

British versus American spelling

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There are several areas in which British and American spelling are different. These are the main ones to be aware of.

Words ending in *-re*

British English words that end in *-re* often end in *-er* in American English:

British English	American English
centre	center
fibre	fiber
litre	liter
theatre	theater or theatre

Words ending in *-our*

British English words ending in *-our* usually end in *-or* in American English:

British English	American English
colour	color
flavour	flavor
humour	humor
labour	labor
neighbour	neighbor

Words ending in *-ize* or *-ise*

Verbs in British English that can be spelled with either *-ize* or *-ise* at the end are always spelled with *-ize* at the end in American English:

British English	American English
apologize or apologise	apologize
organize or organise	organize
recognize or recognise	recognize

Words ending in -yse

Verbs in British English that end in -yse are always spelled -yze in American English:

British English	American English
analyse	analyze
breathalyse	breathalyze
paralyse	paralyze

Words ending in a vowel plus l

In British spelling, verbs ending in a vowel plus *l* double the *l* when adding endings that begin with a vowel. In American English, the *l* is not doubled:

British English	American English
<i>travel</i>	<i>travel</i>
travelled	traveled
travelling	traveling
traveller	traveler

<i>fuel</i>	<i>fuel</i>
fuelled	fueled
fuelling	fueling

Words spelled with double vowels

British English words that are spelled with the double vowels *ae* or *oe* are just spelled with an *e* in American English:

British English	American English
leukaemia	leukemia
manoeuvre	maneuver
oestrogen	estrogen
paediatric	pediatric

Note that in American English, certain terms, such as *archaeology*, keep the *ae* spelling as standard, although the spelling with just the *e* (i.e. *archeology*) is usually acceptable as well.

Nouns ending with -ence

Some nouns that end with *-ence* in British English are spelled *-ense* in American English:

British English	American English
defence	defense
licence	license
offence	offense
pretence	pretense

Nouns ending with -ogue

Some nouns that end with *-ogue* in British English end with either *-og* or *-ogue* in American English:

British English	American English
analogue	analog or analogue
catalogue	catalog or catalogue
dialogue	dialog or dialogue

The distinctions here are not hard and fast. The spelling *analogue* is acceptable but not very common in American English; *catalog* has become the US norm, but *catalogue* is not uncommon; *dialogue* is still preferred over *dialog*.

Aside from spelling differences, many items and practices have different names in British and American English, as indicated in the following table.

British English versus American English Table

British English	American English	Italian
accommodation	accommodations	alloggio
aerofoil	airfoil	superficie aereodinamica
aeroplane	airplane	aereo
Allen key	Allen wrench	chiave a brugola
aluminium	aluminum	alluminio
aniseed	anise	anice
anticlockwise	counterclockwise	in senso antiorario
articulated lorry	tractor-trailer	autoarticolato
asymmetric bars	uneven bars	parallele asimmetriche
aubergine	eggplant	melanzana
autumn	fall	autunno
baking tray	cookie sheet	piastra da forno
bank holiday	legal holiday	festività legale
barrister	attorney	avvocato patrocinante
beetroot	beet(s)	barbatietola rossa
bill	check	conto
biscuit	cookie; cracker	biscotto
black economy	underground economy	economia sommersa
blanket bath	sponge bath	lavaggio a letto (di un paziente)
blind	(window) shade	avvolgibile
block of flats	apartment building	condominio
boiler suit	coveralls	tuta da lavoro
bonnet (<i>of a car</i>)	hood	cofano
boob tube	tube top	corpetto stretto senza spalline
boot (<i>of a car</i>)	trunk	bagagliaio
bowls	lawn bowling	Ggoco delle bocce su prato
braces	suspenders	bretelle
brawn (<i>the food</i>)	headcheese	soppressata
bridging loan	bridge loan	prestito compensativo
bumbag	fanny pack	marsupio
candyfloss	cotton candy	zucchero filato
car park	parking lot	parcheggio
caravan	trailer	roulotte
catapult	slingshot	fionda
central reservation	median strip	aiuola spartitraffico
chemist	drugstore	farmacia
chips	French fries	patatine fritte (a bastoncino)
cinema	movie theater; the movies	cinema
cling film	plastic wrap	pellicola adesiva (per alimenti)

