

## 5. Spelling

(See also Chapter 7 “Compounding Examples” and Chapter 9 “Abbreviations and Letter Symbols”)

- 5.1. GPO uses Webster’s Third New International Dictionary as its guide for the spelling of words not appearing in the GPO STYLE MANUAL. Colloquial and dialect spellings are not used unless required by the subject matter or specially requested. The tendency of some producers of computer-assisted publications to rely on the limited capability of some spell-checking programs adds importance to this list.

### Preferred and difficult spellings

- 5.2. In addition to indicating the preferred forms of words with variant spellings, the list also contains other words frequently misspelled or causing uncertainty.

<b>A</b>	adviser	ambidextrous	athenaeum
abattoir	adviser (law)	amoeba	attester
aberration	adz	ampoule	autogiro
abetter	aegis	analog	awhile (for some time)
abettor (law)	aesthetic	analogous	a while (a short time)
abridgment	affect (influence, v.)	anemia	ax
absorb (take in)	effect (result, finish, n., v.)	anesthetic	aye
adsorb (adhesion)	afterward(s)	aneurysm	
abysmal	afterword	anomalous	
a cappella	aging	anonymous	<b>B</b>
accede (yield)	aid (n., v.)	antediluvian	backward
exceed (surpass)	aide	antibiotics (n.)	baloney (nonsense)
accepter	aide-de-camp	antibiotic (adj.)	bologna (sausage)
acceptor (law)	albumen (egg)	anyway (adv.)	bandanna
accessory	albumin	anywise (adv.)	bargainer
accommodate	(chemistry)	appall, -ed, -ing	bargainor (law)
accordion	align	appareled, -ing	baritone
accouter	allottee	aquatic	bark (boat)
accursed	all ready (prepared)	aqueduct	barreled, -ing
acetic (acid)	already (previous)	archaeology	bastille
ascetic (austere)	all right	arrester	bathyscaph
acknowledgment	altogether	artifact	battalion
acoustic	(completely)	artisan	bazaar (event)
adapter	all together	ascendance, -ant	bizarre (strange or absurd)
adjurer	(collectively)	ascent (rise)	behoove
adjuster	aluminum	assent (consent)	beneficent
ad nauseam		assassinate	

benefited, -ing	calligraphy	channeled, -ing	consummate
bettor (wagerer)	callus (n.)	chaperon(e)	contradictor
beveled, -ing	callous (adj.)	chautauqua	control, -lable, -ling
biased, -ing	calorie	chauvinism	converter
blessed	canceled, -ing	chiffonier	conveyor
bloc (group)	cancellation	chile con carne	cookie
block (grants)	candor	chili (pepper)	cornetist
blond(e)	canister	chiseled, -ing	corollary
bluing	cannot	chlorophyll	corvette
born (birth)	canoeing	cigarette	councilor (of council)
borne (carried)	cantaloupe	citable	counselor (adviser)
bouillon (soup)	canvas (cloth)	cite (quote)	counseled, -ing
bullion (metal)	canvass (solicit)	site (place)	cozy
boulder	capital (city, money)	clamor	crawfish
bourgeoisie	capitol (building)	climactic (climax)	creneled, -ing
breach (gap)	carabao (sing., pl.)	climatic (climate)	crystaled, -ing
breech (lower part)	carat (gem weight)	cocaine	crystalline
brier	caret (omission mark)	coconut	crystallize
briquet, -ted, -ting	karat (gold weight)	cocoon	cudged, -ing
Britannia	carbureted, -ing	coleslaw	cyclopedia
broadax	carburetor	colloquy	czar
bronco	Caribbean	colossal	
brunet(te)	caroled, -ing	combated, -ing	
buccaneer	carotene	commenter	<b>D</b>
buncombe	carrot	commentor (law)	darndest
union	cartilage	commingle	debarcation
bur	caster (roller)	commiserate	decaffeinated
burned	castor (oil)	complement	decalogue
bus, bused, buses,	casual (informal)	(complete)	defense
busing	causal (cause)	compliment	deliverer
butadiene	catalog, -ed, -ing	(praise)	deliveror (law)
<b>C</b>	cataloger	confectionery	demagogue
caffeine	catsup	confidant(e)	demarcation
calcareous	caviar	confident (sure)	de minimis
calcimine	caviled, -er, -ing	confirmer	dependent
caldron	center	confirmor (law)	descendant (n., adj.)
calendar	centipede	conjurer	desecrater
calender (paper finish)	centrifugal	connector	desiccate
caliber	cesarean	connector (road)	desuetude
caliper	chairmaned	connoisseur	(suspended)
caliper	chaise longue;	consecrator	destitute (bereft)
calk (spike)	lounge	consensus	detractor
caulk (seal)	chancellor	consignor	develop, -ment
		consulter	

