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Differences between British, Canadian and American Spelling

by Karen Bond

This list is very much a work-in-progress. If you find any inaccuracies, or can think of any words or spellings that I have omitted, please email me at teacherkarenb@hotmail.com. If you are looking for a specific word in Canadian or American English, please go to **Edit**, then **Find**.

Canadian English generally follows British spelling, but often the American alternative is possible too. The most commonly used spelling, where applicable, is marked with an asterisk (*).

Australian English also generally follows the British tradition.

 British	 Canadian	 American
acknowledgement	acknowledgement*, acknowledgment	acknowledgment, acknowledgement
ageing, aging	aging*, ageing*	aging
aeroplane	airplane	airplane
aesthetics	aesthetics	aesthetics, esthetics
aluminium	aluminum	aluminum
among, amongst	among*, amongst	among
amortise	amortize	amortize
anaemia	anemia	anemia
anaesthesia	anaesthesia*, anesthesia	anesthesia
analogue	analogue	analogue, analog

analyse	analyze*, analyse	analyze
annex, annexe	annex	annex
apnoea	apnea	apnea
apologise*, apologize	apologize	apologize
archaeology	archaeology*, archeology	archaeology, archeology
armour	armour*, armor	armor
artefact	artifact	artifact
authorise*, authorize	authorize	authorize
axe	axe	ax, axe
balk*, baulk	balk	balk
banister*, bannister	banister*, bannister	banister
behaviour	behaviour	behavior
behove	behoove	behoove
blonde (<i>for female</i>)	blonde*, blond*	blond, blonde
B.Sc.	B.Sc.	B.S.
burette	burette*, buret	buret, burette
burnt, burned	burned*, burnt*	burned, burnt
bussed, bussing	bused, busing	bused, busing
Caesarean	Caesarian*, Cesarean, Cesarian	Cesarean, Caesarean
calibre	calibre	caliber
cancelled	cancelled	canceled, cancelled
candour	candour	candor
capitalise	capitalize	capitalize
carburettor	carburetor*, carburettor	carburetor
catalogue	catalogue	catalog(ue)
catalyse	catalyze*, catalyse	catalyze
centre	centre	center
cheque (<i>noun, money</i>)	cheque	check
chequered	checkered	checkered

chilli*, chili	chili	chili
cigarette	cigarette	cigarette, cigaret
clamour	clamour	clamor
collectable *, collectible	collectible	collectible
colour	colour*, color	color
connection*, connexion	connection	connection
convenor	convenor	convener
cosy	cozy	cozy
counsellor	counsellor*, counselor	counselor
criticise*, criticize	criticize	criticize
curb (<i>verb</i>)	curb	curb
customize, customise	customize	customize
demeanour	demeanour	demeanor
dependant (<i>a person who relies on another person, especially for financial support</i>)	dependant	dependent
defence	defence*, defense	defense
dialling, dialled	dialing, dialed; dialling, dialled	dialing, dialed
dialogue	dialogue	dialog(ue)
diarrhoea	diarrhea	diarrhea
dietician*, dietitian	dietitian*, dietician	dietitian*, dietician,
dispatch*, despatch	dispatch	dispatch
doughnut	doughnut, donut	donut, doughnut
Dr (<i>A contracted form of a word, ending with the same letter as the full form, is not followed by a full stop.</i>)	Dr.	Dr.
draught (<i>current of air</i>)	draft	draft
dreamt, dreamed	dreamt*, dreamed*	dreamed, dreamt
emphasise	emphasize	emphasize
encyclopedia*, encyclopædia	encyclopedia	encyclopedia
endeavour	endeavour	endeavor
enquiry*, inquiry	inquiry*, enquiry	inquiry
enrol	enrol	enroll

favour	favour	favor
favourite	favourite	favorite
fibre	fibre	fiber
fibre optics	fiber optics, fibre optics (<i>used by the Canadian government only</i>)	fiber optics
finalise, finalise	finalize	finalize
flautist	flutist*, flautist	flutist
flavour	flavour	flavor
focused, focusing or focussed, focussing	focused, focusing or focussed, focussing	focused, focusing
foetus*, fetus	fetus	fetus
forever*, for ever	forever	forever
fuelling	fuelling	fueling
fulfil	fulfil	fulfill, fulfil
galvanise	galvanize	galvanize
gaol (<i>old fashioned</i>), jail*	jail	jail
gauge	gauge	gauge, gage
gemmology	gemmology	gemology
generalise	generalize	generalize
glamour	glamour	glamour, glamor
gonorrhoea	gonorrhoea	gonorrhoea
grey	grey	gray
gynaecology	gynecology*, gynaecology	gynecology
haemorrhage	hemorrhage	hemorrhage
harbour	harbour	harbor
harmonise*, harmonize	harmonize	harmonize
haulier	hauler	hauler
homeopathy*, homoeopathy	homeopathy	homeopathy
honour	honour	honor
humour	humour	humor
initialise	initialize	initialize

