom. In the United States, following the publication of *Webster's Dictionary* in the early 19th century, American English became more standardized, exclusively using the -er spelling.^[5]

In addition, the spelling of some words have been changed from -re to -er in both varieties. These include *amber*, *blister*, *cadaver*, *canister*, *chamber*, *chapter*, *charter*, *cider*, *coffer*, *coriander*, *cover*, *cucumber*, *cylinder*, *December*, *diaper*, *disaster*, *enter*, *fever*, *filter*, *gender*, *leper*, *letter*, *lobster*, *master*, *member*, *meter* (measuring instrument), *minister*, *monster*, *murder*, *November*, *number*, *October*, *offer*, *order*, *oyster*, *powder*, *proper*, *render*, *semester*, *September*, *sequester*, *sinister*, *sober*, *surrender*, *tender*, and *tiger*. Words using the -*meter* suffix (from Ancient Greek -μέτρον *métron*, via French -*mètre*) normally had the -re spelling from earliest use in English but were superseded by -er. Examples include *thermometer* and *barometer*.

The *e* preceding the *r* is kept in American-inflected forms of nouns and verbs, for example, *fibers*, *reconnoitered*, *centering*, which are *fibres*, *reconnoitred*, and *centring* respectively in British English. According to the *OED*, *centring* is a "word ... of 3 syllables (in careful pronunciation)"^[23] (i.e., /ˈsɛntərɪŋ/), yet there is no vowel in the spelling corresponding to the second syllable (/ə/). The *OED* third edition (revised entry of June 2016) allows either two or three syllables. On the *Oxford Dictionaries Online* website, the three-syllable version is listed only as the American pronunciation of *centering*. The *e* is dropped for other derivations, for example, *central*, *fibrous*, *spectral*. However, the existence of related words without *e* before the *r* is not proof for the existence of an -re British spelling: for example, *entry* and *entrance* come from *enter*, which has not been spelled *entre* for centuries.^[24]

The difference relates only to root words; -er rather than -re is universal as a suffix for agentive (*reader*, *user*, *winner*) and comparative (*louder*, *nicer*) forms. One outcome is the British distinction of *meter* for a measuring instrument from *metre* for the unit of length. However, while "poetic metre" is often spelled as -re, *pentameter*, *hexameter*, etc. are always -er.^[25]

Exceptions

Many other words have -er in British English. These include Germanic words, such as *anger*, *mother*, *timber* and *water*, and such Romance-derived words as *danger*, *quarter* and *river*.

The ending -*cre*, as in *acre*,^[26] *lucre*, *massacre*, and *mediocre*, is used in both British and American English to show that the *c* is pronounced /k/ rather than /s/. The spellings *euchre* and *ogre* are also the same in both British and American English.

The spelling *theatre* is a variant in American English.^[27] It appears frequently in names, such as those of many New York City theatres on *Broadway*,^[28] especially of things named when it was still the prevailing spelling.^[29] (In British English a "theatre" is where stage performances take place but not film screenings – these take place in a cinema, or "picture theatre" in Australia.)^[30]

It is sometimes claimed that, in the US, these two spellings have different meanings, with *theatre* referring to dramatic arts and *theater* referring to buildings.^[29] However, the trade magazine *American Theatre* described this as a "popular myth",^[29] as *theater* is the prevailing American spelling used to refer to both dramatic arts and buildings.^[31] National US newspapers such as *The New York Times* use *theater* in their entertainment sections; the *Times* even corrects proper names from *theatre* to *theater*.^{[29][32][33]} The spelling *theatre* was previously more common, prevailing into at least the 1960s, with organizations such as *Theatre Communications Group*, founded 1961, and *The Guthrie Theater*, founded 1963, using it.^[29] *The New York Times* switched to using *theater* in 1962,^{[34][35]} The Guthrie changed its spelling in 1971,^[36] and the spelling has become increasingly common since.^[29]

Some placenames in the United States use *Centre* in their names. Examples include the villages of *Newton Centre* and *Rockville Centre*, the city of *Centreville*, *Centre County* and *Centre College*. Sometimes, these places were named before spelling changes but more often the spelling serves as an affectation. Proper names are usually spelled according to their native-variety spelling vocabulary; so, for instance, although *Peter* is the usual form of the male given name, as a surname both the spellings *Peter* and *Petre* (the latter notably borne by a British lord) are found.

For British *accoutre*, the American practice varies: the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* prefers the -re spelling,^[37] but *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* prefers the -er spelling.^[38]

More recent French loanwords keep the *-re* spelling in American English. These are not exceptions when a French-style pronunciation is used (/rə/ rather than /ə(r)/), as with *double entendre*, *genre* and *oeuvre*. The unstressed /ə(r)/ pronunciation of an *-er* ending is used either as the most common variant or an alternative pronunciation with some words, including *cadre*, *macabre*, *maître d'*, *Notre Dame*, *piastre*, and *timbre*.

Commonwealth usage

The *-re* endings are mostly standard throughout the Commonwealth. The *-er* spellings are recognized as minor variants in Canada, partly due to US influence. They are sometimes used in proper names (such as Toronto's controversially named Centerpoint Mall).^[12]

-ce, -se

For *advice*/*advise* and *device*/*devise*, American English and British English both keep the noun–verb distinction both graphically and phonetically (where the pronunciation is *-s/* for the noun and *-z/* for the verb). For *licence*/*license* or *practice*/*practise*, British English also keeps the noun–verb distinction graphically (although phonetically the two words in each pair are homophones with *-s/* pronunciation). On the other hand, American English uses *license* and *practice* for both nouns and verbs (with *-s/* pronunciation in both cases too).

American English has kept the Anglo-French spelling for *defense* and *offense*, which are *defence* and *offence* in British English. Likewise, there are the American *pretense* and British *pretence*; but derivatives such as *defensive*, *offensive*, and *pretension* are always thus spelled in both systems.

Australian^[39] and Canadian usages generally follow British usage.

-xion, -ction

The spelling *connexion* is now rare in everyday British usage, its use lessening as knowledge of Latin attenuates,^[12] and it has almost never been used in the US: the more common *connection* has become the standard worldwide. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the older spelling is more etymologically conservative, since the original Latin word had *-xio-*. The American usage comes from *Webster*, who abandoned *-xion* and preferred *-ction*.^[40] *Connexion* was still the house style of *The Times* of London until the 1980s and was still used by *Post Office Telecommunications* for its telephone services in the 1970s, but had by then been overtaken by *connection* in regular usage (for example, in more popular newspapers). *Connexion* (and its derivatives *connexional* and *connexionalism*) is still in use by the *Methodist Church of Great Britain* to refer to the whole church as opposed to its constituent districts, circuits and local churches, whereas the US-based *United Methodist Church* uses *Connection*.

Complexion (from *complex*) is the standard form worldwide, though *complection* does exist as an uncommon variant.^{[41][42]} The adjective *complected* (as in "dark-complected"), although sometimes proscribed, is on equal footing in the United States with *complexioned*.^[43] It is not used in this way in the UK, although there exists a rare alternative meaning of *complicated*.^[44]

Greek-derived and Latin-derived spellings

ae and oe

Many words, especially medical words, that are written with *ae/æ* or *oe/œ* in British English are written with just an *e* in American English.^[45] The sounds in question are /i:/ or /ɛ/ (or, unstressed, /i/, /ɪ/ or /ə/). Examples (with non-American letter in **bold**): ***aeon***, ***anaemia***, ***anaesthesia***, ***caecum***, ***caesium***, ***coeliac***, ***diarrhoea***, ***encyclopaedia***, ***faeces***, ***foetal***, ***gynaecology***, ***haemoglobin***, ***haemophilia***, ***leukaemia***, ***oesophagus***, ***oestrogen***, ***orthopaedic***,^[note 1] ***palaeontology***, ***paediatric***, ***paedophile***.

Words that can be spelled either way in American English include *aesthetics*, *amoeba* and *archaeology* (which usually prevail over *esthetics*, *ameba* and *archeology*),^[12] as well as *paean*^{[46][47]}, *palaestra*^[48], *phoenix*^[49], *subpoena*^[50]. *Oenology* is acceptable in American English but is deemed a minor variant of *enology*. The chemical *haem* (named as a shortening of *haemoglobin*) is spelled *heme* in American English, to avoid confusion with *hem*.