device (contrivance)	duffelbag	engraft	<b>F</b>
devise (convey)	dullness	enroll, -ed, -ing,	fantasy
dextrous (syllable	dumbfound	-ment	farther (distance)
division)	dwelt	enshade	further (degree)
diaeresis	dyeing (coloring)	ensheathe	favor
diaeretic	dying (death)	ensnare	fecal
diuretic (water pill)	<b>E</b>	ensure (guarantee)	feces
diagramed, -ing	eastward	insure (protect)	fetal
diagrammatic	ecstasy	entrench	fetish
dialed, -ing	edema	entrepreneur	fetus
dialogue	edgewise	entrust	fiance(e)
dialysis	electronics (n.)	entwine	fiber
diaphragm	electronic (adj.)	envelop (v.)	fiche (microfiche)
diarrhea	eleemosynary	envelope (n.)	filigree
dickey	elicit (to draw)	enwrap	finable
dietitian	illicit (illegal)	eon	finagle
diffuser	embarrass	epaulet, -ed, -ing	financier
dike	embed	epiglottis	fjord
dilettante	embellish	epilogue	flammable ( <i>not</i>
dinghy (boat)	emboveled, -ing	equaled, -ing	inflammable)
diphtheria	emboweler	erysipelas	flection
discreet (prudent)	emigrant (go from)	escallop	fledgling
discrete (distinct)	immigrant (go	escapable	flextime
disheveled, -ing	into)	esophagus	flier
disc (computer)	emigree	etiology	flotage
dispatch	eminent (famous)	evacuee	flotation
dissension	imminent (soon)	evanescent	fluorescent
distention	emoji	eviscerate	focused, -ing
distill, -ed, -ing,	employee	evocative	folderol
-ment	enameled, -ing	exhibitor	forbade
distributor	encage	exhilarate	forbear (endurance)
divorcee (masc.,	encase	exonerate	forebear (ancestor)
fem.)	encave	exorbitant	foresee
doctoral	enclasp	expellant	forgettable
doctrinaire	enclose	exposé (n.,	forgo (relinquish)
doggerel	enclosure	exposure)	forego (precede)
dossier	encumber	expose (v., to lay	format, formatted,
doweled, -ing	encumbrance	open)	formatting
downward	encyclopedia	exsiccate	forswear
dreadnought	endorse, -ment	extant (in existence)	fortissimo
dreamed	endwise	extent (range)	forward (ahead)
drought	enfeeble	extoll, -ed, -ing	foreword (preface)
dueled, -ing	enforce, -ment	eyeing	fricassee
		eyrie	fuchsia

fueler  
 fulfill, -ed, -ing,  
 -ment  
 fulsome  
 fungus (n., adj.)  
 funneled, -ing  
 furor  
 fuse (all meanings)  
 fuselage  
 fusillade

**G**

gaiety  
 gaily  
 galosh  
 gamboled, -ing  
 garrote  
 gauge  
 gazetteer  
 gelatin  
 genealogy  
 generalissimo  
 germane  
 glamorous  
 glamour  
 glycerin  
 gobbledygook  
 goodbye  
**govinfo**  
 (always bold)  
 graveled, -ing  
 gray  
 grievous  
 groveled, -ing  
 gruesome  
 guarantee (n., v.)  
 guaranty (n., law)  
 guerrilla (warfare)  
 gorilla (ape)  
 guesstimate  
 guttural  
 gypsy

**H**

hallelujah  
 hara-kiri  
 harass  
 harebrained  
 healthful (for  
 health)  
 healthy (with  
 health)  
 heinous  
 hemoglobin  
 hemorrhage  
 hiccup  
 highfalutin  
 hijack  
 homeopath  
 homogeneity  
 homogeneous  
 (mixed uniformly)  
 homogenous (of  
 similar origin)  
 homologue  
 hors d'oeuvre  
 hypocrisy  
 hypotenuse

