



# Nonfiction Niche Editorial

Don't let typos sabotage your success.

## US to UK English Cheat Sheet

### UK English References

#### UK Dictionaries and Tools

- [Cambridge Dictionary](#)
- Verify UK spelling using [Language Tool](#) and toggling to English (British)

#### UK Style Manuals

- [The Guardian Style Guide](#)
- [The Modern Humanities Research Association \(MHRA\) Style Guide](#) or
- [The University of Oxford Style Guide](#)

### UK Linguistic Preferences

#### UK Spelling and Usage Differences

- *Many UK English words use different suffix spellings*
  - -re rather than -er (*theatre*, not *theater*)
  - -ise rather than -ize (*apologise*, not *apologize*)
  - -yse rather than -yze (*analyse*, not *analyze*)
  - -our rather than -or (*behaviour*, not *behavior*)
  - single l instead of a double l (*enrol*, not *enroll*)
  - often keeps -e for word modifications (*judgement*, not *judgment*)(see the Find and Replace Chart below for more specific examples and verify specific variations in a [dictionary](#) with UK spelling variants included)
- *UK English tends to use the verb 'have', and US English tends to use the verb 'take'*
  - UK: She had a shower. I had a nap.
  - US: She took a shower. I took a nap.
- *UK English favours different prepositions in some situations*
  - *at the weekend*, not *on the weekend*
  - *at school* or *at university*, not *in school* or *in university*
  - *different to* or *different from*, not *different than*
  - *written to her*, not *written her*
  - *in hospital*, not *in the hospital*
  - *tell the time*, not *tell time*
- *UK English tends to put River before the name of the river*
  - *River Thames*, not *Thames River*

## UK Grammar Preferences

- *Plural verb forms with collective nouns*
  - UK English uses both singular and plural verbs with collective nouns, but US English tends to use singular verbs with [collective nouns](#) (army, assortment, band, class, party, team, etc.). In both, the plural tends to be used to emphasise the individual members of a group who are acting separately rather than together as a unit.
    - UK: The team play on Monday.
    - US: The team plays on Monday.
- *Present perfect tense to describe the past*
  - UK English often uses the present perfect tense to describe past events, and US English often uses the simple past tense to describe past events.
    - UK: I have just spoken to him. I have already spoken to them.
    - US: I just spoke to him. I already spoke to them.
- *'That' and 'which' can both be used for restrictive clauses in UK English*
  - UK: The dinner which I put in the oven burned (restrictive) or The dinner that I put in the oven burned (restrictive). The dinner, which I put in the oven, burned (non-restrictive).
  - US: The dinner that I put in the oven burned (restrictive). The dinner, which I put in the oven, burned (non-restrictive).

## UK Punctuation Preferences

- *Abbreviations*
  - In UK English, don't use periods or 'full stops' with abbreviations that end on the last letter of the word they abbreviate.
    - (Doctor) Dr
    - (Mister) Mr
    - (Missus) Mrs
    - (The Reverend) The Revd
    - (Saint) St
    - (Street) St
  - In UK English, do use periods or 'full stops' with abbreviations that don't end on the last letter of the word they abbreviate or with French/Latin/Italian abbreviations.
    - (ante meridiem) a.m.
    - (Drive) Dr.
    - (exempli gratia) e.g.
    - ibid.
    - (id est) i.e.
    - (Monsieur) M.
    - (no date of publication) n.d.
    - (no place of publication) n.p.
    - (Page/s) p. or pp.
    - (Professor) Prof.

