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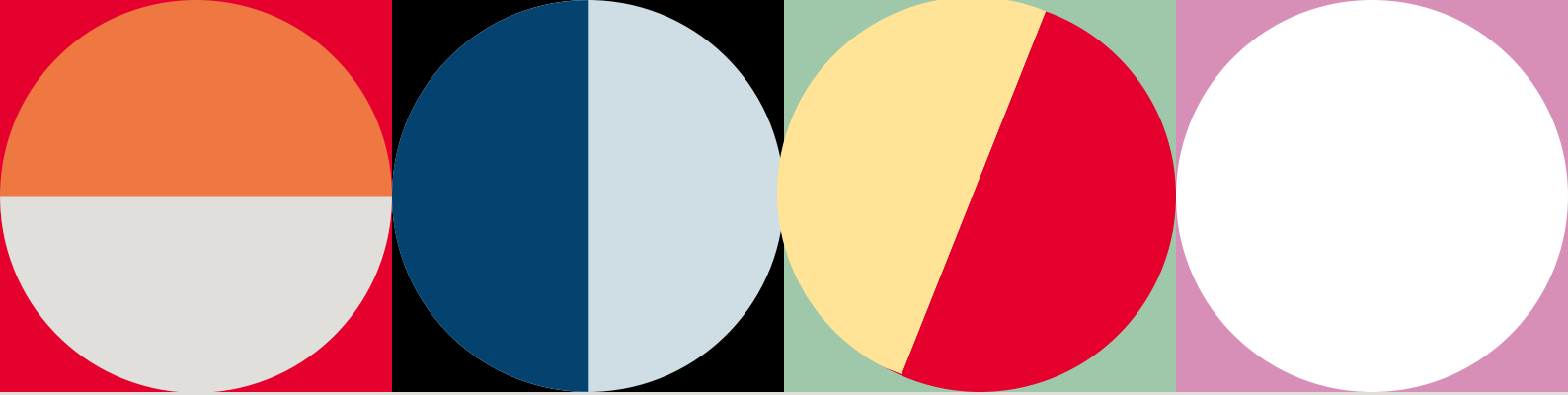
**Starter Kit**



**Autumn 2025  
Update**



**+ 5 bonus  
pages**



**Welcome  
(back) to**

**scrib.**<sup>®</sup>

### **About Scrib.**

Scrib. was created by Anna Yeadell, a professional academic editor and lecturer with over 20 years' experience helping international students and researchers write clearly and achieve better results.

The **Scrib.method** brings together everything she's learned from editing thousands of books, theses, essays, and journal articles – distilled into a practical system that builds confidence and saves time.

We kicked off our launch with a free **Starter Kit** to give you a taste of our content and clear, practical guidance for writing accurate academic English. Since then, the Scrib. Starter Kit has been **downloaded by over 100 students and writers**. Now it's back – refreshed for Autumn 2025 – right on time for the start of term and the assignments you have ahead.

### **What's new this autumn?**

This Autumn 2025 update of the Scrib. Starter Kit includes a summary of two of our most popular **Scrib.bits: Which vs. That** and **UK vs. US English** – to help you polish your writing as the new academic year begins.

We've also added **a bonus companion to the Self-Editing Checklist**: a clear, practical run-through of everything to check before you hit “submit” on your next piece.

*Happy writing!*

# Academic Writing Cheat Sheet

## Clarity. Precision. Impact.

Created by a professional academic editor to help you sound more confident, credible, and academic.

## Upgrade informal language

Choose words that reflect academic tone and register:

Instead of...	Use...	Why?
a lot / lots of	<i>many / much / numerous / a large number (amount) of</i>	More precise + formal
big / huge	<i>large / substantial / significant / extensive</i>	Match: size/degree/importance/scope
think / believe*	<i>suggest / argue / contend / maintain</i>	Verbs match the context
get / got	<i>obtain / receive / gain / achieve</i>	Verbs match the context
things / stuff**	<i>elements / components / aspects / features</i>	Avoids vagueness; choose a specific term

\*If you're dealing with a change in state → *become / improve / deteriorate*.

\*\*If you can be specific, do it (e.g., *methods, data, materials, variables*). Specific beats generic every time.

