

British English vs. American English

**British English vs. American English**

- There are many differences between British and American punctuation, spelling, and grammar. The main difference is that British English keeps the spelling of words it has absorbed from other languages, mainly French and German. Whilst American English spellings are based mostly on how the word sounds when it is spoken.
- Neither version is more correct than the other; which version you should use depends on who your primary audience is. Here are some of the most common differences between British and American academic English.

**Spelling Patterns**

- Below is a list of common British and American spelling patterns:

British Pattern	British Example	American Pattern	American Example
<b>-ae or -oe</b>	foetus, encyclopaedia, leukaemia	<b>-e</b>	fetus, encyclopedia, leukemia
<b>-ise or -ize</b>	apologise, fantasise, idolise, realise	<b>only -ize</b>	apologize, fantasize, idolize, realize
<b>-ller</b>	traveller, cancelled	<b>-ler</b>	travler, canceled,
<b>-l</b>	fulfil, instil, enrol	<b>-ll</b>	fulfill, instill, enroll
<b>only -ogue</b>	catalogue, dialogue	<b>og or -ogue</b>	catalogue, catalog, dialogue, dialog
<b>-our</b>	colour, flavour, armour, endeavour	<b>-or</b>	color, flavor, armor, endeavor
<b>-re</b>	theatre, metre, centre, fibre	<b>-er</b>	theater, center, meter, fiber
<b>-yse</b>	paralyse	<b>-yze</b>	paralyze

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### Spelling Patterns

- Words that are spelled the same in both British and American English include: successful, resourceful, meaningful, refill, harmful, hour, surprise, prize, advise, advertise, etc.

### Dates

- British English writes dates in day/month/year format (DD/MM/YY).
  - 22/3/23 means March, 3, 2023.
- American English writes dates in month/day/year format (MM/DD/YY).
  - 3/22/23 means March, 3, 2023.

### Titles

- British English does not place periods after titles (Mr, Mrs, Ms).
- American English places periods after titles (Mr., Mrs., Ms.).

### Time

- British English dictates a period between the hours and minutes (10.30, 9.23)
- American English dictates a colon between the hours and minutes (10:30, 9:23)

### Punctuation Marks

- British English
  - Single quotation marks ('s') but alternate with double for quotations within quotations. (He said, 'This model has been called "the best".')
  - Punctuation appears *outside* quotation marks. (Did he say, 'the best there is'?)
  - *Exception:* when the punctuation is part of the original quotation rather than the speaker's sentence. (He asked, 'the best there is?')
- American English
  - Double quotation marks ("x"), but alternate with single for quotations within quotations. (She said, "This model has been called 'the best.'")
  - Punctuation appears *within* quotation marks. (They said he is "the best there is.")
  - *Exception:* emphasizing the writer's sentences rather than the speaker's quotation. (They told them we are "the best there is"!)

### American Gray vs. British Grey

- Gray and grey are two different spellings of the same word, used to refer to the color between white and black. It can be used as a noun to refer to the color, an adjective to describe something as being that color, and as a verb to refer to the act of becoming that color.
- Never changing forms of the words:
  - "Earl Grey" tea (is always spelled with the "e" as it is a proper noun.
  - "Gray" (measure of energy)
  - "greyhound" dog breed or bus service

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**Vocabulary and Slang Words**

- Most words mean the same thing in British and American English. However, there are often two different words that can be used to refer to the same thing depending on if you are using American or British English.
  - **Example:** British English uses the word football to refer to the sport that Americans know as soccer.
  - **More Examples:**

American English	British English
apartment, flat, studio	flat
cotton candy	candy floss
trunk	boot
flashlight	torch
cookie	biscuit
French fries, fries	chips
potato chips	crisps
trailer	caravan
mail	post
diaper	nappy
oatmeal	porridge

American English	British English
garbage	rubbish
green thumb	green fingers
parking lot	car park
pants	trousers
candy	sweets
elevator	lift
vacation	holiday
windshield	windscreen
gas, gasoline	petrol
eggplant	aubergine
sweater	jumper



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### British English vs. American English

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