Words that can be spelled either way in British English include *chamaeleon*, *encyclopaedia*, *homoeopathy*, *mediaeval* (a minor variant in both AmE and BrE^{[51][52][53]}), *foetid* and *foetus*. The spellings *foetus* and *foetal* are Britishisms based on a mistaken etymology.^[54] The etymologically correct original spelling *fetus* reflects the Latin original and is the standard spelling in medical journals worldwide;^[55] the Oxford English Dictionary notes that "In Latin manuscripts both *fētus* and *foetus* are used".^[56]

The Ancient Greek diphthongs <αι> and <οι> were transliterated into Latin as <ae> and <oe>. The ligatures *æ* and *œ* were introduced when the sounds became monophthongs, and were later applied to words not of Greek origin in both Latin (for example, *cæli*) and French (for example, *œuvre*). In English, which has adopted words from all three languages, it is now usual to replace *Æ*/*æ* with *Ae/ae* and *Œ*/*œ* with *Oe/oe*. In many words, the digraph has been reduced to a lone *e* in all varieties of English: for example, *aedifice*, *aemulate*, *aequal*, *aequator*, *aequinox*, *aera*, *aesteem*, *aeternal*, *foederal*, *oeconomy*, *praemium*, *tragoedy*.^[57] The spelling *aenigma*, while uncommon in modern English, is recorded as a recognized variant spelling in *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*.^[58] In other cases, the digraph is retained across all varieties. Despite *phoenix* and *subpoena* being the most common spellings in American English, the uncommon variants *phenix*^[59] and *subpena*^[60] are occasionally used, with *Phenix* in *Virginia* illustrating the variant spelling. The retention of the digraph is especially common in names: *Aegean* (the sea), *Caesar*, *Oedipus*, *Phoebe*, etc., although "caesarean section" may be spelled as "cesarean section". There is no reduction of Latin -ae plurals (e.g., *larvae*); nor where the digraph <ae>/<oe> does not result from the Greek-style ligature as, for example, in *maelstrom* or *toe*; the same is true for the British form *aeroplane* (compare other *aero*- words such as *aerosol*). The now chiefly North American *airplane* is not a respelling but a recoinage, modelled after *airship* and *aircraft*. The word *airplane* dates from 1907,^[61] at which time the prefix *aero*- was trisyllabic, often written *aëro*-.

Canadian English mostly follows American English in this respect. While *e* is generally preferred over *oe* and often over *ae*, *oe* and *ae* are sometimes found in academic, scientific and official publications (for example, the fee schedule of the *Ontario Health Insurance Plan*), and in words such as *palaeontology* or *aeon*.^[62]

Pediatrician is preferred roughly 10 to 1 over *paediatrician*, while *foetal* and *oestrogen* are similarly uncommon. Canadian English is split on *gynecology* (e.g., the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada vs. the Canadian Medical Association's Canadian specialty profile of *Obstetrics/gynecology*). While British and American English both use the spelling "*palaeolithic*", the standard Canadian English spelling is usually "*paleolithic*", which is one of the very few instances where the Canadian spelling of a word differs from both the British and American spellings of that word.^{[63][64]}

In Australia, it can go either way, depending on the word: *medieval*, *eon* and *fetus* follow the American usage with *e* rather than *ae* or *oe*; *oestrogen* and *paediatrician* are spelled the British way.^[62] *Manoeuvre* is the only spelling in Australia, and the most common one in Canada, where *maneuver* and *manoeuvre* are also sometimes found.^[12] Elsewhere, the British usage prevails, but the spellings with just *e* are increasingly used worldwide. With the exception of *manoeuvre*, most British and American spellings are usually considered acceptable variants.^{[12][8]}

Greek-derived spellings (often through Latin and Romance)

***-ise*, *-ize* (*-isation*, *-ization*)**

Origin and recommendations

The *-ize* spelling is often incorrectly seen in the United Kingdom as an Americanism. It has been in use since the 15th century, predating the *-ise* spelling by over a century.^[65] The verb-forming suffix *-ize* comes directly from Ancient Greek *-ίζειν* (*-ízein*) or Late Latin *-izāre*, while *-ise* comes via French *-iser*, which itself stems from the same Greek suffix.^{[66][67]} The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) recommends *-ize* and lists the *-ise* form as an alternative.^[67]

Publications by Oxford University Press (OUP)—such as Henry Watson Fowler's *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, *Hart's Rules*,^[68] and *The Oxford Guide to English Usage*^[69]—also recommend *-ize*. However, Robert Allan's *Pocket Fowler's Modern English Usage* considers either spelling to be acceptable anywhere but the US.^[70]

Usage

American spelling avoids *-ise* endings in words like *organize*, *realize* and *recognize*.^[71]

British spelling mostly uses *-ise* (*organise*, *realise*, *recognise*), though *-ize* is sometimes used.^[71] The ratio between *-ise* and *-ize* stood at 3:2 in the British National Corpus up to 2002.^[72] The spelling *-ise* is more commonly used in UK mass media and newspapers,^[71] including *The Times* (which switched conventions in 1992),^[73] *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Economist* and the BBC. The Government of the United Kingdom additionally uses *-ise*, stating "do not use Americanisms" justifying that the spelling "is often seen as such".^[74] The *-ize* form is known as Oxford spelling and is used in publications of the Oxford University Press, most notably the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and of other academic publishers^[75] such as *Nature*, the *Biochemical Journal* and *The Times Literary Supplement*. It can be identified using the IETF language tag **en-GB-oxendict** (or, historically, by **en-GB-oed**).^[76]

In Ireland, India, Australia, and New Zealand^[77] *-ise* spellings strongly prevail: the *-ise* form is preferred in Australian English at a ratio of about 3:1 according to the *Macquarie Dictionary*.

In Canada, the *-ize* ending is more common, although the *Ontario Public School Spelling Book*^[78] spelled most words in the *-ize* form, but allowed for duality with a page insert as late as the 1970s, noting that, although the *-ize* spelling was in fact the convention used in the *OED*, the choice to spell such words in the *-ise* form was *a matter of personal preference*; however, a *pupil* having made the decision, one way or the other, thereafter ought to write uniformly not only for a given word, but to apply that same uniformity consistently for all words where the option is found. Just as with *-yze* spellings, however, in Canada the *ize* form remains the preferred or more common spelling, though both can still be found, yet the *-ise* variation, once more common amongst older Canadians, is employed less and less often in favour of the *-ize* spelling. (The alternate convention offered as a matter of choice may have been due to the fact that although there were an increasing number of American- and British-based dictionaries with Canadian Editions by the late 1970s, these were largely only supplemental in terms of vocabulary with subsequent definitions. It was not until the mid-1990s^{[79][80]} that Canadian-based dictionaries became increasingly common.)

Worldwide, *-ize* endings prevail in scientific writing and are commonly used by many international organizations, such as United Nations Organizations (such as the World Health Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization) and the International Organization for Standardization (but not by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). The European Union's style guides require the usage of *-ise*.^[81] Proofreaders at the EU's Publications Office ensure consistent spelling in official publications such as the *Official Journal of the European Union* (where legislation and other official documents are published), but the *-ize* spelling may be found in other documents.

The same applies to inflections and derivations such as *colonised/colonized* and *modernisation/modernization*.

Exceptions

- Some verbs take only an *-ize* form worldwide. In these, *-ize* is not a suffix, so does not ultimately come from Ancient Greek *-ίζειν*: for example, *capsize*, *seize* (except in the legal phrases *to be seised of* or *to stand seised to*), *size* and *prize* (meaning *value*, as opposed to the *prize* that means *pry*).
- Some verbs take only *-s-* worldwide. In these, *-ise* is not a suffix, but part of the English, French or Latin stems *-rise*, *-vise*, *-mis-*, etc.: *advise*, *arise*, *chastise*, *circumcise*, *compromise*, *demise*, *despise*, *devise*, *disguise*, *excise*, *exercise*, *franchise*, *guise*, *improvise*, *incise*, *promise*, *reprise*, *revise*, *rise*, *surmise*, *televise*, and *wise*. Less common *-ize* variants such as *advertize*^{[82][83]}, *comprize*^{[84][85]}, and *surprize*^[86] do exist in American English, but are rarer than the *-ise* forms.
- Some words spelled with *-ize* in American English are not used in British English. For example, from the noun *burglar*, the usual verb is formed by suffixation in American English (*burglarize*) but back-formation in British English (*burgle*).^[87]
- Conversely, the verb *to pry* (meaning "to force" or "to lever") is rarely used in North American English:^[12] *pry* is instead used, a back-formation from or alteration of *prize* to avoid confusion with the more common noun "prize". When it is used in Canada, it is spelled with an s, just as it is in British, Irish, Indian, New Zealand and European English, where its use is more common. However, the rare occurrences in the US have the spelling as *prize* even though it does not contain a suffix, so does not derive from *-ίζειν*.^{[88][89]}
- The spelling *enterprize* was the dominant spelling throughout the 18th century^[90]; Royal Navy vessels such as HMS *Enterprize* (1743) also used this spelling. However, *enterprize* is now considered archaic and is no longer used in either British or American English.

-yse, -yze

The ending *-yse* is now British and *-yze* is American. Thus, in British English *analyse*, *catalyse*, *hydrolyse* and *paralyse*, but in American English *analyze*, *catalyze*, *hydrolyze* and *paralyze*.

Either ending is derived from the Greek noun stem *λύσις* *lysis* ("release") with the *-ize/-ise* suffix added to it, and not the original verb form, whose stem is *λυ-* *ly-* without the *-s/z-* segment. The Oxford English Dictionary states on that matter: ^[91]

On Greek analogies the verb would have been *analysize*, French *analysiser*, of which [French] *analyser* was practically a shortened form, since, though following the analogy of pairs like *annexe*, *annexe-r*, it rested chiefly on the fact that by form-association it appeared already to belong to the series of factitive verbs in French *-iser*, English *-ize*, = Latin *-īzāre*, from Greek *-ίζ-ειν*, to which in sense it belonged. Hence from the first it was commonly written in Eng. *analyze*, the spelling accepted by Johnson, and historically quite defensible.