instalment	instalment*, installment	installment
jail*, gaol (<i>old fashioned</i>)	jail	jail
jewellery	jewellery*, jewelry	jewelry
judgment*, judgement	judgment*, judgement	judgment
kerb (<i>noun</i>)	curb	curb
kilometre	kilometre	kilometer
label, labelled, labelling	label, labelled, labelling	label, labeled, labeling
labour	labour	labor
lasagne	lasagna	lasagna
leant, leaned	leaned	leaned
learnt, learned	learned*, learnt*	learned
licence (<i>noun</i>)	licence	license
license (<i>verb</i>)	license*, licence	license
litre	litre	liter
lustre	lustre	luster
manoeuvre	manoeuvre*, maneuver	maneuver
marvellous	marvellous	marvelous
maximise*, maximize	maximize	maximize
meagre	meagre	meager
metre (<i>unit of length</i>)	metre	meter
modelled	modelled	modeled
modelling	modelling	modeling
mould	mould	mold
moustache	moustache*, mustache	mustache, moustache
mum, mummy	mum, mummy*, mom, mommy	mom, mommy
neighbour	neighbour	neighbor
net, nett (<i>amount of money</i>)	net	net
ochre	ochre	ocher
odour	odour*, odor	odor
oedema, edema	edema	edema

oesophagus*, esophagus	esophagus	esophagus
oestrogen*, estrogen	estrogen	estrogen
offence	offence*, offense	offense
omelette	omelette*, omelet	omelet, omelette
organisation*, organization	organization	organization
organise	organize	organize
optimise*, optimize	optimize	optimize
orientate	orient	orient
orientated	oriented	oriented
orthopaedic	orthopaedic*, orthopedic	orthopedic
pædiatrics	pediatrics	pediatrics
paedophile*, pedophile	pedophile	pedophile
paralyse	paralyze*, paralyse	paralyze
parlour	parlour	parlor
paralleling, parallelled	paralleling, paralleled	paralleling, paralleled
peddler*, pedlar	peddler*, pedlar	peddler
penalise, penalisation	penalize, penalization	penalize, penalization
pleaded	pleaded	pleaded, pled
plough	plow*, plough	plow
practise (<i>verb</i>)	practise*, practice	practice
practice (<i>noun</i>)	practice	practice
pretence	pretense*, pretence	pretense
programme (<i>TV</i>), program (<i>computer</i>)	program*, programme	program
pyjamas	pyjamas	pajamas
rancour	rancour	rancor
realise*, realize	realize	realize
recognise*, recognize	recognize	recognize
rigour	rigour	rigor
rumour	rumour	rumor

sabre	sabre	saber
saleable	saleable	saleable, salable
saviour	saviour	savior
savour	savour	savor
sceptical	sceptical*, skeptical	skeptical
signalling	signalling	signaling
skilful	skilful*, skillful	skillful, skilful
slipped disc	slipped disc	slipped disk
smelt, smelled	smelled	smelled
snorkelling	snorkelling	snorkeling
speciality	specialty*, speciality	specialty
standardise, standardisation	standardize, standardization	standardize, standardization
sulphur	sulphur*, sulfur	sulfur
theatre	theatre	theater
theatregoer	theatregoer	theatergoer
titbit	tidbit	tidbit
towards	toward*, towards	toward, towards (<i>unusual</i>)
travelling	travelling	traveling, travelling
tumour	tumour	tumor
tyre	tire	tire
valour	valour	valor
vapour	vapour	vapor
vice (<i>the device</i>)	vice	vise, vice
vigour	vigour	vigor
visualise*, visualize	visualize	visualize
wagon*, waggon	wagon	wagon
woollen	woollen*, woolen	woolen
yogurt*, yoghurt, yoghourt	yogourt*, yoghurt, yogurt	yogurt*, yoghurt, yoghourt



HOME

Please feel free to email me at teacherkarenb@hotmail.com with any comments or queries.

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