

**GRAMMAR** 

# American and British English: spelling

**LEVEL** 

Upper-Intermediate (B2)

**NUMBER** 

EN\_B2\_2042G

**LANGUAGE** 

English







## **Learning outcomes**

 I can identify some key differences in spelling between American and British English.

 I can apply this knowledge to spell a range of words accurately in both variations.



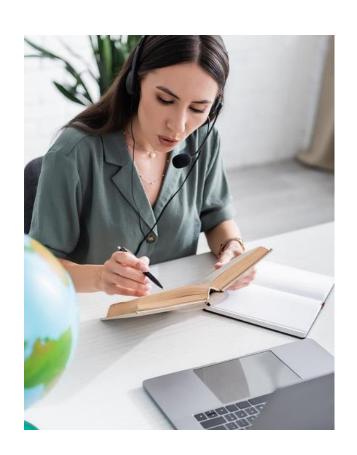


## Warm-up

**Answer** the questions below.

Even though they are the same language, British English and American English are different in many ways. Which English are you more familiar with?

Do you know which English Lingoda lessons are based on?







## **Brainstorm**



Do you know the difference between British English and American English?

- 1. In breakout rooms or together as a class, take **3 minutes** to **write** down as many different words that you know in British and American English, such as *flat* vs. *apartment*.
- 2. **Share** your words with the rest of the class!





## **BrE vs. AmE**

Depending on where you study English, your pronunciation, spelling, and word choices can be different. **BrE** is an abbreviation for *British English* and **AmE** is for *American English*.



I went to the theatre last night.

I went to the theater last night.







## **Categorise**

**Categorise** the words into one of the two blue boxes.

**BrE** colour realize 2 3 center **AmE** apologise 4 5 analyze



## BrE vs. AmE: -our vs. -or and -ise vs. -ize

- 1. **Read** the words.
- 2. **Review** the information in the blue boxes.

favourite > favorite

to realize **>** to realize

In **British English**, words ending in **-our** are preferred while the **u** is dropped from the word in **American English**.

American English uses the -ize spelling at the end of words while those same words are spelt with the -ise ending in British English.





## **Transform the word**

Tranform the words spelt in British English to American English.

1	to analyse	>	to analyze
2	humour	>	
3	to utilise	>	
4	rumour	>	
5	to apologise	>	
6	neighbour	>	



## -re vs. -er and ending in a vowel with double I

- Words that end in -re in British English often have those letters reversed when spelt in American English.
- In **American English**, the **double I** is dropped when adding suffixes to verbs that end in the letter **I**.
  - There is an exception to this rule. The following words are spelt with double I in AmE and not in BrE: skillful, willful, installment, enrollment.

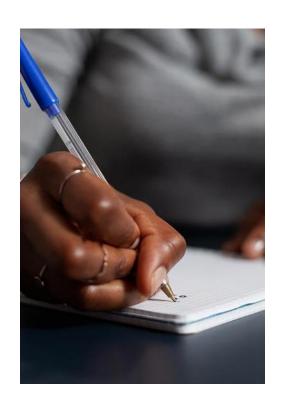
BrE	AmE
centre	center
litre	liter
travelling	traveling
cancelled	canceled

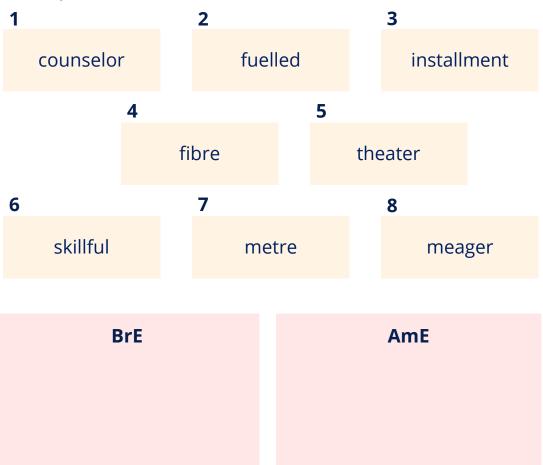




## **Categorise**

- 1. **Read** the words.
- 2. **Categorise** them into one of the two pink boxes.

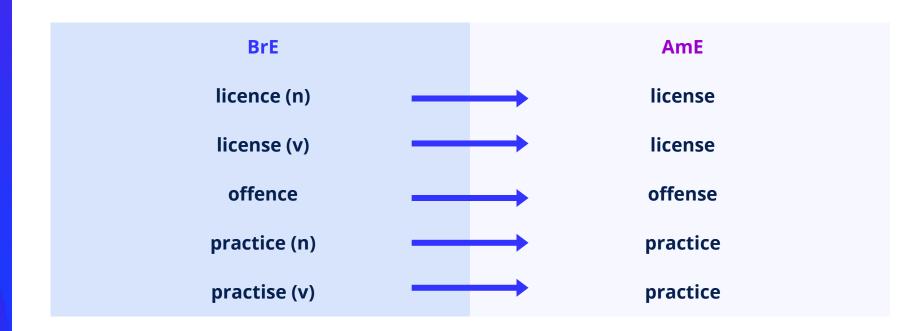






#### -ce vs. -se

- While the British use the -ce ending nouns, Americans generally prefer -se.
- The spelling depends on whether the word is a **noun** or a **verb**.







## American English dropped e

**Review** the information below.

There are three cases when Americans will drop an e and the British will keep it.