Alongside the authoritative Samuel Johnson's Dictionary, 1755, the spelling *analyze* was also preferred by John Kersey's of 1702 and Nathan Bailey's of 1721, both published in London. It is also given (alongside with *analyse*) as one of the two equally significant "main forms" in the first (published 1884-1928) and second (published 1989) editions of the Oxford English Dictionary.

In Canada, *-yze* is now generally preferred^[92], but *-yse* is also very common. In South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, *-yse* is the prevailing form.

-ogue, -og

British and other Commonwealth English use the ending *-logue* while American English commonly uses the ending *-log* for words like *analog(ue)*, *catalog(ue)*, *homolog(ue)*, etc., etymologically derived from Greek *-λόγος* *-logos* ("one who speaks (in a certain manner)"). The *-gue* spelling, as in *catalogue*, is used in the US, but *catalog* is more common. In contrast, *dialogue*, *epilogue*, *prologue*, and *monologue* are extremely common spellings compared to *dialog* etc. in American English, although both forms are treated as acceptable ways to spell the words^[93] (thus, the inflected forms, *cataloged* and *cataloging* vs. *catalogued* and *cataloguing*).

In American English, *analog* is the standard spelling for the adjective (e.g., *analog signal*), while *analogue* is sometimes preferred for the noun. According to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, *analog* is listed as the primary adjective form, and *analogue* as the principal noun form, with *analog* being labeled as a variant.^[94]

In Australia, *analog* is standard for the adjective, but both *analogue* and *analog* are current for the noun; in all other cases the *-gue* endings strongly prevail,^[12] for example *monologue*, except for such expressions as *dialog box* in computing,^[95] which are also used in other Commonwealth countries. In Australia, *analog* is used in its technical and electronic sense, as in *analog electronics*.^[8] In Canada and New Zealand, *analogue* is used, but *analog* has some currency as a technical term^[12] (e.g., in electronics, as in "analog electronics" as opposed to "digital electronics" and some video-game consoles might have an *analog stick*). The *-ue* is absent worldwide in related words like *analogy*, *analogous*, and *analogist*.

Words such as *demagogue*, *pedagogue*, and *synagogue*, from the Greek noun *ἀγωγός* *agōgos* ("guide"), are more commonly spelled with *-ue* in American English, though the shorter forms *demagog*,^[96] *pedagog*,^[97] and *synagog*^[98] also exist and are accepted variants.

Both British and American English use the spelling *-gue* with a silent *-ue* for certain words that are not part of the *-ogue* set, such as *tongue*, *plague*, *vague*, and *league*. In addition, when the *-ue* is not silent, as in the words *argue*, *ague* and *segue*, all varieties of English use *-gue*.

Doubled consonants

The plural of the noun *bus* is usually *buses*, with *busses* a minor American variant.^[99] Conversely, inflections of the verb *bus* usually double the *s* in British usage (*busses*, *bussed*, *bussing*) but not American usage (*buses*, *bused*, *busing*).^[99] In Australia, both are common, with the American usage slightly more common.^[100]

Doubled in British English

The final consonant of an English word is sometimes doubled in both American and British spelling when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel, for example *strip/stripped*, which prevents confusion with *stripe/striped* and shows the difference in pronunciation (see digraph). Generally, this happens only when the word's final syllable is stressed and when it also ends with a lone vowel followed by a lone consonant. In British English, however, a final *-l* is often doubled even when the final syllable is unstressed.^[12] This exception is no longer usual in American English, seemingly because of Noah Webster.^[101] The *-ll-* spellings are nevertheless still deemed acceptable variants by both Merriam-Webster Collegiate and American Heritage dictionaries.

- The British English doubling is used for all inflections (*-ed*, *-ing*, *-er*, *-est*) and for the noun suffixes *-er* and *-or*. Therefore, British English usage is *cancelled*, *counsellor*, *cruellest*, *labelled*, *modelling*, *quarrelled*, *signalling*, *traveller*, and *travelling*. Americans typically use *canceled*, *counselor*, *cruellest*, *labeled*, *modeling*, *quarreled*, *signaling*, *traveler*, and *traveling*. However, for certain words such as *cancelled*, the *-ll-* spelling is acceptable in American English as well.
 - The word *parallel* keeps a single *-l-* in British English, as in American English (*paralleling*, *unparalleled*), to avoid the cluster *-llell-*.
 - Words with two vowels before a final *l* are also spelled with *-ll-* in British English before a suffix when the first vowel either acts as a consonant (*equalling* and *initialled*; in the United States, *equaling* or *initialed*), or belongs to a separate syllable (British *di•alled* and *fu•el•ling*; American *di•aled* and *fue•ling*).
 - British *woollen* is a further exception due to the double vowel (American: *woolen*). Also, *wooly* is accepted in American English, though *woolly* prevails in both systems.^[12]
 - The verb *surveil*, a back-formation from *surveillance*, always makes *surveilled*, *surveilling*.^[102]
- Endings *-ize/-ise*, *-ism*, *-ist*, *-ish* usually do not double the *l* in British English; for example, *devilish*, *dualism*, *normalise*, and *novelist*.
 - Exceptions: *duellist*, *medallist*, *panellist*, *tranquillise*, and sometimes *triallist* in British English.
- For *-ous*, British English has a single *l* in *scandalous* and *perilous*, but the "ll" in *libellous* and *marvellous*.
- For *-ee*, British English has *libellee*.
- For *-age*, British English has *pupillage* but *vassalage*.
- American English sometimes has an unstressed *-ll-*, as in the UK, in some words where the root has *-l*. These are cases where the change happens in the source language, which was often Latin. (Examples: *bimetallism*, *cancellation*, *chancellor*, *crystallize*, *excellent*, *railery*, and *tonsillitis*.)
- All forms of English have *compelled*, *excelling*, *propelled*, *rebellling* (stressed *-ll-*); *revealing*, *fooling* (double vowel before the *l*); and *hurling* (consonant before the *l*).
- Canadian and Australian English mostly follow British usage.^[12]

Among consonants other than *l*, practice varies for some words, such as where the final syllable has secondary stress or an unreduced vowel. In the United States, the spellings *kidnaped* and *worshiped*, which were introduced by the Chicago Tribune in the 1920s,^[103] are common, but *kidnapped* and *worshipped* prevail.^{[104][105]} *Kidnapped* and *worshipped* are the only standard British spellings. However, *focused* is the predominant spelling in both British and American English, *focussed* being just a minor variant in British English.^[106]

Miscellaneous:

- British *calliper* or *caliper*; American *caliper*.
- British *jewellery*; American *jewelry*. The word originates from the Old French word *jouel*^[107] (whose contemporary French equivalent is *joyau*, with the same meaning). The standard pronunciation /'dʒu:əlri/^[108] does not reflect this difference, but the non-standard pronunciation /'dʒu:ləri/ (which exists in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, hence the Cockney rhyming slang word *tomfoolery* /tɒm' fu:ləri/) does. According to Fowler, *jewelry* used to be the "rhetorical and poetic" spelling in the UK, and was still used by *The Times* into the mid-20th century. Canada has both, but *jewellery* is more often used. Likewise, the Commonwealth (including Canada) has *jeweller* and the US has *jeweler* for a jewel(le)ry seller.

Doubled in American English

Conversely, there are words where British writers prefer a single *l* and Americans a double *l*. In American usage, the spelling of words is usually not changed when they form the main part (not prefix or suffix) of other words, especially in newly formed words and in words whose main part is in common use. Words with this spelling difference include *appall*, *enrollment*, *fulfillment*, *installment*, *skillful*, *thrall*, *willful*. These words have monosyllabic cognates always written with -ll: *pall* (verb), *roll*, *fill*, *stall*, *skill*, *thrall*, *will*. Cases where a single *l* nevertheless occurs in both American and British English include *null* → *annul*, *annulment*; *till* → *until* (although some prefer *til* to reflect the single *l* in *until*, sometimes using a leading apostrophe (*'til*); this should be considered a hypercorrection as *till* predates the use of *until*); and others where the connection is not clear or the monosyllabic cognate is not in common use in American English (e.g., *null* is used mainly as a technical term in law, mathematics, and computer science).

In the UK, a single *l* is generally preferred over American forms *distill*, *enroll*, *enthrall*, and *instill*, although *ll* was formerly used;^[109] these are always spelled with *ll* in American usage. The former British spellings *dulness*, *fulness*, and *instal* are now quite rare.^[12] The Scottish *tolbooth* is cognate with *tollbooth*, but it has a distinct meaning.

In both American and British usages, words normally spelled -ll usually drop the second *l* when used as prefixes or suffixes, for example *all* → *almighty*, *altogether*; *full* → *handful*, *useful*; *well* → *welcome*, *welfare*; *chill* → *chilblain*.

Both the British *fulfil* and the American *fulfill* never use -ll- in the middle (i.e., **fullfill* and **fullfil* are incorrect).^{[110][111]}

Johnson wavered on this issue. His dictionary of 1755 lemmatizes *distil* and *instill*, *downhil* and *uphill*.^[12]

Dropped "e"

British English sometimes keeps a silent "e" when adding suffixes where American English does not.