**I**

idiosyncrasy  
 idle (inactive)  
 idol (statue)  
 idyll  
 imminent (soon)  
 eminent (famous)  
 impaneled, -ing  
 impasse  
 imperiled, -ing  
 impostor  
 impresario  
 imprimatur  
 inculcate  
 indict (to accuse)  
 indite (to compose)  
 inequity (unfairness)  
 iniquity (sin)

inferable  
 infold  
 ingenious (skillful)  
 ingenuous (simple)  
 innocuous  
 innuendo  
 inoculate  
 inquire, inquiry  
 install, -ed, -ing,  
 -ment  
 installation  
 instill, -ed, -ing  
 insure (protect)  
 ensure (guarantee)  
 intelligentsia  
 interceptor  
 interment (burial)  
 internment (jail)  
 intern  
 intervenor (law)  
 intervenor (law)  
 intransigent (n., adj.)  
 in vitro  
 in vivo  
 iridescent  
 italic

**J**

jalopy  
 jealousy  
 jerry-(built)  
 jury-(rigged)  
 jeweled, -ing, -er  
 jewelry  
 judgeship  
 judgment  
 jujitsu  
 juxtaposition

**K**

karat  
 kerneled, -ing  
 kerosene  
 ketchup

kidnapped, -ing  
 kidnapper  
 kilogram  
 knapsack  
 kopek  
 kumquat

**L**

labeled, -ing  
 lacquer  
 landward  
 lath (wood)  
 lathe (machine)  
 laureled  
 leukemia  
 leveled, -ing  
 leveler  
 liable (responsible)  
 libel (legal)  
 liaison  
 libelant  
 libeled, -ing  
 libelee  
 libeler  
 license  
 licenser (issuer)  
 licensor (grantor)  
 licorice  
 likable  
 lilliputian  
 lineage (lines)  
 lineage (descent)  
 liquefy  
 liquor  
 liqueur  
 liter  
 livable  
 loath (reluctant)  
 loathe (detest)  
 lodestar  
 lodestone  
 lodgment  
 logistics (n.)  
 logistic (adj.)

louver  
luster  
lyonnaise

**M**

madam  
Mafia  
maim  
maize (corn)  
  maze (labyrinth)  
maneuver  
manifold  
manikin (dwarf)  
mannequin (model)  
mantel (shelf)  
  mantle (cloak)  
marbleize  
marijuana  
marshaled, -ing  
marshaler  
marveled, -ing  
marvelous  
material (goods)  
  materiel (military)  
meager  
medaled, -ing  
medalist  
medieval  
meme  
metaled, -ing  
metalize  
meteorology  
  (weather)  
  metrology  
    (weights and  
    measures)  
meter  
mil ( $\frac{1}{1000}$  inch)  
  mill ( $\frac{1}{1000}$  dollar)  
mileage  
miliary  
  (tuberculosis)  
milieu  
milk cow

millenary (1,000)  
  millinery (hats)  
millennium  
minable  
missilery  
misspell  
miter  
mnemonic  
moccasin  
modeled, -ing  
modeler  
mold  
mollusk  
molt  
moneys  
monogramed, -ing  
monologue  
mortise  
movable  
mucilage  
mucus (n.)  
  mucous (adj.)  
Muslim  
mustache

**N**

naphtha  
Navajo  
Nazism  
neophyte  
niacin  
nickel  
niter  
nonplused  
northward  
Novocain  
  (trademark)  
novocaine  
  (anesthetic)

**O**

obligato  
obloquy  
ocher

octet  
offal  
offense  
omelet  
ophthalmology  
opossum  
orangutan  
orbited, -ing  
ordinance (law)  
  ordnance  
    (military)  
organdy  
overseas or oversea

