

Name: _____ Date: _____

Words with More Than One Acceptable Spelling

There are several words in English that have more than one acceptable spelling. This has to do with the origins and printing history of the English language. English developed in Britain and spread all over the world as England built its empire. When the American colonies broke ties with England, many things that had been done in a British way were now done in an American way. When Noah Webster published his first American dictionary, he was sure to include the new preferred American spellings of many English words. If you see a word as you read that you think is misspelled, check a dictionary to see if there is more than one acceptable spelling for the word.

Example: Carolyn had beautiful grey eyes.

Look up the word *grey* in the dictionary. What is the alternative spelling of this word?

Write the word here. _____

The word *grey* is commonly spelled *gray* in American English.

For the sentences below, check the spelling of each underlined word in a dictionary. If the spelling is an acceptable spelling, write the alternative spelling in the blank. If it is not acceptable, cross out the word and write the correct spelling in the blank.

1. I would love to go to the theatre tonight. _____
2. Roberto is always sure to fulfill his promises. _____
3. The sponsors canceled the dance due to the weather. _____
4. Brenda was carefull to look up her words in a dictionary. _____
5. The puppies were so playful and loveable, we had to have one.

Challenge: Look up each of the words below to find a second acceptable spelling or an alternative spelling in British English. Write the second spelling in the blank.

center _____ catalog _____ donut _____

color _____ curb _____ meter _____

honor _____ defense _____ pajamas _____