Case	BrE	AmE
verb + -ment	judgement	judgment
adjective with <i>-able</i>	sizeable	sizable
gerund	ageing	aging





## **How would Americans spell these words?**

**Transform** the BrE spellings to AmE spellings.

1	abridgement	>	abridgment
2	pretence	>	
3	defence	>	
4	blameable	>	
5	likeable	>	
6	acknowledgement	>	



I've got a headache.
I've gotten a
headache.

I learnt a lot.
I learned a lot.

In British English, the past participle of **get** is **got**. In American English, it is **gotten.** 

In British English, it is more common to end some past tense verbs with 't'. In American English, it is more common to end these same verbs in 'ed'.





## **Transform the words**

**Transform** the words below into the **past tense**. **Write** them in BrE or AmE. Note: these are *alternative* past tense and past participle endings in both AmE and BrE.

1	dream (BrE)	>	dreamt
2	leap (BrE)	>	
3	dwell (AmE)	>	
4	burn (BrE)	>	
5	creep (AmE)	>	
6	smell (AmE)	>	



## **Discuss**

**Answer** the questions below.

Does your country have language differences between regions?





Do you prefer British English or American English? Why?



## Let's reflect

 Can you identify some key differences in spelling between American and British English?

 Can you apply this knowledge to spell a range of words accurately in both variations?

Your teacher will now make one suggestion for improvement for each student.



## **End of the lesson**

### Idiom

## to get someone's drift

Meaning: to understand what someone has said

**Example:** I didn't get her drift—does she want to stay or not?







# **Additional practice**



## **Transform the words**

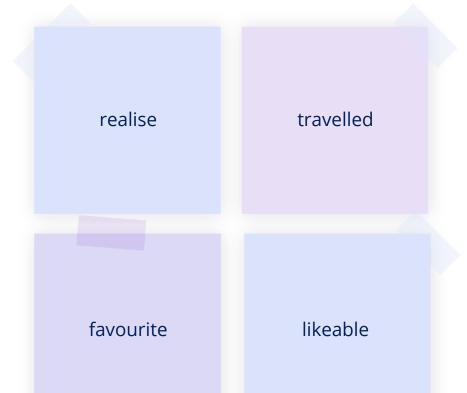
Transform the AmE words on the left to BrE.

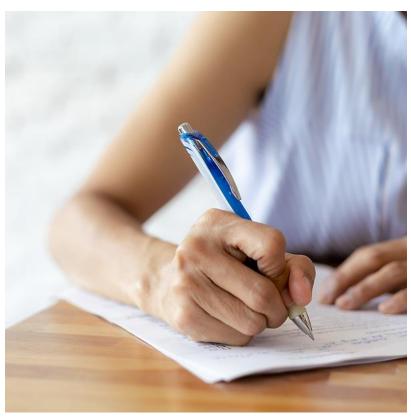
1	analyze	>	analyse
2	practice (n.)	>	
3	practice (v.)	>	
4	skillful	>	
5	liter	>	
6	color	>	



## Writing

- 1. **Read** the words below.
- 2. Are they **AmE** or **BrE**? How do you know?
- 3. Take **5** minutes to **write** down sentences using as many of the words as possible.









## **Discuss**

**Answer** the questions below.

British English or American English—which do you have a more difficult time understanding?





Where does your Lingoda teacher come from?
Where have most of your English teachers come from?



# 9.

## **Answer key**

- **P.6:** *BrE*: 1, 4 *AmE*: 2, 3, 5
- P.8:
- 2.) humor
- 3.) utilize
- 4.) rumor
- 5.) apologize
- 6.) neighbor
- **P.10:** *BrE*: 2, 4, 7
- *AmE*: 1, 3, 5, 6, 8
- **P.13:** 2.) pretense
- 3.) defense
- 4.) blamable
- 5.) likable
- 6.) acknowledgment
- **P.15:** 2.) leapt 3.) dwelled 4.) burnt 5.) creeped 6.) smelled



# 9.

## **Answer key**

P.20: 2.) practice 3.) practise 4.) skilful 5.) litre 6.) colour



# 9.

## **Summary**

#### -our vs. -or and -ise vs. -ize

- In **British English**, words ending in **-our** are preferred while the **u** is dropped from the word in **American English**, e.g. favourite favorite
- American English uses the -ize spelling at the end of words while those same words are spelt with the -ise ending in British English, e.g. to realise to realize

#### -re vs. -er and ending in a vowel with double I

- Words that end in **-re** in British English often have those letters reversed in American English, e.g. centre center
- In American English, the **double** *I* is dropped when adding suffixes to verbs that end in the letter *I*, e.g. *travelling traveling*

#### -ce vs. -se and dropped e

- While the **British** use the **-ce** ending nouns, **Americans** generally prefer **-se**. The spelling depends on whether the word is a **noun** or a **verb**, e.g. *licence license*
- There are **three cases** when **Americans** will **drop an e** and the **British** will keep it: verb + ment, e.g. judgement judgment, adjective with able, e.g. sizeable sizable, gerund, e.g. ageing aging

#### **Verb differences**

- In British English, the past participle of **get** is **got**. In American English, it is **gotten**.
- In British English, it is more common to end some past tense verbs with 't'. In American English, it is more common to end these same verbs in 'ed', e.g. learnt learned





# **Vocabulary**

to utilise

meagre

sizeable

abridgement

blameable





## **Notes**