# Academic Writing

## Cheat Sheet

### Structure every paragraph like this

A well-structured paragraph should:

- 1 Start strong** – with a clear topic sentence
- 2 Support** – add evidence, data, or references
- 3 Explain** – analyse what the evidence shows
- 4 Conclude or connect** – link to the next idea

**Ask yourself:** Does your paragraph focus on one main idea? Does it develop that idea clearly?

### Transition phrases that work

Function	Examples
Adding ideas	<i>Moreover, In addition, Furthermore, Additionally</i>
Contrast	<i>However, Although, In contrast, Nevertheless, Nonetheless</i>
Cause (reason)	<i>Because, Since</i>
Examples	<i>For example, For instance, such as*</i>
Conclusion	<i>In conclusion, Overall, To summarize, In sum</i>
Effect (result)	<i>Therefore, Thus, As a result, Consequently</i>

\*use *such as* within a sentence; don't start a new sentence with it.

# Academic Writing Cheat Sheet

## Avoid these in academic writing

Don't use...	Try instead...
I think / I believe	<i>This paper argues that... / The evidence suggests that...</i>
You can see that...	<i>This indicates/demonstrates that...</i>
A lot of people say	<i>Scholars have argued that.../Research shows that...(cite)</i>
Really / very	Delete the intensifier or choose a precise word (e.g., <i>crucial, substantial, marked</i> ).
Contractions ( <i>don't, can't</i> )	Use full forms ( <i>do not, cannot, is not</i> )

## Quick fixes to improve any text

- **Cut filler:** Avoid repeating the same point
- Check **subject-verb agreement**
- Use **academic present tense:** *The author argues...*
- Be **precise:** Replace vague words (*things, nice*)
- Check **formatting:** Titles, citations, headings
- **Prefer active verbs** over heavy nominalizations where possible.

## Want more?

This cheat sheet is just a start. COMING SOON: **Scrib.sheets** for deeper dives into referencing, paragraph structure, editing, what exactly nominalization is, and more. Sign up for the **Scrib. Newsletter** to be the first to know.

# 5

# Most Common Grammar Mistakes

## Most common grammar mistakes – and how to fix them:

Designed for international students (useful for everyone!)

These are the issues that cause the most trouble in academic writing.

They're easy to fix once you know the signs.

### Article use (*a, an, the*)

1

Incorrect: *He wrote an thesis on climate change.*

*Thesis* starts with a consonant sound, so use *a* not *an*.

Correct: *He wrote a thesis on climate change.*

Incorrect: *The students need the feedbacks.*

*Feedback* is uncountable in English, don't add *-s*.

Correct: *The students need feedback.*

#### Tips:

- Use *a/an* for general or first mentions: *a paper, an idea*.
- Use *the* for something specific or previously mentioned: *the argument*.
- No article with uncountable or plural nouns when general: *Students need structure*.
- Follow the sound rule: *an MBA, a university*.
- Common uncountables: *feedback, research, evidence, information, advice*.

### Subject-verb agreement

2

Incorrect: *This research give strong results.*

- *Research* is uncountable = singular → needs *gives*, not *give*

Correct: *This research gives strong results.*

Incorrect: *Each of the students were assigned a topic.*

- *Each* is singular, even though *students* is plural.

Correct: *Each of the students was assigned a topic.*

#### Tips:

- Singular subject → singular verb; plural subject → plural verb.
- *Each / Every / Everyone* are singular.
- To avoid *none* confusion, rewrite: *No students were...*

# 5

## Most Common Grammar Mistakes

### Tense consistency

Incorrect: *The study examines these theories and found significant links.*

- Mixing present (examines) and past (found) without a reason.

Correct: *The study examines these theories and finds significant links.*

3

Incorrect: *The author suggested that conflict still exists today.*

- Past tense for the author, present tense for an ongoing reality.

Correct: *The author suggests that conflict still exists today.*

### Tips:

- Use present tense for what authors/theories say.
- Use present perfect for general findings, e.g., *Studies have shown...*
- Use past tense to report your methods and results.
- Be consistent within a sentence or paragraph.

### Word order in academic English

Incorrect: *Also the paper shows clearly that this is important.*

Correct: *The paper also clearly shows that this is important.*

4

Incorrect: *It the author argues important is also.*

Correct: *The author also argues that this is important.*

### Tips:

- Typical order: Subject → Verb → Object.
- Place mid-position adverbs (*also, often, clearly, usually*) after first auxiliary/BE\* and before the main verb: *is often, has also been, can clearly show.*
- Keep modifiers close to the word they modify.
- Read aloud to catch awkward placement.