- When adding -ing to the verbs *route*,^[112] *singe*, *swinge*, *dye*, British English usually preserves the -e to distinguish from the -ing forms of *rout*, *sing*, *swing*, *die*.^[note 2] This is rare in American English except for *swingeing*.^[113] In contrast, the verb *bathe* and the British verb *bath* both form *bathing*. Of other -inge verbs, both forms of English vary for *tinge* and *twinge*, and prefer *cringing*, *hinging*, *lunging*, *syringing*.
- British prefers *ageing*,^[12] American usually *aging*. Both prefer *ageism*, but *agism* is also common in American.
- Before -able, British English prefers *likeable*, *liveable*, *rateable*, *saleable*, *sizeable*, *unshakeable*,^[114] where American practice prefers to drop the "e"; but both British and American English prefer *breathable*, *curable*, *datable*, *lovable*, *movable*, *notable*, *provable*, *quotable*, *scalable*, *solvable*, *usable*,^[114] and those where the root is polysyllabic, like *believable* or *decidable*. Both systems keep the silent "e" when it is needed to preserve a soft "c", "ch", or "g", such as in *cacheable*, *changeable*, *traceable*; both usually keep the "e" after "-dge", as in *knowledgeable*, *unbridgeable*, and *unabridgeable* ("These rights are unabridgeable").
- Both *abridgment* and the more regular *abridgement* are current in the US, only the latter in the UK.^[12] Likewise for the word *lodg(e)ment*. Both *judgment* and *judgement* are in use interchangeably everywhere, although the former prevails in the US and the latter prevails in the UK^[12] except in the legal profession, where *judgment* is standard. This also holds for *abridgment* and *acknowledgment*. Both systems prefer *fledgling* to *fledgeling*, but *ridgeling* to *ridgling*. *Acknowledgment*, *acknowledgement*, *abridgment* and *abridgement* are all used in Australia; the shorter forms are endorsed by the Australian Capital Territory Government.^{[8][115]} As a rule, "g" is hard unless followed by an "e", "i", or "y": aside from the preceding -dg- words, the few exceptions include *mortgagor*, *gaol*, *margarine* (variant), and such Latin *æ* words as *algae*.
- Suffix or pseudo-suffix -y in short words varies in both Englishes; cases where British dictionaries give priority to -ey and American ones do not include *fog(e)y*, *gam(e)y*, *mous(e)y*, *phon(e)y*, *pric(e)y*, *rop(e)y*, *stag(e)y*.

Different spellings for different meanings

	Meaning	Example	British	American	Notes	Etymology
<i>dependant</i> or <i>dependent</i>	adjective	A is dependent on B	dependent	dependent	<i>dependant</i> is also an acceptable variant for the noun form in the US. ^[116]	
	noun	A is a dependant	dependant			
<i>disc</i> or <i>disk</i>	optical discs		(computing) disc In computing, disc is used for optical discs (e.g., a CD, Compact Disc; DVD, Digital Versatile/Video Disc; MCA DiscoVision, LaserDisc), by choice of the group that coined and trademarked the name Compact Disc. ^[117]		Traditionally, disc used to be British and disk American.	Both spellings are etymologically sound (Greek <i>diskos</i> , Latin <i>discus</i>), although <i>disk</i> is the earlier form.
	other disks		disk In computing, disk is used for products using magnetic storage (e.g., <u>hard disks</u> or <u>floppy disks</u> , also known as diskettes). ^[117]			
<i>inquiry</i> or <i>enquiry</i> ^[12]	formal inquest	a formal inquiry	inquiry	inquiry (except for the <u>National Enquirer</u>)	Historically, <i>inquiry</i> and <i>enquiry</i> were equal alternatives. A strict distinction is made by Fowler, and is maintained by many (though not all) British writers. Interchangeable in Australian English ^[118]	
	act of questioning	to make enquiries	inquiry or enquiry ^[119]			
<i>ensure</i> or <i>insure</i> ^[120]	to make sure, to make certain	to ensure the gates are shut	ensure		The Commonwealth distinction is only about a century old. ^[12]	
	to make certain especially by taking necessary measures and precautions	to ensure the prisoner doesn't escape	ensure	insure		
	to provide or obtain insurance on or for	to insure a car	insure			
	to guarantee or protect against	to insure against danger	insure			

<i><u>matt</u> or <u>matte</u></i> ^[12]	a non-glossy surface	a matt table	matt	matte		
	<u>the motion-picture technique</u>	a matte shot	matte			
<i><u>programme</u> or <u>program</u></i>	a leaflet listing information about a live event	a concert programme	programme (first appeared in England in 1671)	program (first appeared in Scotland in 1633, shared with Canadian English, though occasionally wholly replaced with -mme there ^[12])	New Zealand also follows the British pattern. Australia has followed the American pattern since the 1960s, ^[12] and is listed as the official spelling in the <i>Macquarie Dictionary</i> ; ^[8] see also the name of <i>The Micallef P(r)ogram(me)</i> .	The British <i>programme</i> is from post-classical Latin <i>programma</i> and French <i>programme</i> . The <i>OED</i> entry, updated in 2007, says that <i>program</i> conforms to the usual representation of Greek as in <i>anagram</i> , <i>diagram</i> , <i>telegram</i> etc.
	a computer program		program (occasionally programme)			
<i><u>tonne</u> or <u>ton</u></i>	SI unit (1,000 kilograms)	a metric <u>tonne</u>	tonne	ton	Canada uses either nomenclature. ^[121]	
	<u>long ton</u> (2,240 pounds or 1,016 kilograms)		ton	N/A	The tonne and long ton differ by only 1.6%, and are roughly interchangeable when accuracy is not critical	
	<u>short ton</u> (2,000 pounds or 907 kilograms)		N/A	ton		
<i><u>metre</u> or <u>meter</u></i> ^[122]	unit of length	a metre long	metre	meter	also the international spelling for the unit according to the SI brochure by the <u>BIPM</u>	
	measuring device	a water meter	meter			

Different spellings for different pronunciations

In a few cases, essentially the same word has a different spelling that reflects a different pronunciation.

As well as the miscellaneous cases listed in the following table, the past tenses of some irregular verbs differ in both spelling and pronunciation, as with *smelt* (UK) versus *smelled* (US) (see American and British English grammatical differences: Verb morphology).

