

# Reference 4

## Spelling variations

Some words are spelt differently in different varieties of English. The main contrasts are between UK/Irish and US English. Other varieties of English tend to opt for either predominantly UK/Irish or predominantly US spellings. The US spelling tends to be simpler and a clearer reflection of the way the word is pronounced. You can, of course, use whichever spelling you prefer but it is sensible to be consistent. The main patterns of spelling variation are shown below.

Space is provided in the middle columns for you to add further examples of your own.

Word-processing and other computer programs often have spellcheck features that check the spelling of what you write for you. You can usually set these to either UK, US or Australian spelling. However, remember that it is not sensible to rely on the computer to check and correct your spelling for you. A spellcheck program will not pick up the spelling errors in this sentence, for example: *I don't no weather their are two many mistakes inn yore righting or knot.*

<i>pattern of variation</i>	<i>examples of UK + Irish spelling</i>	<i>examples of US spelling</i>	<i>comment</i>
words with <i>-our/or</i>	labour, honour, behaviour, endeavour, favourable, rumour	labor, honor, behavior, endeavor, favorable, rumor	In some words UK spelling prefers the <i>-or</i> form, e.g. humorous, honorary, glamorous.
words ending with <i>-er/re</i>	centre, theatre, centimetre, litre, lustre	center, theater, centimeter, liter, luster	UK spelling distinguishes between metre (100 cms) and meter (measuring device).
verbs ending in single <i>l</i> when they add a suffix	cancelling, labelled, counsellor, marvellous, modelled	canceling, labeled, counselor, marvelous, modeled	Sometimes the double <i>l</i> spelling will also be found in US texts.
other words with single or double <i>l</i>	fulfil, enrol, enrolment, instalment, skilful, wilful	fulfill, enroll, enrollment, installment, skillful, willful	The verb <i>to install</i> can be written with either <i>l</i> or <i>ll</i> in both UK and US English, although <i>ll</i> is more common.
words ending with <i>-ogue/og</i>	analogue, catalogue, dialogue	analog, catalog, dialog	The <i>-ogue</i> ending can also be found in US texts.

<i>pattern of variation</i>	<i>examples of UK + Irish spelling</i>	<i>examples of US spelling</i>	<i>comment</i>
verbs ending with <i>-ise/ize</i> and nouns ending with <i>-isation/ization</i>	emphasise, minimise, globalise, colonise, organise, standardise, globalisation, colonisation, organisation, standardisation	emphasize, minimize, globalize, colonize, organize, standardize, globalization, organization, standardization	Some verbs always end in <i>-ise</i> , e.g. advertise, advise, apprise, arise, comprise, compromise, despise, devise, disguise, enfranchise, enterprise, excise, exercise, improvise, incise, premise, revise, supervise, surmise, surprise. With other words the <i>-ize/ization</i> endings will also sometimes be found in UK texts.
verbs ending with <i>-yse/lyze</i>	analyse, catalyse, paralyse	analyze, catalyze, paralyze	The nouns analysis, catalysis and paralysis are spelt the same in both UK and US texts.
some words ending with <i>-ce/se</i>	defence, offence, pretence, practise (verb), licence (noun)	defense, offense, pretense, practice (verb and noun), license (verb and noun)	UK spelling distinguishes between <i>practice</i> and <i>licence</i> (nouns) and <i>practise</i> and <i>license</i> (verbs).
some words with <i>-ae</i> or <i>-oe</i> in UK English	anaesthetic, gynaecology, haemorrhage, orthopaedic, manoeuvre, oesophagus	anesthetic, gynecology, hemorrhage, orthopedic, manoeuvre, esophagus	Words in this category are all of Greek origin and most occur in medical contexts.
miscellaneous	aluminium, cheque, grey, kerb, mould, plough, (TV, research) programme, pyjamas, storey (of building), (car) tyre	aluminum, check, gray, curb, mold, plow, program, pajamas, story, tire	In UK spelling note the spelling of computer <i>program</i> . In UK spelling <i>check</i> , <i>curb</i> , <i>story</i> and <i>tire</i> have distinct meanings from <i>cheque</i> , <i>kerb</i> , <i>storey</i> and <i>tyre</i> .