**P**

pajamas  
palate (mouth)  
  palette (colors)  
  pallet (bed or  
  freight)  
paleontology  
paneled, -ing  
paraffin  
paralleled, -ing  
parallelepiped  
parceled, -ing  
partisan  
pastime  
patrol, -led, -ling  
peccadillo  
pedant (n.)  
  pedantic (adj.)  
peddler  
penciled, -ing  
pendant (n.)  
  pendent (u.m.)  
percent  
peremptory  
  (decisive)  
  preemptory  
    (preference)  
perennial  
periled, -ing  
permittee

perquisite (privilege)  
  prerequisite  
    (requirement)  
personal (individual)  
  personnel (staff)  
perspective (view)  
  prospective  
    (expected)  
petaled, -ing  
pharaoh  
pharmacopeia  
phoenix  
phlegm  
phony  
phosphorus (n.)  
  phosphorous (adj.)  
photostated  
pickax  
picnicking  
pipet  
plaque  
plastics (n.)  
  plastic (adj.)  
pledger  
  pledgor (law)  
plenitude  
pliers  
plow  
poleax  
pollination  
pommeled, -ing  
pontoon  
porcelaneous  
practice (n., v.)  
precedence  
  (priority)  
  precedents (usage)  
prerogative  
pretense  
preventive  
principal (chief)  
  principle  
    (proposition)  
privilege

proffer	renaissance	sextet	stubbornness
programmatic	reparable	Shakespearean	stultify
programmed, -mer, -ming	repellant (n.)	shellacking	stupefy
prologue	repellent (adj.)	shoveled, -ing	subpoena, -ed
promissory	requester	shriveled, -ing	subtlety
pronunciation	requestor (law)	sideward	succor
propel, -led, -ling	rescission	signaled, -ing	sulfur (also derivatives)
propellant (n.)	responder	siphon	sulfanilamide
propellent (adj.)	(electronics)	site (place)	sulfureted, -ing
prophecy (n.)	responser	cite (quote)	supererogation
prophecy (v.)	(electronics)	sizable	surfeit
ptomaine	reveled, -er, -ing	skeptic	surreptitious
pubic (anatomy)	rhyme, rhythmic	skillful	surveillance
pulmotor	RIFing, RIFed, RIFs	skulduggery	swiveled, -ing
pusillanimous	rivalled, -ing	sleight (deft)	sylvan
	roweled, -ing	slight (meager)	synonymous
	ruble	smolder	syrup
<b>Q</b>	<b>S</b>	sniveled, -ing	<b>T</b>
quarreled, -ing	saccharin (n.)	snorkel	taboo
quartet	saccharine (adj.)	soliloquy	tactician
quaternary	sacrilegious	sometime	tasseled, -ing
questionnaire	salable	(formerly)	tattoo
queue	sanded, -ing	some time (some time ago)	taxied, -ing
<b>R</b>	savable	some times (at times)	technique
raccoon	savanna	southward	teetotaler
racket (all meanings)	savior	spacious (space)	tercentenary
rapprochement	Saviour (Christ)	specious	theater
rarefy	scalloped, -ing	(deceptive)	therefor (for it)
rarity	schizophrenia	specter	therefore (for that reason)
ratable	scion (horticulture)	spirituous (liquor)	thiamine
rational (adj.)	scurrilous	spirochete	thralldom
rationale (n.)	seismology	spoliation	thrash (beat)
rattan	selvage (edging)	stationary (fixed)	thresh (grain)
raveled, -ing	salvage (save)	stationery (paper)	threshold
reconnaissance	sentineled, -ing	statue (sculpture)	tie, tied, tying
reconnoiter	separate (v., adj.)	stature (height)	timber (wood)
recyclable	sepulcher	statute (law)	timbre (tone)
referable	seriatim	staunch	tinseled, -ing
refuse	settler	stenciled, -ing	titer
registrar	settlor (law)	stenciler	tonsillitis
reinforce	sewage (waste)	stifling	tormenter
relater	sewerage (drain system)	stratagem	
relator (law)			
remodeler			

totaled, -ing  
 toward  
 toweled, -ing  
 toxemia  
 trafficking  
 trammeled, -ing  
 tranquilize(r)  
 tranquillity  
 transcendent  
 transferable  
 transferor  
 transferred  
 transonic  
 transponder  
 (electronics)  
 transshipment  
 traveled, -ing  
 traveler  
 travelogue

triptych  
 trolley  
 troop (soldiers)  
 troupe (actors)  
 troweled, -ing  
 tryptophan  
 tularemia  
 tunneled, -ing  
 tunneler  
 turquoise  
 typify  
 tyrannical  
 tyro