UK	US	Notes
<u>aeroplane</u> /ˈɛəpəleɪn/	<u>airplane</u> /ˈɛəpleɪn/	<i>Aeroplane</i> , originally a French loanword with a different meaning, is the older spelling. ^[123] The oldest recorded uses of the spelling <i>airplane</i> are British. ^[123] According to the <i>OED</i> , ^[124] " <i>airplane</i> became the standard American term (replacing <i>aeroplane</i>) after this was adopted by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics in 1916. Although A. Lloyd James recommended its adoption by the BBC in 1928, it has until recently been no more than an occasional form in British English." In the British National Corpus, ^[125] <i>aeroplane</i> outnumbers <i>airplane</i> by more than 7:1 in the UK. The case is similar for the British <i>aerodrome</i> ^[126] and American <i>airdrome</i> ; ^[127] <i>Aerodrome</i> is used merely as a technical term in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The prefixes <i>aero-</i> and <i>air-</i> both mean <i>air</i> , with the first coming from the Ancient Greek word <i>ἀήρ</i> (<i>āēr</i>). Thus, the prefix appears in <i>aeronautics</i> , <i>aerostatics</i> , <i>aerodynamics</i> , <i>aeronautical engineering</i> and so on, while the second occurs invariably in <i>aircraft</i> , <i>airport</i> , <i>airliner</i> , <i>airmail</i> etc. In Canada, <i>airplane</i> is more common than <i>aeroplane</i> , although <i>aeroplane</i> is used as part of the regulatory term "ultra-light aeroplane". ^[128]
<u>aluminium</u> /ˌæl(j)ʊˈmɪnjəm/	<u>aluminum</u> /əˈlʊmɪnəm/	The spelling <i>aluminium</i> is the international standard in the sciences according to the IUPAC recommendations. Humphry Davy, the element's discoverer, first proposed the name <i>alumium</i> , and then later <i>aluminum</i> . The name <i>aluminium</i> was finally adopted to conform with the <i>-ium</i> ending of some metallic elements. ^[129] Canada uses <i>aluminum</i> and Australia and New Zealand <i>aluminium</i> , according to their respective dictionaries ^[12] although the Canadian trade association is called the 'Aluminium Association of Canada' ^[130]
<u>ampoule</u> /ˈæmp(j)uːl/	<u>ampoule</u> , <u>ampule</u> , <u>ampul</u> /ˈæmpuːl/	The <i>-poule</i> spelling and /-puːl/ pronunciation, which reflect the word's French origin, are common in both the US and the UK, ^[131] with <i>-pule</i> and /-pjuːl/ being rare variants in the United Kingdom. ^[132]
<u>arse</u> /ɑːs/	<u>ass</u> /æs/	In vulgar senses " <u>buttocks</u> " ("anus"/"wretch"/"idiot"); unrelated sense "donkey" is <u>ass</u> in both. <i>Arse</i> is very rarely used in the US, though often understood, whereas both are used in British English (with <i>arse</i> being considered vulgar). <i>Arse</i> is also used in <u>Newfoundland</u> .
<u>behove</u> /bɪˈhəʊv/	<u>behoove</u> /bɪˈhuːv/	The 19th century had the spelling <i>behove</i> pronounced to rhyme with <i>move</i> . ^[133] Subsequently, a pronunciation spelling with doubled <i>oo</i> was adopted in the US, while in the United Kingdom a <u>spelling pronunciation</u> rhyming with <i>rove</i> was adopted.
<u>bogeyman</u> /ˈboʊɡɪmæn/	<u>boogeyman</u> /ˈbuːɡɪmæn/ <u>boogerman</u> /ˈbuːɡɜrmæn/	The American form, <i>boogeyman</i> , is reminiscent of musical boogie to the British ear. Both the British form, <i>bogeyman</i> , and the Southern US variation <i>boogerman</i> suggest the slang term <i>bogey</i> (UK) / <i>booger</i> (US) for <u>nasal mucus</u> , while the mainstream American spelling of <i>boogeyman</i> does not.
<u>brent</u> /brɛnt/	<u>brant</u> /brænt/	For the species of goose.
<u>carburettor</u> , <u>carburetter</u> /ˌkɑːrbjʊˈrɛtə/, /ˌkɑːrbəˈrɛtə/	<u>carburetor</u> /ˌkɑːrbəˈrɛtər/	The word <i>carburetor</i> comes from the French <i>carbure</i> meaning " <u>carbide</u> ". ^{[134][135]}
<u>charivari</u> /ˌʃɑːrɪˈvɑːri/	<u>shivaree</u> , <u>charivari</u> /ˌʃɪvəˈjiː/	In the US, both terms are mainly regional. ^[136] The pronunciation of /ʃɪvəˈjiː/ is also found in Canada and <u>Cornwall</u> , ^[137] and is a corruption of the French word.
<u>closure</u> /ˈkləʊʒə/	<u>cloture</u> /ˈklouʒɜː/	Motion in legislative or parliamentary procedure that quickly ends debate. Borrowed from the French <i>clôture</i> meaning "closure"; <i>cloture</i> remains the name used in the US. The American spelling was initially used when it was adopted into the UK in 1882 but was later changed to <i>closure</i> . ^{[138][139]}
<u>eyrie</u> /ˈiəri/	<u>aerie</u> , <u>eyrie</u> /ˈɛɪi/, /ˈiəri/	Not to be confused with the adjective <u>eerie</u> . Rhymes with <i>weary</i> and <i>hairly</i> respectively.
<u>fillet</u> /ˈfɪlɪt/	<u>fillet</u> , <u>filet</u> /fɪˈleɪ/	Pronounced the French way (approximately) in the US; Canada follows British pronunciation and distinguishes between <i>fillet</i> , especially as concerns fish, and <i>filet</i> , as concerns certain cuts of beef. McDonald's in the UK and Australia use the US spelling "filet" for their <u>Filet-O-Fish</u> .
<u>furore</u> /ˈfjʊəˈɔːri/	<u>furor</u> /ˈfjʊəɹə/	<i>Furore</i> is a late 18th-century Italian loanword that replaced the Latinate form in the UK in the following century, ^[140] and is usually pronounced with a voiced

UK	US	Notes
		final e. The Canadian usage is the same as the American, and Australia has both. ^[12]
<u>grotty</u> /'grɒti/	<u>grody</u> , <u>groaty</u> /'grəʊdi/	Clippings of <i>grotesque</i> ; both are slang terms from the 1960s. ^[141]
<u>haulier</u> /'həʊliə/	<u>hauler</u> /'həʊlə/	Haulage contractor; <i>haulier</i> is the older spelling. ^[12]
<u>jemmy</u> /'dʒɛmi/	<u>jimmy</u> /'dʒɪmi/	In the sense " <u>crowbar</u> ".
<u>mum</u> (my) /mʌm/	<u>mom</u> (my) /mɒm/	<i>Mom</i> is sporadically regionally found in the UK (e.g., in West Midlands English). Some British and Irish dialects have <i>mam</i> , ^[142] and this is often used in Northern English, Hiberno-English, and Welsh English. Scottish English may also use <i>mam</i> , <i>ma</i> , or <i>maw</i> . In the American region of New England, especially in the case of the Boston accent, the British pronunciation of <i>mum</i> is often retained, while it is still spelled <i>mom</i> . In Canada, there are both <i>mom</i> and <i>mum</i> ; Canadians often say <i>mum</i> and write <i>mom</i> . ^[143] In Australia and New Zealand, <i>mum</i> is used. In the sense of a preserved corpse, <i>mummy</i> is always used.
<u>naivety</u> , <u>naïveté</u> /nɑːˈiːv(ə)ti/	<u>naïveté</u> /nɑːˈiːv(ə)teɪ/	The American spelling is from French, and American speakers generally approximate the French pronunciation, whereas the British spelling conforms to English norms. ^{[144][145]} In the UK, <i>naïveté</i> is a minor variant, used about 20% of the time in the British National Corpus; in the US, <i>naïvete</i> and <i>naïveté</i> are marginal variants, and <i>naivety</i> is almost unattested. ^{[12][146]}
<u>orientated</u> /'ɔː.ɪəntetɪd/	<u>oriented</u> /'ɔː.ɪentɪd/	In the UK, Australia and New Zealand, it is common to use <i>orientated</i> (as in family-orientated), whereas in the US, <i>oriented</i> is used exclusively (family-oriented). The same applies to the negative (<i>disorientated</i> , <i>disoriented</i>). Both words have the same origins, coming from "orient" or its offshoot "orientation". ^[147]
<u>pernickety</u> /pəˈnɪkti/	<u>persnickety</u> /pəˈsnɪkti/	<i>Persnickety</i> is a late 19th-century American alteration of the Scots word <i>pernickety</i> . ^[148]
<u>plonk</u> /plɒŋk/	<u>plunk</u> /plʌŋk/	As verb meaning "sit/set down carelessly". ^[149]
<u>potter</u> /'pɒtə/	<u>putter</u> /'pʌtə/	As verb meaning "perform minor agreeable tasks". ^[150]
<u>pyjamas</u> /prɪˈdʒɑːməz/	<u>pajamas</u> /pəˈdʒæ.məz/	The y represents the pronunciation of the original Urdu term <i>pāy-jāma</i> , and in the 18th century spellings such as <i>paijamahs</i> and <i>peiijammahs</i> appeared: this is reflected in the pronunciation /paɪˈdʒɑːməz/ (with the first syllable rhyming with <i>pie</i>) offered as an alternative in the first edition of the <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> . Two spellings are also known from the 18th century, but <i>pajama</i> became more or less confined to the US. ^[151] Canada follows both British and American usage, with both forms commonplace.
<u>quin</u> /kwɪn/	<u>quint</u> /kwɪnt/	Abbreviations of <i>quintuplet</i> .
<u>scallywag</u> /'skælɪwæg/	<u>scalawag</u> /'skæləwæg/, <u>scallywag</u>	In the United States (where the word originated, as <i>scalawag</i>), ^[12] <i>scallywag</i> is not unknown. ^[152]
<u>sledge</u> /sledʒ/	<u>sled</u> /slɛd/	In American usage a <i>sled</i> is smaller and lighter than a <i>sledge</i> and is used only over ice or snow, especially for play by young people, whereas a <i>sledge</i> is used for hauling loads over ice, snow, grass, or rough terrain. ^[153] Australia follows American usage. ^[154]
<u>speciality</u> /ˌspeʃiˈælɪti/	<u>specialty</u> /ˌspeʃəlti/	In British English the standard usage is <i>speciality</i> , but <i>specialty</i> occurs in the field of medicine ^[155] and also as a legal term for a contract under seal. In Canada, <i>specialty</i> prevails. In Australia and New Zealand, both are current. ^[12]
<u>titbit</u> /'tɪtbɪt/	<u>tidbit</u> /'tɪdbɪt/	According to the <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , the oldest form was <i>tyd bit</i> , and the alteration to <i>titbit</i> was probably under the influence of the obsolete word <i>tit</i> , meaning a small horse or girl.

Past tense differences

In the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, it is more common to end some past tense verbs with a "t" as in *learnt* or *dreamt* rather than *learned* or *dreamed*,^[156] though such spellings are also found in American English. However, in American English, *burned* and *burnt* have different usages.

Several verbs have different past tenses or past participles in American and British English:

- The past tense of the verb "to dive" is most commonly found as "dived" in British and New Zealand English. "Dove" is sometimes used in its place in American English.^[157] Both terms are understood in Canada and Australia, and may be found either in minority use or in regional dialect in the US.
- The past tense of the verb "to get" is "got" everywhere, but the past participle is "got" in British and New Zealand English but "gotten" in American and Canadian, and occasionally in Australian English. Both terms are understood, and may be found either in minority use or in regional dialect. One exception is in the phrase "ill-gotten", which is widely used everywhere. Another is the universal use of "have got" to indicate possession or necessity: "I have got a car", "I have got to go" (whereas "I have gotten a car" would mean "I have *obtained* a car", and "I have gotten to go" would mean "I have had the *opportunity/privilege* to go"). None of this affects "forget" and "beget", whose past participles are "forgotten" and "begotten" in all varieties.

