

# **Variants of the English Language**



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# 1. The Main Variants of the English Language



Every language  
allows different  
kinds of variations:

geographical;

territorial;

stylistic and others.

For historical and economic reasons the English language has spread over vast territories. It is the national language of:

- England proper,
- the USA,
- Australia,
- New Zealand,
- some provinces of Canada.

# Standard English

It may be defined as that form of English which is current and literary, substantially uniform and recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken or understood. Standard English is the variety most widely accepted and understood either within an English-speaking country or throughout the entire English-speaking world.

# Variants of English

There are regional variants possessing a literary norm. There are distinguished variants existing on the territory of the United Kingdom:

British English,

Scottish English,

Irish English),

Variants existing outside the British Isles:

American English,

Canadian English,

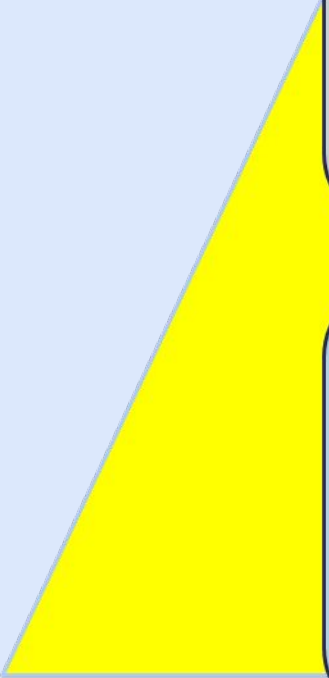
New Zealand English,

South African English,

Indian English.

British English is referred to the written Standard English and the pronunciation known as Received Pronunciation (RP).

## 2. Variants of English in the United Kingdom

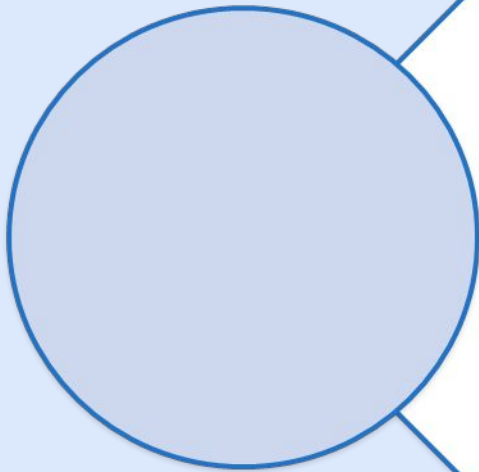


**Scottish English** has a long tradition as a separate written and spoken variety. Pronunciation, grammar and lexis differ from other varieties of English existing on the territory of the British Isles. It can be explained by its historical development.

The identity of Scottish English reflects an institutionalized social structure, as it is most noticeable in the realm of law, local government, religion, and education.



# Lexical peculiarities of Scottish English



Some semantic fields are structured differently in Scottish English and in British English, e.g. the term *minor* in British English is used to denote a person below the age of 18 years, while Scottish law distinguishes between *pupils* and *minors*

Some words used in Scottish English have equivalents in British English, e.g. (ScE) *extortion* – (BrE) *blackmail*;

The distinctiveness of Scottish English derived from the influence of other languages, especially Gaelic, Norwegian, and French., e.g., Gaelic borrowings include:

- *cairn* – ‘a pile of stones that marks the top of a mountain or some other special place’;
- *sporrán* – ‘a small furry bag that hangs in front of a man’s kilt as part of traditional Scottish dress’



Many words which have the same form, but different meanings in Scottish English and British English, e.g. the word *gate* in Scottish English means 'road';

Some Scottish words and expressions are used and understood across virtually the whole country, e.g.

- *dinnae* ('don't'),
- *wee* ('small'),
- *kirk* ('church'),
- *lassie* ('girl').

## Variants of English outside the British Isles:

American  
English,

Canadian  
English,

Australian  
English,

New  
Zealand  
English,

South  
African  
English,


Indian  
English,  
etc.

# Australian English

is similar to British English, but also borrows from American English, e.g. *truck* is used instead of *lorry*. The exposure to the different spellings of British and American English leads to a certain amount of spelling confusion, e.g. *behaviour* as opposed to *behavior*.

## Uniquely Australian terms:

- *outback* – remote regional areas;
- *walkabout* – a long journey of certain length;
- *bush* – native forested areas.




Australian English has a unique set of diminutives formed by adding *-o* or *-ie* to the ends of words:

- *arvo* (afternoon),
- *servo* (service station),
- *barbie* (barbecue),
- *bikkie* (biscuit).



A very common feature of traditional Australian English is rhyming slang based on Cockney rhyming slang and imported by migrants from London in the 19th century, e.g.:



*Captain Cook* rhymes with *look*, so *to have a captain cook*, or *to have a captain*, means *to have a look*.



# New Zealand English



is the variety of the English language spoken in New Zealand and close to Australian English in pronunciation.

The only difference between New Zealand and British spelling is in the ending *-ise* or *-ize*.

New Zealanders use the *-ise* ending exclusively, whereas Britons use either ending, and some British dictionaries prefer the *-ize* ending.



Many local words in New Zealand English were borrowed from the Maori population to describe the local flora, fauna, and the natural environment, e.g.



- the names of birds (*kiwi, tui*);
- the names of fish (*shellfish, hoki*);
- the names of native trees (*kauri, rimu*) and many others.

Words that are unique to New Zealand English or shared with Australian English, e.g.

- *bach* - 'a small holiday home, often with only one or two rooms and of simple construction';
- *footpath* - 'pavement';
- *togs* - 'swimming costume'.

# New Zealand idioms



It is in idioms, in different metaphoric phrases that New Zealand English has made most progress or divergence. Often they reflect significant differences in culture., e.g. :

- *up the Puhoi without a paddle* – ‘to be difficulties without an obvious solution’;
- *sticky beak* – ‘someone unduly curious about people’s affairs’.

The latter idiom in Australia is quite pejorative whereas in New Zealand it is used with more affection and usually as a tease.



Thank you for your  
attention!!!

## Questions:

-What kind of variants existing outside the British Isles do you know?

American English, Canadian English, New Zealand English, South African English, Indian English.

-The main difference between New Zealand and British spelling is in the

–ise or –ize

-What is the meaning of the word Togs?

– ‘swimming costume’

Some Scottish words and expressions do you know?

*dinnae* (don't),

*wee* ('small'),

*kirk* ('church'),

*lassie* ('girl').