### \*Quick mid-position adverb rule:

With **BE** as the main verb → adverb after BE:

- *She is often late. / The results were clearly flawed.*

With **auxiliaries** → adverb after the first auxiliary:

- *They have already finished. / The paper was quickly approved.*

With a **normal (lexical) verb** → adverb before the main verb:

- *He often reads in the evening. / We clearly show the trend.*

# 5

## Most Common Grammar Mistakes

### Prepositions in formal phrases

Incorrect: *They discussed about the results in the meeting.*

Correct: *They discussed the results at the meeting.* (Use *discuss* + object.)

Don't add *about*.)

5

Incorrect: *She is responsible of data analysis.*

Correct: *She is responsible for data analysis.*

### Tips:

- Learn common verb–preposition collocations: \*\* depend on, focus on, result in/from, consist of, based on, associated with, contribute to, responsible for.
- Use a collocations dictionary or check examples in academic sources.

\*\*A collocation is a natural word partnership: terms that commonly occur together and sound “right,” e.g., *conduct research, significant effect, responsible for*.

### Self-Test: Can you spot the mistake?

1. Each of the results show strong correlation.
2. She gave me an useful summary of the article.
3. The researchers discusses the implications in detail.

**Check your answers on the next page!**

# Self-Test:

# Answers

## Answers

1. Each of the results shows a strong correlation.

*Each* is singular → shows; add *a* before a countable singular noun.

2. She gave me a useful summary of the article.

*Useful* starts with a consonant sound → *a*, not *an*.

3. The researchers discuss the implications in detail.

Plural subject → plural verb.

# 20

# Academic Phrases

## Top 20 academic phrases (with examples)

Use these to elevate your writing and guide your reader clearly through your argument.

### Introducing ideas

It is well established that...

- *It is well established that climate change poses a significant threat to global health.* (Social sciences / Environmental studies)

This paper examines...

- *This paper examines the relationship between bilingualism and cognitive flexibility.* (Linguistics / Psychology)

A key argument is that...

- *A key argument is that urban planning must incorporate sustainability principles.* (Geography / Urban Studies)

The purpose of this study is to investigate...

- *The purpose of this study is to investigate the long-term effects of early childhood education.* (Education / Developmental Studies)

Growing evidence suggests that...

- *Growing evidence suggests that microaggressions can significantly impact workplace well-being.* (Sociology / Business)

### Comparing and contrasting

In contrast to previous research, this study...

- *In contrast to previous research, this study focuses on under-represented rural populations.* (Public Health / Sociology)

Whereas X argues..., Y suggests that...

- *Whereas Marx argues that class is central to historical change, Weber suggests that culture plays an equally important role.* (History / Political Theory)

Although some scholars maintain that..., others propose...

- *Although some scholars maintain that language is innate, others propose that it is acquired through interaction.* (Linguistics / Cognitive Science)

This differs significantly from earlier findings that...

- *This differs significantly from earlier findings that suggested a linear relationship.* (Science / Economics)

Similar patterns can be observed in...

- *Similar patterns can be observed in case studies from South America and Southeast Asia.* (Anthropology / Political Economy)

# 20

## Academic Phrases

### Discussing evidence

The data reveal that...

- *The data reveal that students who receive timely feedback perform better academically.* (Education / Psychology)

This finding supports the view that...

- *This finding supports the view that environmental regulation can drive innovation.* (Law / Environmental Policy)

As shown in Table 2...

- *As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents reported increased motivation.* (All disciplines – especially sciences and social sciences)

The results demonstrate a clear relationship between...

- *The results demonstrate a clear relationship between screen time and sleep quality.* (Health Sciences / Psychology)

This correlation may be explained by...

- *This correlation may be explained by differences in socioeconomic status.* (Sociology / Public Policy)

### Analysing or discussing implications

This suggests that...

- *This suggests that early intervention is critical for language development.* (Linguistics / Child Development)

An important implication is that...

- *An important implication is that policymakers should invest more in preventive healthcare.* (Policy / Public Health)

Although some scholars maintain that..., others propose...