Miscellaneous spelling differences

In the table below, the main spellings are above the accepted alternative spellings.

United Kingdom (UK)	United States (US)	Remarks
<u>adze</u>	adze, <u>adz</u> ^[158]	In British English, <i>adze</i> is the standard spelling. In American English, <i>adz</i> is an accepted variant, though <i>adze</i> is also widely used. The <i>U.S. Government Publishing Office Style Manual</i> prefers <i>adz</i> . ^[159]
<u>annexe</u> , <u>annex</u>	annex	<i>Annex</i> is the verb in both British and American English. However, the noun—an <i>annex(e)</i> of a building—is spelled with an <i>e</i> at the end in the UK, but not in the US. Australia follows US usage. ^[62]
<u>apophthegm</u> ^[160]	<u>apothegm</u> ^[161]	Johnson preferred <i>apophthegm</i> (the <i>ph</i> is silent), which matches Ancient Greek: ἀπόφθεγμα, romanized: <i>apophthegma</i> . ^[162] Webster preferred <i>apothegm</i> , which matches Latin <i>apothegma</i> and was also more common in England until Johnson. ^[162] There is an unrelated word spelled <i>apothem</i> in all varieties of English. ^[162]
<u>artefact</u> , <u>artifact</u>	artifact	In British English, <i>artefact</i> is the main spelling and <i>artifact</i> a minor variant. ^[163] In American English, <i>artifact</i> is the established spelling. Canadians prefer <i>artifact</i> and Australians <i>artefact</i> , according to their respective dictionaries. ^[12] <i>Artefact</i> reflects <i>arte-fact(um)</i> , the Latin source. ^[164]
<u>axe</u>	axe, <u>ax</u>	For both the noun and verb. The word derives from Old English <i>æx</i> . In the US, both spellings are acceptable, though <i>axe</i> is more common. The <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> (<i>OED</i>) states that "the spelling <i>ax</i> is better on every ground, of etymology, phonology, and analogy, than <i>axe</i> , which became prevalent in the 19th century; but it [<i>ax</i>] is now disused in the United Kingdom". ^[165]
<u>camomile</u> , <u>chamomile</u>	chamomile	The word derives, via French and Latin, from Greek χαμαίμηλον ("earth apple"). The more common British spelling <i>camomile</i> , corresponding to the immediate French source, is the older English spelling, while <i>chamomile</i> more accurately corresponds to the ultimate Latin and Greek source. ^[166] In the UK, according to the <i>OED</i> , "the spelling <i>cha-</i> is chiefly in pharmacy, after Latin; that with <i>ca-</i> is literary and popular". In the US, <i>chamomile</i> dominates in all senses.
<u>carat</u>	<u>karat</u> , carat	The spelling with a <i>k</i> is used in the US only for the measure of purity of gold. The <i>c</i> spelling is universal for weight. ^[164]
<u>cheque</u>	check	For the banking medium, hence the terms <i>paycheque</i> (or <i>pay cheque</i>) and <i>paycheck</i> (or <i>pay check</i>). Accordingly, the North American term for what is known as a <i>current account</i> or <i>cheque account</i> in the UK is spelled <i>chequing account</i> in Canada and <i>checking account</i> in the US. Some American financial institutions, notably <i>American Express</i> , use <i>cheque</i> , but this is merely a trademarking affectation.
<u>chequer</u>	checker	As in <i>chequerboard</i> / <i>checkerboard</i> , <i>chequered</i> / <i>checkered flag</i> , etc. <i>Checker</i> is the more common spelling in Canada and Australia. ^[12]
<u>chilli</u>	<u>chili</u> , <u>chile</u>	The original Mexican Spanish word is <i>chile</i> , itself derived from the Classical Nahuatl term <i>chilli</i> . ^{[12][167]} In <i>Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary</i> , <i>chile</i> and <i>chilli</i> are given as <i>also</i> variants.
<u>chlorophyll</u>	chlorophyll, chlorophyl ^{[168][169]}	
<u>cigarette</u>	cigarette, cigaret ^[170]	<i>Cigaret</i> was common in American English during the early to mid-20th century and remains an accepted variant in <i>Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary</i> .
<u>cipher</u> , <u>cypher</u>	cipher	
<u>corvette</u>	corvette, corvet ^[171]	
<u>cosy</u>	cozy	In all senses (adjective, noun, verb).
<u>coulter</u>	colter, coulter	
<u>defuse</u>	defuse, defuze ^{[172][173]}	
<u>doughnut</u>	doughnut, donut	In the US, both are used, with <i>donut</i> indicated as a less common variant of <i>doughnut</i> . ^[174]
<u>draught</u> , draft	draft	British English usually uses <i>draft</i> for all senses as the verb; ^[175] for a preliminary version of a document; for an order of payment (bank draft), and for military conscription (although this last meaning is not as common as in American English). It uses <i>draught</i> for a drink from a cask (draught beer); for animals used for pulling heavy loads (draught horse); for a current of air; for a ship's minimum depth of water to float; ^[176] and for the game <i>draughts</i> , known as <i>checkers</i> in the US. It uses either <i>draught</i> or <i>draft</i> for a plan or sketch (but almost always <i>draughtsman</i> in this sense; a <i>draftsman</i> drafts legal documents). American English uses <i>draft</i> in all these cases. Canada uses both systems; in Australia, <i>draft</i> is used for technical drawings, is accepted for the "current of air" meaning, and is preferred by professionals in the nautical sense. ^[12] The pronunciation is always the same for all meanings within a dialect (RP /draːft/, General American

United Kingdom (UK)	United States (US)	Remarks
		<i>/dræft/</i>). The spelling <i>draught</i> reflects the older pronunciation, <i>/dra:xt/</i> ; <i>draft</i> emerged in the 16th century to reflect the change in pronunciation. ^{[177][178]}
<u>dyke</u>	<u>dike</u>	The spelling with an <i>i</i> is sometimes found in the UK, but the <i>y</i> spelling is rare in the US, where the <i>y</i> distinguishes <i>dike</i> in this sense from <u>dyke</u> , a slang term for a lesbian (sometimes considered a slur).
<u>faggot</u>	<u>fagot</u> , faggot	In the sense "a bundle of sticks", <i>fagot</i> is the preferred American spelling; the single- <i>g</i> spelling has existed since Middle English and is etymologically closer to French <i>fagot</i> . Merriam-Webster's <i>Collegiate Dictionary</i> lists only the offensive senses under <i>faggot</i> , ^[179] while the non-slur senses appear exclusively under <i>fagot</i> , ^[180] where <i>faggot</i> is also given as a variant for those senses.
<u>font</u> , <u>fount</u>	font	<i>Fount</i> was the standard British spelling for a metal type font (especially in the sense of one consignment of metal type in one style and size, e.g. "the printing company had a fount of that typeface"); it lasted until the end of the metal type era and is occasionally still seen. ^[181] The spellings derive from French <i>fondre</i> , "to cast".
<u>fuse</u>	<u>fuse</u> , <u>fuze</u> ^{[182][183]}	When referring to a cord or string used to ignite something, <i>fuse</i> is the established spelling, while <i>fuze</i> is a less common American variant.
<u>gauge</u>	<u>gauge</u> , <u>gage</u> ^[184]	Both spellings have existed since Middle English. ^[185]
<u>gauntlet</u>	<u>gauntlet</u> , <u>gantlet</u>	When meaning "ordeal", as in the phrase <i>running the ga(u)ntlet</i> , American style guides prefer <i>gantlet</i> . ^[186] This spelling is unused in the UK ^[187] and less usual in the US than <i>gauntlet</i> . The word is an alteration of the earlier term <i>gantlope</i> , by folk etymology with <i>gauntlet</i> (glove), which may be spelled either <i>gauntlet</i> or <i>gantlet</i> . ^[188]
<u>glycerine</u>	<u>glycerin</u>	Scientists use the term <i>glycerol</i> .
<u>gram</u> , <u>gramme</u>	gram	The dated spelling <i>gramme</i> is sometimes used in the UK, ^[189] but never in the US. (<i>Kilo</i>) <i>gram</i> is the only spelling used by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures. The same applies to other related terms such as <i>decagram</i> and <i>hectogram</i> .
<u>grey</u>	<u>gray</u>	<i>Grey</i> became the established British spelling in the 20th century, ^[12] but it is a minor variant in American English, according to dictionaries. The two spellings are of equal antiquity, and the OED states that "each of the current spellings has some analogical support". ^[190] Both <i>Grey</i> and <i>Gray</i> are found in proper nouns everywhere in the English-speaking world. The name of the dog breed <i>greyhound</i> is never spelled <i>grayhound</i> ; the word descends from <i>grighund</i> .
<u>grill</u> , <u>grille</u>	<u>grill</u> , <u>grille</u>	In the US, <i>grille</i> refers to that of an automobile, whereas <i>grill</i> refers to a device used for heating food. However, it is not uncommon to see both spellings used in the automotive sense, ^[191] as well as in Australia ^[192] and New Zealand. ^[193] <i>Grill</i> is more common overall in British and American English. ^[194]
<u>hearken</u>	<u>hearken</u> , <u>harken</u> ^[195]	The word derives from <i>hark</i> . The spelling <i>hearken</i> was probably influenced by <i>hear</i> . ^[196]
<u>idyll</u>	<u>idyll</u> , <u>idyl</u> ^[197]	
<u>jail</u> , <u>gaol</u>	jail	In the UK, <i>gaol</i> and <i>gaoler</i> are sometimes used, apart from literary usage, chiefly to describe a medieval building and guard. Both spellings date back to Middle English: <i>gaol</i> was a loanword from Norman French, while <i>jail</i> was a loanword from central (Parisian) French. In Middle English, the two spellings were associated with different pronunciations. In modern English, the word, regardless of spelling, is always pronounced the way the <i>jail</i> spelling is, <i>/dʒeɪl/</i> . The survival of <i>gaol</i> in British English is "due to statutory and official tradition". ^[198] In Australia, <i>gaol</i> is obsolete and only used in historical contexts (e.g. Maitland Gaol, although the modern spelling is used for the tourist attraction). <i>Jail</i> has been used throughout the 20th century and was made the preferred spelling by the Government Publishing Style Manual in 1978. ^[199] However, while the terms <i>jail</i> and <i>prison</i> are commonly used in Australia, the term <i>correctional facility</i> is officially used by most state and territory governments.
<u>kerb</u>	<u>curb</u>	For the noun designating the edge of a roadway (or the edge of a British <i>pavement</i> / American <i>sidewalk</i> / Australian <i>footpath</i>). <i>Curb</i> is the older spelling and in all varieties of English, it is the only correct spelling for the verb meaning "restrain". ^[200]
<u>liquorice</u>	<u>licorice</u>	The American spelling is closer to the Old French source <i>licorece</i> , which is ultimately from Greek <i>glykyrrhiza</i> . ^[201] The British spelling was influenced by the unrelated word <i>liquor</i> . ^[202]