**U**  
 unctuous  
 unwieldy  
 upward  
 uremia  
 usable

**V**  
 vacillate  
 valance (drape)  
 valence  
 (chemistry)  
 veld  
 veranda  
 vermilion  
 vicissitude  
 victualed, -ing  
 victualer  
 vilify  
 villain  
 visa, -ed, -ing  
 vitamin  
 vitrify  
 volcanism  
 voluntarism  
 votable

vying

**W**  
 wainscoting  
 warranter  
 warrantor (law)  
 warranty  
 weeviled, -ing  
 welder  
 westward  
 whimsy  
 whiskey, -s  
 willful  
 withe  
 woeful  
 woolen  
 woolly  
 worshiped, -er, -ing

## Anglicized and foreign words

**5.3.** Diacritical marks are not used with anglicized words.

**A**  
 abaca  
 aide memoire  
 a la carte  
 a la king  
 a la mode  
 angstrom  
 aperitif  
 applique  
 apropos  
 auto(s)-da-fe

**B**  
 blase  
 boutonniere  
 brassiere

**C**  
 cabana  
 cafe  
 cafeteria

caique  
 canape  
 cause celebre  
 chateau  
 cliché  
 cloisonne  
 comedienne  
 comme ci  
 comme ca  
 communique  
 confrere  
 consommation  
 cortege  
 coulee  
 coup de grace  
 coup d'état  
 coupe  
 creme  
 crepe  
 crepe de chine

critique  
 critiquing

**D**  
 debacle  
 debris  
 debut  
 debutante  
 decollete  
 dejeuner  
 denouement  
 depot  
 dos-a-dos

**E**  
 eclair  
 eclat  
 ecru  
 elan  
 elite  
 entree

etude

**F**  
 facade  
 faience  
 faux pas  
 fete  
 fiance (masc., fem.)  
 frappe

**G**  
 garcon  
 glace  
 grille  
 gruyere

**H**  
 habitue

**I**  
 ingenue

<b>J</b> jardiniere	<b>N</b> naive naivete nee	pousse cafe premiere protege (masc., fem.) puree	seance senor smorgasbord soiree souffle suede
<b>L</b> laissez faire litterateur	<b>O</b> opera bouffe opera comique	<b>R</b> rale recherche regime risque role rotisserie roue	<b>T</b> table d'hote tete-a-tete tragedienne
<b>M</b> materiel matinee melange melee menage mesalliance metier moire	<b>P</b> papier mache piece de resistance pleiade porte cochere porte lumiere portiere	<b>S</b> saute	<b>V</b> vicuna vis-a-vis

**5.4.** Foreign words carry the diacritical marks as an essential part of their spelling.

à l'américaine	chargé d'affaires	entrepôt	passé (masc., fem.)
attaché	congé	exposé	pâté
béton	crédit foncier	longéron	père
blessé	crédit mobilier	mañana	piña
calèche	curé	maté	précis
cañada	déjà vu	mère	raisonné
cañon	détente	nacré	résumé
chargé	doña	outré	touché

### Plural forms

**5.5.** Nouns ending in *o* immediately preceded by a vowel add *s* to form the plural; nouns ending in *o* preceded by a consonant add *es* to form the plural, except as indicated in the following list.

albinos	falsettos	merinos	sexdecimos
armadillos	gauchos	mestizos	sextos
avocados	ghettos	octavos	siroccos
banjos	halos	octodecimos	solos
cantos	indigos	pianos	tangelos
cascos	infernos	piccolos	tobaccos
centos	juntos	pomelos	twos
didos	kimonos	provisos	tyros
duodecimos	lassos	quartos	virtuosos
dynamos	magnetos	salvos	zeros
escudos	mementos		



- 5.6.** When a noun is hyphenated with an adverb or preposition, the plural is formed on the noun.

comings-in	hangers-on	markers-up
fillers-in	listeners-in	passers-by
goings-on	lookers-on	swearers-in

- 5.7.** When neither word is a noun, the plural is formed on the last word.

also-rans	go-betweens	run-ins
come-ons	higher-ups	tie-ins

- 5.8.** In forming the plurals of compound terms, the significant word takes the plural form.