coffin	casket	bara
consumer durables	durable goods	beni di consumo durevoli
cornflour	cornstarch	farina, amido di granoturco
cos (<i>lettuce</i>)	Romaine	lattuga romana
cot	crib	culla
cotton bud	cotton swab	batuffolo di ovatta
cotton wool	absorbent cotton	cotone idrofilo
council estate	(housing) project	quartire di case popolare
courgette	zucchini	zucchina
court card	face card	figura (delle carte da gioco)
crash barrier	guardrail	barriera di sicurezza, guardrail
crisps	chips; potato chips	patatine
crossroads	intersection	incrocio
crotchet (<i>music</i>)	quarter note	semiminima
cupboard	closet	credenza
current account	checking account	conto corrente
danger money	hazard pay	indennità di rischio
demister (<i>in a car</i>)	defroster	sbrinatoro
dialling tone	dial tone	segnale di linea
diamante	rhinestone	strass
diversion	detour	deviazione
double cream	heavy cream	panna molta densa
draughts (<i>game</i>)	checkers	gioco della dama
drawing pin	thumbtack	puntina da disegno
dressing gown	robe; bathrobe	vestaglia, veste da camera
drink-driving	drunk driving	guida in stato di ubriachezza
driving licence	driver's license	patente di guida
dual carriageway	divided highway	strada a doppia carreggiata
dummy (<i>for a baby</i>)	pacifier	succhiotto
dust sheet	drop cloth	telo, telone
dustbin	garbage can, trash can	pattumiera
dustman	garbage collector	operatore ecologico, spazzino
earth (<i>electrical</i>)	ground	terra, massa
engaged (<i>of a phone</i>)	busy	occupato
estate agent	real estate agent, realtor (<i>trademark</i>)	agente immobiliare
estate car	station wagon	auto familiare, station wagon
ex-directory	unlisted	non in elenco
faith school	parochial school	scuola di impostazione religiosa
financial year	fiscal year	anno, esercizio finanziario
fire brigade/service	fire company/department	pompieri, vigili del fuoco
first floor	second floor	primo piano

fish finger	fish stick	bastoncino di pesce
fitted carpet	wall-to-wall carpeting	moquette
flannel	washcloth	flanella
flat	apartment	appartamento
flexitime	flexitime	orario di lavoro flessibile
flick knife	switchblade	coltello a serramanico
flyover	overpass	cavalcavia, sovrappasso
football	soccer	calcio
footway	sidewalk	marciapiede
fringe (<i>hair</i>)	bangs	frangetta
full stop (<i>punctuation</i>)	period	punto fermo (segno di interpunzione)
gear lever	gearshift	leva del cambio
goods train	freight train	treno merci
greaseproof paper	wax paper/waxed paper	carta oleata
green fingers	green thumb	pollice verde
grill (<i>noun</i>)	broiler	griglia
grill (<i>verb</i>)	broil	arrostitire
ground floor	first floor	pianterreno
groundsman	groundskeeper	custode di campo sportivo
hairslide	barrette	fermacapelli
handbag	purse	borsa da donna
hatstand	hatrack	appendiabiti a stelo
hen night	bachelorette party	addio al nubilato
hire purchase	installment plan	acquisto con pagamento a rate
hoarding	billboard	tabellone per affissioni
hob	stovetop	piastra, piano di cottura
holiday	vacation	vacanza
holidaymaker	vacationer	villeggiante
homely	homey	casalingo, accogliente
hosepipe	(garden) hose	tubo di gomma, flessibile
in hospital	in the hospital	in ospedale
hot flush	hot flash	vampata di calore
ice lolly	Popsicle (<i>trademark</i>)	ghiacciolo
icing sugar	confectioners' sugar	zucchero a velo
indicator (<i>on a car</i>)	turn signal	freccia direzionale
inside leg	inseam	al cavallo (misura di calzoni)
jelly babies	jelly beans	caramelle gommosi
Joe Bloggs	Joe Blow	americano tipico
jug	pitcher	caraffa, brocca
jumble sale	rummage sale	vendita di beneficenza
jump lead	jumper cable	cavo con morsetto
jumper	sweater	pullover
junior school	elementary school	scuola elementare

kennel	doghouse	canile
ladybird	ladybug	coccinella
a lettuce	a head of lettuce	lattuga
level crossing	grade crossing	passaggio a livello
lift	elevator	ascensore
lolly	Popsicle (<i>trademark</i>)	ghiacciolo
lollipop lady (or man)	crossing guard	persona che ferma il traffico per far passare scolari
loo (<i>toilet</i>)	john	gabinetto
loose cover	slipcover	fodera amovibile
lorry	truck	camion
loudhailer	bullhorn	megafono
lucky dip	grab bag	pesca (nei luna park)
luggage van	baggage car	bagagliaio
maize	corn	granturco, mais
marshalling yard	railroad yard	scalo di smistamento, piazzale di manovra
maths	math	matematica
metalled road	paved road	strada massicciata
milometer	odometer	contamiglia
minim (<i>music</i>)	half note	minima
mobile phone	cell phone	telefono cellulare
monkey tricks	monkeyshines	tiro mancino
motorbike	motorcycle	motocicletta
motorway	expressway; highway	autostrada
mum/mummy	mom/mommy	mamma
nappy	diaper	pannolino per neonati
newsreader	newscaster	annunciatore
number plate	license plate	targa
off-licence	liquor store; package store	negozio di vini, birra e liquori
opencast mining	open-pit mining	estrazione di minerali a cielo aperto
ordinary share	common stock	azioni ordinarie
oven glove	oven mitt	guanto da forno
paddling pool	wading pool	vasca per giochi infantili
pants	underpants	mutandine da uomo
parting (<i>in hair</i>)	part	scriminatura
patience	solitaire	gioco del solitario
pavement	sidewalk	marciapiede
pay packet	pay envelope	busta paga
pedestrian crossing	crosswalk	passaggio pedonale
peg	clothespin	attaccapanni
pelmet	valance	mantovana
petrol	gas; gasoline	benzina
physiotherapy	physical therapy	fisioterapia
pinafore dress	jumper	scamiciato