- *Although some scholars maintain that language is innate, others propose that it is acquired through interaction.* (Linguistics / Cognitive Science)

This differs significantly from earlier findings that...

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Similar patterns can be observed in...

- *Similar patterns can be observed in case studies from South America and Southeast Asia.* (Anthropology / Political Economy)

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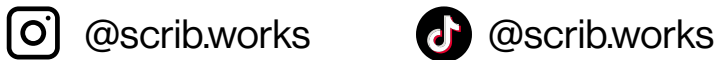
## Academic Phrases

### Scrib. tip

- Use one template per sentence.
- Avoid stacking phrases (e.g., don't write *In contrast...*, *the results demonstrate...* in the same sentence).
- If you need both ideas, split into two sentences.
- Cite claims. When you write *research shows* or *scholars argue*, add an in-text citation to the source.

### Want more?

If you opted in for updates, we'll email you when each new product drops. Otherwise, follow our socials for release dates.



### COMING SOON: Scrib.how series

The **Scrib.how series** is a four-part Scrib.sheet series that systematically examines every stage of an academic essay: introduction, thesis statement, body paragraph, and conclusion.

The series breaks down how to maximize the function of each section of the essay, with easy-to-remember guides and examples.

- Scrib.how: **Thesis Statements**
- Scrib.how: **Introductions**
- Scrib.how: **Body Paragraphs**
- Scrib.how: **Conclusions**



# Self-Editing Checklist:

## Content & Clarity

### Polish your writing before you hit “submit.”

Use this four-step checklist to improve clarity, flow, and academic tone, without needing a second pair of eyes.

#### 1 Check structure and logic

Make sure your writing flows from idea to idea.

- Does your introduction clearly state the focus or argument?
- Does each paragraph focus on one main idea?
- Are your paragraphs well structured?

**Topic sentence → evidence → analysis → link/transition**

- Have you used headings where appropriate to guide the reader?
- Is there a logical order to your points (chronological, thematic, comparative, etc.)

#### 2 Check clarity and style

Ensure your writing is precise, academic, and easy to follow.

- Have you avoided vague terms like *things*, *stuff*, *a lot*?
- Have you replaced informal verbs with academic alternatives (e.g., *get* → *obtain*, *look at* → *examine*)?
- Are your sentences varied in length and structure – but not rambling?
- Have you used transition words to link ideas smoothly?
- Did you eliminate contractions (e.g. *don't* → *do not*)?

#### 3 Check grammar and word use

Tidy up sentence-level errors and improve accuracy.

- Do subjects and verbs agree in number (e.g., *the results show, the data reveal*)?
- Are tenses consistent (past for your methods/results; present for what sources say)?
- Have you checked article use (*a, an, the*)?
- Have you double-checked prepositions (e.g., *responsible for*, not *responsible of*; *result in/from*, *depend on*)?
- Are word forms and plurals correct (e.g., *analysis/analyses*, *criterion/criteria*)?

# Content & Clarity



## Final step: Read it aloud

This simple trick catches awkward phrasing, missing words, and run-on sentences better than any app. (Text-to-speech works too.) The more you practise self-editing, the stronger your first drafts will become.

### Bonus! See inside a Scrib.sheet

**A real page from Scrib.sheet: Academic Phrases – Discussing implications and Citing & comparing literature sections.**

#### What are Scrib.sheets?

Scrib.sheets are practical guides tackling the trickiest aspects of academic writing – from crafting sharp thesis statements and ensuring cohesion to correct use of capitalization and articles. Each sheet includes clear explanations, worked examples, and short exercises you can apply straight away.

#### How to use this page

- Borrow phrases by function to frame your point clearly (e.g., *These results indicate... / Similar findings were reported by...*).
- Model your sentences on the examples and adapt the bracketed parts to your topic.
- When you write *research shows / scholars argue*, add a citation.
- **Coming soon:** Full Scrib.sheets launch. If you opted in, we'll email you at launch; otherwise follow @scrib.works for updates.

Turn the page for a free preview of **Scrib.sheet: 100+ Academic Phrases!**

## 9. Acknowledging limitations

No study is perfect and acknowledging your limitations shows academic maturity. Being transparent about the boundaries of your research does not weaken your work; it strengthens your credibility. Use the following phrases to express limitations clearly and professionally, while maintaining confidence in the value of your findings.