United Kingdom (UK)	United States (US)	Remarks
		<i>Licorice</i> prevails in Canada and is common in Australia, but is rarely found in the UK. <i>Liquorice</i> is rarely found in the US (it is "chiefly British", according to dictionaries). ^[12]
<u>lupin</u>	<u>lupine</u> , <u>lupin</u>	^[203]
<u>mollusc</u>	<u>mollusk</u>	The related adjective may be spelled <i>molluscan</i> or <i>molluskan</i> .
<u>mould</u>	<u>mold</u>	In all senses of the word. Both spellings have been used since the 16th century. ^[204] In Canada, both spellings are used. ^[12]
<u>moult</u>	<u>molt</u>	
<u>moustache</u>	<u>mustache</u> , <u>moustache</u>	In the US, according to Merriam-Webster's <i>Collegiate Dictionary</i> and <i>The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language</i> , the British spelling is an accepted variant.
<u>neuron</u> , <u>neurone</u>	<u>neuron</u>	<i>Neuron</i> is now the established spelling in both British and American English. According to their dictionaries, Canada and Australia generally also use <i>neuron</i> .
<u>omelette</u>	<u>omelet</u> , <u>omelette</u>	<i>Omelet</i> is the older of the two, despite the term's etymology (French <i>omelette</i>). ^[12] <i>Omelette</i> prevails in Canada and Australia.
<u>pipette</u>	<u>pipette</u> , <u>pipet</u> ^[205]	The <i>U.S. Government Publishing Office Style Manual</i> prefers <i>pipet</i> . ^[206]
<u>plough</u>	<u>plow</u>	Both spellings have existed since Middle English. In England, <i>plough</i> became the main spelling in the 18th century. ^[207] Although <i>plow</i> was preferred by Noah Webster, <i>plough</i> continued to be used in the US, as implied by the entry in <i>Webster's Third</i> (1961). Newer dictionaries label <i>plough</i> as "chiefly British". The word <i>snowplough/snowplow</i> , originally an Americanism, predates Webster's dictionaries and was first recorded as <i>snow plough</i> . Canada uses both <i>plough</i> and <i>plow</i> , ^[12] although <i>snowplow</i> is more common.
<u>programme</u> , <u>program</u>	<u>program</u>	While <i>program</i> is used in British English in the case of computer programs, <i>programme</i> is the spelling most commonly used for all other meanings. However, in American English, <i>program</i> is the preferred form for all senses. Australia follows US usage.
<u>racquet</u> , <u>racket</u>	<u>racket</u>	In the UK, <i>racquet</i> is the spelling for the item of sporting equipment, whereas <i>racket</i> is the spelling for the type of organized crime. In the US, <i>racket</i> is the standard for both terms, though an exception is that the sport of racquetball is spelled with the <i>-qu</i> spelling in all varieties of English. In Canada, <i>racket</i> is the preferred spelling, while Australia uses both.
<u>sceptic</u> , <u>skeptic</u>	<u>skeptic</u>	The American spelling <i>skeptic</i> , akin to Greek, is the earliest known spelling in English. ^[208] It was preferred by Fowler and is used by many Canadians, where it is the earlier form. ^[12] <i>Sceptic</i> also predates the European settlement of the US and follows the French <i>sceptique</i> and Latin <i>scepticus</i> . In the mid-18th century, Johnson's dictionary listed <i>skeptic</i> without comment or alternative, but this form has never been popular in the UK; ^[209] <i>sceptic</i> , an equal variant in the old <i>Webster's Third</i> (1961), has now become "chiefly British". Australians generally follow British usage (with the notable exception of the Australian Skeptics). All spellings are pronounced with a /k/ (a hard c) at the start, though in French, the letter is silent and the word is pronounced as "septique".
<u>slew</u> , <u>slue</u>	<u>slue</u>	When meaning "to turn sharply; a sharp turn", the preferred spelling differs. When meaning "a great number", the spelling is usually <i>slew</i> in all varieties of English. ^[210]
<u>smoulder</u>	<u>smolder</u>	Both spellings date back to the 16th century and have existed since Middle English. ^{[164][211]}
<u>storey</u> , <u>storeys</u>	<u>story</u> , <u>stories</u>	For the level of a building. The letter e is used in the UK and Canada to differentiate between the levels of buildings and a story as a literary work. ^[12] <i>Story</i> is the earlier spelling. The <i>OED</i> states that this word is "probably the same word as story [in its meaning of "narrative"] though the development of sense is obscure." ^[212] One of the first uses of the (now-British) spelling <i>storey</i> was by Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1852 (<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> xxxii).
<u>sulphate</u> , <u>sulfate</u> ^[213]	<u>sulfate</u> , <u>sulphate</u>	<i>Sulfate</i> is the more common variant in British English in scientific and technical usage; see the entry on <i>sulfur</i> , and the decisions of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) ^[214] and the UK's Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC). ^[215]
<u>sulphur</u> , <u>sulfur</u>	<u>sulfur</u>	<i>Sulfur</i> is the spelling preferred by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) since 1971 or 1990 ^[214] and by the UK's Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) since 1992. ^[215] <i>Sulfur</i> is used by scientists in all countries and has been actively taught in chemistry in British schools since December 2000; ^[216] however, <i>sulphur</i> prevails in British, Irish, and Australian English, and is also found in some American place names (e.g., <u>Sulphur</u> , Louisiana, and <u>White Sulphur Springs</u> , West Virginia). The use of <i>f</i> versus <i>ph</i> spellings continued in the UK until the 19th century, when the word was standardized as <i>sulphur</i> . ^[217] On the other hand, <i>sulfur</i> is the form that was established in the US; Canada uses both. Oxford Dictionaries note that "in chemistry and other technical uses ... the <i>-f-</i> spelling is now the standard form for this and related words in British as well as US contexts, and is increasingly used in general contexts