plain chocolate	dark chocolate	cioccolato fondente
plain flour	all-purpose flour	farina normale
polo neck	turtleneck	collo alto
postal vote	absentee ballot	voto per posta
postbox	mailbox	cassetta della posta
postcode	zip code	codice di avviamento postale
potato crisp	potato chip	patatine fritte
power socket	electrical outlet	presa di corrente
pram	baby carriage; stroller	carrozzina per bambini
press-up	pushup	flessione, piegamento
public school	private school	scuola privata
public transport	public transportation	trasporto pubblico
pushchair	stroller	passerellino
pylon	utility pole	pilone, palo a traliccio
quaver (<i>music</i>)	eighth note	croma
queue	line	coda, fila di persone
railway	railroad	ferrovia
real tennis	court tennis	gioco della pallacorda
recorded delivery	certified mail	servizio di consegna registrato
registration plate	license plate	targa
remould (<i>tyre</i>)	retread	ricostruzione, rigenerazione a caldo di un pneumatico
reverse-charge call	collect call	telefonata a carico del destinatario
reversing light	back-up light	luce o fanale di retromarcia
right-angled triangle	right triangle	triangolo rettangolo
ring road	beltway	circonvallazione, raccordo anulare, tangenziale
roundabout (<i>at a fair</i>)	carousel	giostra (luna park)
roundabout (<i>in road</i>)	traffic circle	rotatoria
rowing boat	rowboat	barca a remi
rubber	eraser	gomma da cancellare
rubbish	garbage, trash	spazzatura
rubbish-bin	garbage can, trash can	pattumiera
sailing boat	sailboat	barca a vela
saloon (<i>car</i>)	sedan	auto berlina
sandwich cake	layer cake	torta a strati
sanitary towel	sanitary napkin	assorbente igienico
self-raising flour	self-rising flour	farina autolievitante
semibreve (<i>music</i>)	whole note	semibreve
semitone (<i>music</i>)	half step	semitono
shopping trolley	shopping cart	carrello di supermercato

silencer (<i>on a car</i>)	muffler	marmitta
skeleton in the cupboard	skeleton in the closet	scheletro nell'armadio
skimmed milk	skim milk	latte scremato
skipping rope	jump rope	corda per saltare
skirting board	baseboard	battiscopa
sledge	sled	slitta, slittino
sleeper	railroad tie	traversino di binario
snakes and ladders	chutes and ladders	gioco dell'oca
solicitor	lawyer	avvocato, procuratore legale
splashback	backsplash	paraspruzzi
stag night	bachelor party	festa di addio al celibato
Stanley knife	utility knife	taglierino
starter	appetizer	antipasto
state school	public school	scuola pubblica
storm in a teacup	tempest in a teapot	tempesta in un bicchier d'acqua
surtitle	supertitle	sottotitoli (teatro)
sweet(s)	candy	caramella
takeaway (<i>food</i>)	takeout; to go	cibo da asporto
taxi rank	taxi stand	posteggio di taxi
tea towel	dish towel	straccio da cucina
tick	check mark	segno di spunta
ticket tout	scalper	bagarino
tights	pantyhose	collant, calzamaglia
timber	lumber	legname
tin	can	lattina
torch	flashlight	torcia elettrica
trade union	labor union	sindacato
trading estate	industrial park	zona industriale di una città
trainers	sneakers	scarpe da ginnastica
tram	streetcar; cable car	tram, vettura tramviaria
transport cafe	truck stop	autogrill
trolley	shopping cart	carrello da supermercato
twelve-bore	twelve-gauge	calibro dodici
Underground, tube	subway	metropolitana
vacuum flask	thermos bottle	thermos
verge (<i>of a road</i>)	shoulder	marginie, ciglio
vest	undershirt	canottiera
veterinary surgeon	veterinarian	veterinario
wagon (<i>on a train</i>)	car	vettura, carrozza
waistcoat	vest	panciotto, gilet
walking frame	walker	deambulatore
wallet	billfold	portafogli da uomo
wardrobe	closet	armadio

water ice	Italian ice	sorbetto
white coffee	coffee with cream	caffelatte
white spirit	mineral spirits	acquaragia minerale
wholemeal bread	wholewheat bread	pane integrale
windcheater	windbreaker	giacca a vento
windscreen	windshield	parabrezza
wing (<i>of a car</i>)	fender	parafango
worktop	countertop	piano di lavoro
zebra crossing	crosswalk	passaggio pedonale a strisce
zed (<i>letter Z</i>)	zee	Z
zip	zipper	chiusura lampo

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