- This study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged.
- This study is subject to several limitations, including the small sample size and restricted scope.
- Results should be interpreted with caution due to [identified limitation].
- The main limitation of this research is...
- Results should be interpreted with caution due to...
- A potential weakness of this study is...
- Future research should address...
- One limitation is the small sample size, which...
- Another potential limitation is...
- This research does not account for...
- Limitations of this study include...
- The scope of this study was restricted by...
- Future research should address...

### In practice

**STEM:** *The sample size was limited to 48 patients, reducing statistical power.*

**Humanities:** *Archival gaps in parish records restrict conclusions about rural migration patterns.*

# Bonus Page

## Self-Editing Checklist: Formatting & Presentation

### Make sure your assignment looks polished and professional

Even excellent research can lose marks if it doesn't meet your university's formatting requirements. Taking a few minutes to polish the formal presentation – layout, headings, spacing, references – will make a stronger impression and help you secure marks you might otherwise miss.

**Note:** Always check the specific style guide or university formatting rules. The points below reflect widely accepted academic conventions, but your institution may have its own requirements for font, spacing, headings, and layout.

### Self-Editing Checklist: Formatting & Presentation

#### Document layout

- Is your font clear and readable (e.g. Times New Roman or Arial, size 11–12)?
- Is the text left-aligned, not justified (unless required)?
- Is line spacing set to 1.5 or double, with clear paragraph breaks?
- Are margins consistent (usually 2.5 cm / 1 inch)?
- Does your title stand out (larger font or bold, but still professional)?

#### Page elements

- Are page numbers included and positioned consistently?
- Does your table of contents match the actual page numbers?
- Are all headings and subheadings formatted consistently?
- Have you added a header or footer if required by your institution?

#### Referencing & citations

- Is your reference list complete and consistent with your chosen style (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.)?
- Are in-text citations correctly formatted?
- Have you italicized book titles and used quotation marks for articles where needed?
- Is your spelling style consistent (UK vs. US English)?
- Are figure/table numbers and in-text cross-references correct?

# Self-Editing Checklist: Formatting & Presentation

## File details

- Have you checked for plagiarism using your university's tool or trusted software, and reviewed any flagged areas?
- Have you respected the word count (within  $\pm 10\%$  unless otherwise stated)?
- Is your file name clear and professional (e.g. Final\_Essay\_[First name]\_[Surname].pdf)?
- Have you exported the correct file type (PDF or Word, as required)?
- Did you check that all pages and visuals (tables, figures) display correctly?


## Coming soon: Scrib. MasterSheets

For teachers, academic writing tutors, and supervisors Scrib. MasterSheets are complete, ready-to-teach classroom lessons covering the full academic writing curriculum — from argument structure and thesis statements to source integration and academic integrity. Minimal preparation required.

Available as part of Scrib.'s institutional licences for IB, Sixth Form, and Higher Education.

- **The Six Cs of Good Writing**
- **Nominalization**
- **Argument vs Description**
- **AI & Academic Integrity**

scrib.<sup>®</sup> for supervisors



**Scrib.MasterSheet**

### The Six Cs of Good Writing

A plug-and-play workshop for clarity, concision, and compelling argument.

# Scrib.bits Round-up

## What are Scrib.bits?

Scrib.bits are free, bite-sized lessons from Scrib. Each one tackles a common grammar or spelling issue that often trips people up in written English.

Sign up to the Scrib.bits Library at [www.scrib.works/scrib-bits](http://www.scrib.works/scrib-bits).

