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CANADA

December 11, 2025

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Re: The Prime Minister's Office, the Government of Canada and Parliament must continue to use Canadian English spelling

Dear Prime Minister:

We have recently noted the use of British spelling in documents from the [Prime Minister's Office](#) and from the Government of Canada (Budget 2025: Canada Strong) (examples: *utilisation*, *globalisation*, *catalyse*). The signatories of this letter – five are linguistics experts and one is the spokesperson for Canada's national association representing editors (Editors Canada) – are involved in understanding, researching and promoting the use of Canadian English as a vital sign of Canada's unique identity.

We are writing to request that the Prime Minister's Office, the Government of Canada and Parliament continue to use Canadian English spelling, which is the spelling they consistently used from the 1970s to 2025.

Spelling is one aspect of Standard Canadian English, a distinctive national variety of English recognized by the [Oxford English Dictionary](#). Canadian English evolved through Loyalist settlement after the American Revolutionary War, subsequent waves of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish immigration, and from European and global contexts. Today, it reflects global influences and cultures from around the world represented in our population, as well as containing words and phrases from Indigenous languages.

Standard Canadian English is unique among the varieties of English around the world because it is historically influenced by its geographic proximity to the US but has features distinctive from US English and UK English. Standard Canadian English includes Canadianisms, which are, in Walter S. Avis's definition from 1967, "words, expressions or meanings that are native to Canada" or "distinctively characteristic" of the way we talk and write. Its history from 1940 to 2000 has been explored in *Creating Canadian English: the Professor, the Mountaineer, and a National Variety of English* (Stefan Dollinger, Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Another aspect that distinguishes Canadian English is spelling. What is Canadian spelling? According to the *Canadian Press Stylebook*:

Many Canadians are passionate about spelling words "Canadian" – but there are many opinions on what exactly is Canadian. That's because the Canadian style has been to borrow from both Britain and the United States. For some words Canadians opt for a spelling that may have originated in the United States (or more accurately, North America). For other words we follow the British style. On some words, we never use the British variant (tyre for tire, gaol for jail); on others we never use the American version (check for cheque, maneuver for manoeuvre).



Editors Canada's guidebook *Editing Canadian English* notes:

In some cases, Canadians have embraced the American forms so thoroughly that the British variants look decidedly foreign.... In other instances, the British spellings are strongly preferred in Canada.

To use Canadian spelling, the following references are helpful:

- *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (2nd edition, 2004)
- *The Canadian Press Stylebook Caps and Spelling* (available online and updated continuously)
- *Editing Canadian English* (3rd edition, 2015)

A new *Canadian English Dictionary* is being developed by the not-for-profit [Society for Canadian English](#), a consortium including Editors Canada, the University of British Columbia Canadian English Lab and the Strathy Language Unit at Queen's University.

Canadian spelling is used widely and fairly consistently in Canada – in book and magazine publishing, in newspapers and other media, and in the federal and provincial governments and their legislatures. If governments start to use other systems for spelling, this could lead to confusion about which spelling is Canadian.

Canadian English evolved here and represents a unique aspect of our culture. It is part of our history and identity; it is one of the practices woven through our everyday lives that make us Canadian.

Canadian English spelling must continue to be used in all communications and publications in the federal government. It's a matter of our national history, identity and pride. These days, it's the simplest way to take an "elbows up" stance.

Yours sincerely,

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