United Kingdom (UK)	United States (US)	Remarks
		as well."^[218] Some American English usage guides suggest <i>sulfur</i> for technical usage and both <i>sulfur</i> and <i>sulphur</i> in common usage and in literature, but American dictionaries list <i>sulphur</i> as a less common or chiefly British variant.^{[219][220][221][222]} The variation between <i>f</i> and <i>ph</i> spellings is also found in the word's ultimate source: Latin <i>sulfur</i> and <i>sulphur</i>,^[223] but this was due to the <u>Hellenization</u> of the original Latin word <i>sulpur</i> to <i>sulphur</i> in the erroneous belief that the Latin word derived from Greek. This spelling was later reinterpreted as representing an /f/ sound and resulted in <i>sulfur</i>, which appears in Latin toward the end of the <u>Classical period</u>. (The true Greek word for sulfur, <i>θειον</i>, is the source of the international chemical prefix <i>thio</i>-.) In 12th-century <u>Anglo-French</u>, the word became <i>sulfre</i>. In the 14th century, the erroneously Hellenized Latin <i>ph</i> was restored in Middle English <i>sulphre</i>. By the 15th century, both full Latin spelling variants <i>sulfur</i> and <i>sulphur</i> became common in English.
<u>syrup</u>	syrup, <u>sirup</u> ^{[224][225]}	<i>Sirup</i> is a less common American variant.
<u>through</u>	through, <u>thru</u> ^[226]	<i>Thru</i> is typically used in the US as shorthand for <i>through</i> . The spelling is acceptable in informal writing, but not for formal documents; however, it is commonly used on official road signs in the US, as in "no thru traffic", to save space. In the COBOL programming language, <i>THRU</i> is accepted as an abbreviation of the keyword <i>THROUGH</i> . Since programmers prefer to keep computer code brief, <i>THRU</i> is generally the preferred form of this keyword.
<u>tyre</u>	<u>tire</u>	For the outer portion of a wheel. In Canada, as in the US, <i>tire</i> is the older spelling, but both were used in the 15th and 16th centuries (for a metal tire). <i>Tire</i> became the established spelling in the 17th century, but <i>tyre</i> was revived in the UK in the 19th century for rubber/pneumatic tyres; this was possibly because it was used in some patent documents, ^[12] though many continued to use <i>tire</i> for the iron variety. <i>The Times</i> newspaper was still using <i>tire</i> as late as 1905. For the verb meaning "to grow weary", both American and British English only use <i>tire</i> .
<u>vice</u>	<u>vise</u>	For the two-jawed workbench tool, Americans and Canadians retain the very old distinction between <i>vise</i> (the tool) and <i>vice</i> (the sin, and also the Latin prefix meaning a deputy), both of which are spelled <i>vice</i> in the UK and Australia. ^[12] Regarding the "sin" and "deputy" senses of <i>vice</i> , all varieties of English use -c-. Thus, American English (and all other English varieties) writes <i>vice admiral</i> , <i>vice president</i> , and <i>vice principal</i> —never <i>vise</i> for these senses.
<u>wagon</u> , waggon	wagon	For the four-wheel vehicle pulled by draft animals and used for transporting items. <i>Waggon</i> was the dominant spelling in British English in the 19th century, but has mostly fallen out of use; however, both <i>waggon</i> and <i>wagon</i> are considered acceptable spellings in the UK. ^[227]
<u>whisky</u> (Scotland), <u>whiskey</u> (Ireland)	<u>whiskey</u> , whisky	In the US, <i>whiskey</i> is dominant; <i>whisky</i> is encountered less frequently, but is used on the labels of some major brands (e.g., <u>Early Times</u> , <u>George Dickel</u> , <u>Maker's Mark</u> , and <u>Old Forester</u>) and in US federal regulations. ^[228] In Canada, <i>whisky</i> is dominant. Often, the spelling is selected based on the origin of the product rather than the location of the intended readership; therefore, it can be considered a <i>faux pas</i> to write "Scotch whiskey" or "Irish whiskey". Both derive from "uisce beatha" (Irish) and "uisge beatha" (Scottish), meaning "water of life".
<u>xanthophyll</u>	xanthophyll, <u>xanthophyl</u> ^{[229][230]}	
<u>yoghurt</u> , <u>yogurt</u> , <u>yoghourt</u>	yogurt, yoghurt	<i>Yoghurt</i> is rarely used in the US, as is <i>yoghourt</i> in the UK. Although the Oxford Dictionaries have always preferred <i>yogurt</i> , <i>yoghurt</i> is prevalent in current British usage. In Canada, <i>yogurt</i> prevails despite the Canadian Oxford preferring <i>yogourt</i> , which has the advantage of satisfying bilingual (English and French) packaging requirements; ^{[6][231]} the British spelling is dominant in Australia. The word derives from the Turkish language term <i>yoğurt</i> . ^[232] The voiced velar fricative represented by <i>ğ</i> in the modern Turkish (Latinic) alphabet was traditionally written as <i>gh</i> in the <u>Latin script</u> of the <u>Ottoman Turkish</u> (Arabic) <u>alphabet</u> that was used before 1928.

Compounds and hyphens

British English often prefers hyphenated compounds, such as *anti-smoking*, whereas American English discourages the use of hyphens in compounds where there is no compelling reason, so *antismoking* is much more common.^[233] Many dictionaries do not point out such differences. Canadian and Australian usage is mixed, although Commonwealth writers generally hyphenate

compounds of the form noun plus phrase (such as *editor-in-chief*).^[12] Commander-in-chief prevails in all forms of English.

Compound verbs in British English are hyphenated more often than in American English.^[234]

- *any more* or *anymore*: in the sense "any longer", the single-word form is usual in North America and Australia but unusual elsewhere, at least in formal writing.^[12] Other senses always have the two-word form; thus, Americans distinguish "I couldn't love you anymore [so I left you]" from "I couldn't love you any more [than I already do]". In Hong Kong English, *any more* is always two words.^[235]
- *for ever* or *forever*: traditional British English usage makes a distinction between *for ever*, meaning for eternity (or a very long time into the future), as in "If you are waiting for income tax to be abolished you will probably have to wait for ever"; and *forever*, meaning continually, always, as in "They are forever arguing".^[236] In British usage, however, *forever* prevails in the "for eternity" sense as well,^[237] in spite of several style guides maintaining the distinction.^[238] American writers usually use *forever* regardless of which sense they intend (although *forever* in the sense of "continually" is comparatively rare in American English, having been displaced by *always*).
- *near by* or *nearby*: some British writers make the distinction between the adverbial *near by*, which is written as two words, as in, "No one was near by"; and the adjectival *nearby*, which is written as one, as in, "The nearby house".^[239] In American English, the one-word spelling is standard for both forms.
- *per cent* or *percent*: it can be correctly spelled as either one or two words, depending on the Anglophone country, but either spelling must always be consistent with its usage. British English predominantly spells it as two words, so does English in Ireland and countries in the Commonwealth of Nations such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. American English predominantly spells it as one word. Historically, it was spelled as two words in the United States, but its usage is diminishing; nevertheless it is a variant spelling in American English. The spelling difference is reflected in the style guides of newspapers and other media agencies in the US, Ireland, and countries of the Commonwealth of Nations. In Canada and Australia (and sometimes in the UK, New Zealand, other Commonwealth countries, and Ireland) *percent* is also found, mostly sourced from American press agencies.

Capitalization

Acronyms pronounced as words are often written in title case by Commonwealth writers, but usually as upper case by Americans: for example, *Nasa* / *NASA* or *Unicef* / *UNICEF*.^[240] This does not apply to abbreviations that are pronounced as individual letters (referred to by some as "initialisms"), such as *US*, *IBM*, or *PRC* (the People's Republic of China), which are virtually always written as upper case. However, sometimes title case is still used in the UK, such as *Pc* (Police Constable).^[241]

Some initials are usually upper case in the US but lower case in the UK: liter/litre and its compounds (2 *L* or 25 *mL* vs 2 *l* or 25 *ml*);^{[242][243]} and ante meridiem and post meridiem (10 *P.M.* or 10 *PM* vs 10 *p.m.* or 10 *pm*).^{[244][245][246]} Both *AM/PM* and *a.m./p.m.* are acceptable in American English, but US style guides overwhelmingly prefer *a.m./p.m.*^[247]

Punctuation

The use of quotation marks, also called inverted commas or speech marks, is complicated by the fact that there are two kinds: single quotation marks (') and double quotation marks ("). British usage, at one stage in the recent past, preferred single quotation marks for ordinary use, but double quotation marks are again now increasingly common; American usage has always preferred double quotation marks, as have Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand English. It is the practice to alternate the type of quotation marks used where there is a quotation within a quotation.^[248]

The convention used to be, and in American English still is, to put full stops (periods) and commas inside the quotation marks, irrespective of the sense. British style now prefers to punctuate according to the sense, in which punctuation marks only appear inside quotation marks if they were there in the original. Formal British English practice requires a full stop to be put inside the quotation marks if the quoted item is a full sentence that ends where the main sentence ends, but it is common to see the stop outside the ending quotation marks.^[249]

Contractions where the final letter is present are often written in British English without full stops/periods (*Mr*, *Mrs*, *Dr*, *Fr*, and *St* — for "Saint" but not for "Street"). Abbreviations where the final letter is not present generally do take full stops/periods (such as *vol.*, *etc.*, *i.e.*, *ed.*); British English shares this convention with French: *Mlle*, *Mme*, *Dr*, *Ste*, but *M.* for *Monsieur*. In American and Canadian English, abbreviations like *St.*, *Ave.*, *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Ms.*, *Dr.*, and *Jr.*, usually require full stops/periods.

See also

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| ▪ Australian English | ▪ Hong Kong English | ▪ New Zealand English |
| ▪ Canadian English | ▪ Hiberno-English | ▪ Philippine English |
| ▪ English language in England | ▪ Indian English | ▪ Scottish English |
| ▪ English in the Commonwealth of Nations | ▪ Malaysian English | ▪ Singapore English |
| ▪ English orthography | ▪ Manx English | ▪ South African English |

Explanatory notes

1. The majority of American college, university, and residency programs, and even the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, still use the spelling with the digraph *ae*, though hospitals usually use the shortened form.
2. The past forms of *rout* and *route* are both spelled *routed*, but pronounced differently in British English, though usually identically in American English. The other verb pairs contrast *dyled/died*, *singed/sung*, *swinged/swung*.

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- *The Chicago Manual of Style* (<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/>)
 - *The Guardian* style guide (<https://www.theguardian.com/styleguide/0,,184913,00.html>)
 - Word substitution list (<https://wiki.ubuntu.com/EnglishTranslation/WordSubstitution>), by the Ubuntu English (United Kingdom) Translators team (<https://wiki.ubuntu.com/EnglishTranslation>)
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