

Karen's Linguistics Issues

Free resources for Teachers and Students of English

Sharing research and ideas on Linguistics, Applied Linguistics and ELT (English Language Teaching)

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	archeology, archaeology
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	behavior
behave	behoove	behoove
blonde (<i>for female</i>)	blond*, blonde*	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	candor
capitalise	capitalize	capitalize

carburettor	carburetor*, carburettor	carburetor
catalogue	catalogue	catalog(ue)
catalyse	catalyze*, catalyse	catalyze
centre	centre*, center	center
cheque (<i>noun, money</i>)	cheque	check
chequered	checkered	checkered
chilli*, chili	chili	chili
cigarette	cigarette	cigarette, cigaret
clamour	clamour*, clamor	clamor
collectable *, collectible	collectible	collectible
colour	colour	color
connection*, connexion	connection	connection
cosy	cozy*, cosy	cozy
counsellor	counsellor*, counselor	counselor
criticise*, criticize	criticize	criticize
curb (<i>verb</i>)	curb	curb
demeanour	demeanour*, demeanor	demeanor
defence	defence*, defense	defense
dialogue	dialogue	dialog(ue)
diarrhoea	diarrhea	diarrhea
dietician*, dietitian	dietitian*, dietician	dietician, dietitian
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	enroll
favour	favour	favor
fibre	fibre	fiber
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
gauge	gauge	gauge, gage
generalise	generalize	generalize
glamour	glamour	glamour, glamor
gonorrhoea	gonorrhoea	gonorrhoea
grey	grey	gray
gynaecology	gynecology*, gynaecology	gynecology

haemorrhage	hemorrhage	hemorrhage
harbour	harbour*, harbor	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	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
manoeuvre	manoeuvre*, maneuver	maneuver
marvellous	marvellous	marvelous

maximise*, maximize	maximize	maximize
meagre	meagre*, meager	meager
metre (<i>unit of length</i>)	metre*, meter	meter
modelled	modelled	modeled
modelling	modelling	modeling
mould	mould	mold
moustache	moustache*, mustache	mustache, moustache
mum, mummy	mom, mommy	mom, mommy
neighbour	neighbour*, neighbor	neighbor
net, nett (<i>amount of money</i>)	net	net
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
parallelling, parallellled	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
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
speciality	specialty*, speciality	specialty

standardise, standardisation	standardize, standardization	standardize, standardization
sulphur	sulphur*, sulfur	sulfur
theatre	theatre*, theater	theater
theatregoer	theatregoer*, theatergoer	theatergoer
titbit	tidbit	tidbit
towards	toward*, towards	toward, towards (<i>unusual</i>)
travelling	travelling	traveling, travelling
tumour	tumour*, tumor	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