- *Colons and capitalisation*
  - In UK English, typically only capitalise the first word after a colon if it is a proper noun or the first letter of an acronym. In US English, full sentences following a colon are typically capitalised.
- *En dashes with spaces for parenthetical material*
  - UK English tends to use spaced en dashes – as I have here – to set off parenthetical asides or in place of a colon. US English tends to use em dashes—as I have here—without spaces. Consult your style guide for specifics.
    - UK: Harry Styles has won a Grammy for his recent album – *Harry’s House*.
    - US: Harry has won a Grammy for his recent album—*Harry’s House*.
- *e.g. and i.e.*
  - UK English generally omits the comma after e.g. and i.e., and US English generally includes the comma after e.g. and i.e.
    - UK: e.g. and i.e.
    - US: e.g., and i.e.,
- *Single quotation marks (not double)*
  - UK English uses single quotation marks around titles and quotations, and US English uses double quotation marks around titles and quotations:
    - UK: ‘To thine own self be true.’
    - US: “To thine own self be true.”
  - However, UK English uses double quotation marks for quotations within quotations:
    - UK: The reporter said, ‘This book has been called “a game changer.”’
    - US: The reporter said, “This book has been called ‘a game changer.’”
- *Punctuation appears outside quotation marks unless it is part of the material being quoted or if the quote is, or ends with, a complete sentence:*
  - UK English places commas and full stops outside quotation marks unless the punctuation is included in the material being quoted or is, or ends with, a complete sentence. However, US English places commas and periods inside quotation marks, even when they’re not in the original material.
    - UK: This sentence has only a partial quotation that the book is ‘a game changer’. But this one has a full sentence as the quotation: The reporter said, ‘This book has been called “a game changer.”’
    - US: This sentence has only a partial quotation that the book is “a game changer.” The reporter said, “This book has been called ‘a game changer.’”

#### Other UK Style Preferences

- *Dates*
  - In UK English, dates read *Day-Month-Year* (not Month-Day-Year):
    - The 5<sup>th</sup> of April, 1985
    - 5/4/85

- I was born on 5 April 1985 (note there is *no comma before the year*)
- *Money*
  - In UK English, remember to replace dollar symbols (\$100) with pound symbols (£100)
- *Times*
  - In UK English, use a period between the hours and minutes, not a colon:
    - 11.30 (not 11:30)

## Conversion Chart from US English to UK English

Find US spelling	Replace with UK spelling (verify in <a href="#">dictionary</a> )
-ense	-ence
defense	defence
license	licence
-er	-re
caliber	calibre
center	centre
fiber	fibre
liter	litre
meter	metre
theater	theatre
-ize	-ise
apologize	apologise
capitalize	capitalise
characterize	characterise
colonize	colonise
globalize	globalise
hypothesize	hypothesise
legalize	legalise
maximize	maximise
minimize	minimise
neutralize	neutralise
privatize	privatise
randomize	randomise
recognize	recognise
-ization	-isation
organization	organisation
-lyze	-lyse
analyze	analyse
catalyze	catalyse
paralyze	paralyse
-or or -ow	-our or -ough
behavior	behaviour
color	colour
endeavor	endeavour
flavor	flavour
honor	honour
humor	humour

labor	labour
mold	mould
neighbor	neighbour
plow	plough
vapor	vapour
-l (single l)	-ll (double l)
councilor	councillor
counselor	counsellor
enroll	enrol
fulfill	fulfill
install	instal
-l (single l) in past tense verbs	-ll (double ll) in past tense verbs
canceled	cancelled
channeled	channelled
labeled	labelled
modeled	modelled
traveled	travelled
drop -e for word modifications	keep -e for word modifications
acknowledgment	acknowledgement
judgment	judgement
miscellaneous adjectives	miscellaneous adjectives
aging	ageing
favorite	favourite
gray	grey
livable	liveable
movable	moveable
orthopedic	orthopaedic
salable	saleable
skeptical	sceptical
somber	sombre
miscellaneous nouns	miscellaneous nouns
aluminum	aluminium
artifact	artefact
comforter	duvet
cooperation	co-operation
elevator	lift
estrogen	oestrogen
fetus	foetus
line	queue
leukemia	leukaemia
math	maths (for mathematics)
paleontology	palaeontology
percent	per cent
program	programme (but program if tech-related)
sidewalk	pavement
sulfur	sulphur
tire	tyre
miscellaneous verbs	miscellaneous verbs
busted (simple past and past participle)	bust (form in past and past participle)
dove (simple past and past participle)	dived (simple past and past participle)

gotten (past participle)	got (past participle)
learned (simple past)	learnt (simple past)
pled (simple past and past participle)	pleaded (simple past and past participle)
sawed (past participle)	sawn (past participle)
spelled (simple past)	spelt (simple past)
stank or stunk (simple past)	stank (simple past)
woke or waked (simple past)	woke (simple past)