Significant word first:

adjutants general  
 aides-de-camp  
 ambassadors at large  
 attorneys at law  
 attorneys general  
 billets-doux  
 bills of fare  
 brothers-in-law  
 chargés d'affaires  
 chiefs of staff  
 commanders in chief  
 comptrollers general  
 consuls general  
 courts-martial  
 crepes suzette  
 daughters-in-law  
 governors general  
 grants-in-aid  
 heirs at law  
 inspectors general  
 men-of-war  
 ministers-designate  
 mothers-in-law  
 notaries public  
 pilots-in-command  
 postmasters general  
 presidents-elect  
 prisoners of war  
 reductions in force

rights-of-way

secretaries general  
 sergeants at arms  
 sergeants major  
 solicitors general  
 surgeons general

Significant word in middle:

assistant attorneys general  
 assistant chiefs of staff  
 assistant comptrollers general  
 assistant surgeons general

Significant word last:

assistant attorneys  
 assistant commissioners  
 assistant corporation counsels  
 assistant directors  
 assistant general counsels  
 brigadier generals  
 deputy judges  
 deputy sheriffs  
 general counsels  
 judge advocates  
 judge advocate generals  
 lieutenant colonels  
 major generals  
 provost marshals  
 provost marshal generals  
 quartermaster generals

trade unions	men employees
under secretaries	secretaries-treasurers
vice chairmen	women aviators

Both words equally significant:

Bulletins Nos. 27 and 28 *not*  
 Bulletin Nos. 27 and 28 *but*  
 Bulletin No. 27 or 28  
 coats of arms  
 masters at arms  
 men buyers

No word significant in itself:

forget-me-nots  
 hand-me-downs  
 jack-in-the-pulpits  
 man-of-the-earths  
 pick-me-ups  
 will-o'-the-wisps

- 5.9.** Nouns ending with *ful* form the plural by adding *s* at the end; if it is necessary to express the idea that more than one container was filled, the two elements of the solid compound are printed as separate words and the plural is formed by adding *s* to the noun.

five bucketfuls of the mixture (one bucket filled five times)  
 five buckets full of earth (separate buckets)  
 three cupfuls of flour (one cup filled three times)  
 three cups full of coffee (separate cups)

- 5.10.** The following list comprises other words the plurals of which may cause difficulty.

addendum, addenda	cherub, cherubs
adieu, adieus	cicatrix, cicatrices
agendum, agenda	Co., Cos.
alga, algae	coccus, cocci
alumnus, alumni (masc.); alumna, alumnae (fem.)	consortium, consortia
antenna, antennas (antennae, zoology)	corrigendum, corrigenda
appendix, appendixes	crisis, crises
aquarium, aquariums	criterion, criteria
automaton, automatons	curriculum, curriculums, curricula datum (singular), data (plural, but singular in collective sense)
axis, axes	desideratum, desiderata
bandeau, bandeaux	dilettante, dilettanti
basis, bases	dogma, dogmas
bateau, bateaux	ellipsis, ellipses
beau, beaus	equilibrium, equilibriums (equilibria, scientific)
cactus, cactuses	erratum, errata
calix, calices	executrix, executrices
cargo, cargoes	flambeau, flambeaus
chassis (singular and plural)	

focus, focuses	parenthesis, parentheses
folium, folia	phenomenon, phenomena
formula, formulas	phylum, phyla
forum, forums	plateau, plateaus
fungus, fungi	podium, podiums
genius, geniuses	procès-verbal, procès-verbaux
genus, genera	radius, radii
gladiolus (singular and plural)	radix, radices
helix, helices	referendum, referendums
hypothesis, hypotheses	sanatorium, sanatoriums
index, indexes (indices, scientific)	sanitarium, sanitariums
insigne, insignia	septum, septa
italic (singular and plural)	sequela, sequelae
Kansas Citys	seraph, seraphs
lacuna, lacunae	seta, setae
larva, larvae	ski, skis
larynx, larynxes	stadium, stadiums
lens, lenses	stimulus, stimuli
lira, lire	stratum, strata
locus, loci	stylus, styluses
madam, mesdames	syllabus, syllabuses
Marys	symposium, symposia
matrix, matrices	synopsis, synopses
maximum, maximums, maxima	tableau, tableaux
medium, mediums <i>or</i> media	taxi, taxis
memorandum, memorandums, memoranda	terminus, termini
minimum, minimums, minima	testatrix, testatrices
minutia, minutiae	thesaurus, thesauri
monsieur, messieurs	thesis, theses
nucleus, nuclei	thorax, thoraxes
oasis, oases	vertebra, vertebrae (vertebrae, zoology)
octopus, octopuses	virtuoso, virtuosos
opus, opera	vortex, vortices