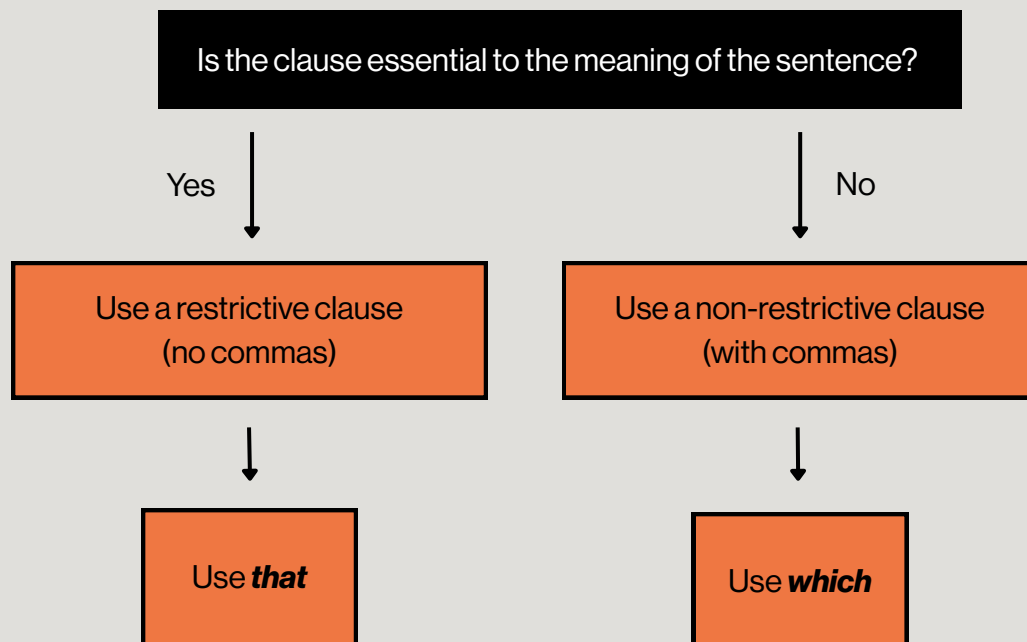
In this updated Starter Kit, we've included condensed versions of our two most popular Scrib.bits: **Which vs. That** and **UK vs. US English**.

## Which vs. That

These two small words cause big confusion – especially when it comes to commas and deciding whether information is essential or just extra detail. Get it wrong, and your sentences can look clumsy or even change meaning.

Our full Scrib.bit explains the difference between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses, and how they relate to *which* and *that*. This quick guide sums up a simple trick to help you choose the right word every time.

### Quick decision guide



# Scrib.bits

## Round-up

### The “Which vs. That” Guide in practice

Restrictive clause → essential information → no commas → use: that

- *The book that you gave me was very informative.*
- *The scarf he lent me was not warm enough.*

The clause identifies which item, so no comma = use that.

Non-restrictive clause → extra information → commas → use: which

- *The community guidelines, which are listed online, have all the policies.*
- *The museum, which opens at 10 a.m., offers free guided tours every weekend.*

The clause adds detail, but the sentence would still make sense without it.

### UK vs. US English

If English isn't your first language and you're studying at an English-speaking university, you'll need to decide whether to write in British or American English. (Your institution may have a preference.)

The key rule? **Stay consistent.**

While neither version is better, there are several differences in spelling and vocabulary. This summary highlights the most common and recognizable differences between the two variations of written English. Although these tips shouldn't be treated as strict rules, you'll notice some common patterns:

#### **-our vs. -or**

In UK English, many words end in -our; in US English, the same words usually drop the u and end in -or.  
Example: *flavour* (UK) – *flavor* (US)

#### **-ence vs. -ense**

Words ending in -ence in UK English often take -ense in US English.  
Example: *pretence* (UK) – *pretense* (US)

#### **Oxford style (Oxford spelling): Use -ize, not -ise**

A much misunderstood aspect of British spelling is the -ize vs. -ise ending.

The Oxford University Press (and many academic publishers) recommend -ize for certain verbs, even in British English.

Examples: *organize*, *realize*, *prioritize*

# Scrib.bits

## Round-up

### Why -ize? The Greek Connection

The -ize ending comes from the Greek suffix  $\text{-ίζειν}$  (-izein), which passed into Latin (-izare) before entering English via French or Latin.

Example: organize ← Latin *organizare* ← Greek *organon* + -izein

Oxford style prefers -ize because it reflects this historical and linguistic origin. It is not an Americanism.

### Sample of commonly confused UK vs. US spelling:

British English	American English
Colour	Color
Favourite	Favorite
Behaviour	Behavior
Centre	Center
Theatre	Theater
Catalogue	Catalog
Programme	Program
Traveller	Traveler
Defence	Defense
Cheque (noun)	Check (noun)
Plough	Plow

# You're all set!

We hope this Starter Kit becomes a permanent fixture alongside your drafts — something you reach for every time you sit down to write.

## Want more?

**COMING SOON: Academic Writing Excellence**, our self-paced, video-supported course.

Check [www.scrib.works/courses](http://www.scrib.works/courses) for details.

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