## Endings “ible” and “able”

**5.11.** The following words end in *ible*; other words in this class end in *able*.

abhorrible	appetible	coctible	combustible
accendible	apprehensible	coercible	comestible
accessible	audible	cognoscible	commonsensible
addible	avertible	cohesible	compactible
adducible	bipartible	collapsible	compatible
admissible	circumscribable	collectible(s)	competible

compossible	distractable	impersuasible	inexpressible
comprehensible	divertible	implausible	infallible
compressible	divestible	impossible	infeasible
conducibile	divisible	imprescriptible	inflexible
conductive	docible	imputrescible	infractible
confluxible	edible	inaccessible	infrangible
congestible	educible	inadmissible	infusible
contemptible	effectible	inapprehensible	innascible
controvertible	effervescible	inaudible	inscriptible
conversable (oral)	eligible	incircumscribable	insensible
conversible (convertible)	eludible	incoercible	instructible
convertible	erodible	incognoscible	insubmersible
convincible	evasible	incombustible	insuppressible
corrigible	eversible	incommiscible	insusceptible
corrodible	evincible	incompatible	intactible
corrosible	exemptible	incomprehensible	intangible
corruptible	exhaustible	incompressible	intelligible
credible	exigible	inconcussible	interconvertible
crucible	expansible	incontrovertible	interruptible
cullible	explosible	inconvertible	intervisible
decoctible	expressible	inconvincible	inventible
deducible	extensible	incorrigible	invertible
deductible	fallible	incorrodible	invincible
defeasible	feasible	incorruptible	invisible
defectible	fencible	incredible	irascible
defensible	flexible	indefeasible	irreducible
delible	fluxible	indefectible	irrefrangible
deprehensible	forcible	indefensible	irremissible
depressible	frangible	indelible	irreprehensible
descendible	fungible	indeprehensible	irrepressible
destructible	fusible	indestructible	irresistible
diffrangible	gullible	indigestible	irresponsible
diffusible	horrible	indiscernible	irreversible
digestible	ignitable	indivertible	legible
dimensibile	illegible	indivisible	mandible
discernible	immersible	indocible	marcescible
discerpible	immiscible	inducible	miscible
discerptible	impartible	ineffervescible	negligible
discussible	impatible	ineligible	nexible
dispersible	impedible	ineludible	omissible
dissectible	imperceptible	inevasible	ostensible
distensible	impermisible	inexhaustible	partible
	imprescriptible	inexpansible	passable (open)

passible (feeling)	reflectible	sensible	transmissible
perceptible	reflexible	sponsible	transvertible
perfectible	refrangible	suasible	tripartible
permissible	remissible	subdivisible	unadmissible
persuasible	renascible	submergible	uncorruptible
pervertible	rendible	submersible	unexhaustible
plausible	reprehensible	subvertible	unexpressible
possible	repressible	suggestible	unintelligible
prehensible	reproducible	supersensible	unresponsible
prescriptible	resistible	suppressible	unsusceptible
producible	responsible	susceptible	vendible
productible	reversible	suspensible	vincible
protrusible	revertible	tangible	visible
putrescible	risible	tensible	vitrescible
receptible	runcible	terrible	
redemptible	sconcible	thurible	
reducible	seducible	traducible	

### Endings “ise,” “ize,” and “yze”

**5.12.** A large number of words have the termination *ise*, *ize*, or *yz*e. The letter *l* is followed by *yz*e if the word expresses an idea of loosening or separating, as *analyze*; all other words of this class, except those ending with the suffix *wise* and those in the following list, end in *ize*.

advertise	compromise	excise	prise (to force)
advise	demise	exercise	prize (to value)
affranchise	despise	exorcise	reprise
apprise (to inform)	devise	franchise	revise
apprize (to appraise)	disenfranchise	improvise	rise
arise	disfranchise	incise	supervise
chastise	disguise	merchandise	surmise
circumcise	emprise	misadvise	surprise
comprise	enfranchise	mortise	televise
	enterprise	premise	

### Endings “cede,” “ceed,” and “sede”

**5.13.** Only one word ends in *sede* (supersede); only three end in *ceed* (exceed, proceed, succeed); all other words of this class end in *cede* (precede, secede, etc.).

## Doubled consonants

- 5.14.** A single consonant following a single vowel and ending in a monosyllable or a final accented syllable is doubled before a suffix beginning with a vowel.

bag, bagging	red, reddish	<i>but</i>
format, formatting	rob, robbing	total, totaled, totaling
input, inputting	transfer, transferred	travel, traveled, traveling

- 5.15.** If the accent in a derivative falls upon an earlier syllable than it does in the root word, the consonant is not doubled.

refer, reference	prefer, preference	infer, inference
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## Indefinite articles

- 5.16.** The indefinite article *a* is used before a consonant and an aspirated *h*; *an* is used before a silent *h* and all vowels except *u* pronounced as in *visual* and *o* pronounced as in *one*.

a historic occasion	an herbseller	<i>but</i>
a hotel	an hour	an H-U-D directive
a human being	an honor	a HUD directive
a humble man	an onion	
a union	an oyster	

- 5.17.** When a group of initials begins with *b, c, d, g, j, k, p, q, t, u, v, w, y,* or *z*, each having a consonant sound, the indefinite article *a* is used.

a BLS compilation	a GAO limitation	a WWW search
a CIO finding	a UFO sighting	

- 5.18.** When a group of initials begins with *a, e, f, h, i, l, m, n, o, r, s,* or *x*, each having a vowel sound, the indefinite article *an* is used.

an AEC report	an NSC (en) proclamation
an FCC (ef) ruling	an RFC (ahr) loan

- 5.19.** Use of the indefinite article *a* or *an* before a numerical expression is determined by the consonant or vowel sound of the beginning syllable.

an 11-year-old	an VIII (eight) classification
a onetime winner	a IV-F (four ef) category (military draft)
a III (three) group	a 4-H Club

## Geographic names

- 5.20.** The spelling of geographic names must conform to the decisions of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) (<http://geonames.usgs.gov>). In the absence of such a decision, the U.S. Directory of Post Offices is to be used.
- 5.21.** If the decisions or the rules of the BGN permit the use of either the local official form or the conventional English form, it is the prerogative of the originating office to select the form that is most suitable for the matter in hand; therefore, in marking copy or reading proof, it is required only to verify the spelling of the particular form used. GPO's preference is for the conventional English form. Copy will be followed as to accents, but these should be consistent throughout the entire job.

## Nationalities, etc.

- 5.22.** The table on Demonyms in Chapter 17 "Useful Tables" shows forms to be used for nouns and adjectives denoting nationality.
- 5.23.** In designating the natives of the States, the following forms will be used.

Alabamian	Kentuckian	North Dakotan
Alaskan	Louisianian	Ohioan
Arizonan	Mainer	Oklahoman
Arkansan	Marylander	Oregonian
Californian	Massachusettsan	Pennsylvanian
Coloradan	Michigianian	Rhode Islander
Connecticuter	Minnesotan	South Carolinian
Delawarean	Mississippian	South Dakotan
Floridian	Missourian	Tennessean
Georgian	Montanan	Texan
Hawaii resident	Nebraskan	Utahn
Hoosier	Nevadan	Vermonteer
(Indiana)	New Hampshireite	Virginian
Idahoan	New Jerseyan	Washingtonian
Illinoisan	New Mexican	West Virginian
Iowan	New Yorker	Wisconsinite
Kansan	North Carolinian	Wyomingite

**5.24.** Observe the following forms:

Alaska Native  
Asian American  
Black or African American  
Hispanic or Latino  
Native American or American Indian  
Native Hawaiian  
Pacific Islander  
Puerto Rican  
White

**Native American words**

**5.25.** Words, including Tribal and other proper names of Indian, Alaska Native, Hawaiian, and other groups, are to be followed literally as to spelling and the use of spaces, diacriticals, hyphens, etc.

**Transliteration**

**5.26.** In the spelling of nongeographic words transliterated from Chinese, Japanese, or any other language that does not have a Latin alphabet, copy is to be followed literally.