

British English (BrE) is the form of English used in the United Kingdom. For the most part, Canadian English, while featuring numerous British forms alongside indigenous Canadianisms, shares vocabulary, phonology and syntax with American English, leading many to recognize North American English as an organic grouping of dialects. This kind of formal English, particularly written English, is often called "standard English." The spoken forms of British English vary considerably, reflecting a long history of dialect development amid isolated populations. In the United Kingdom, dialects, word use and accents vary not only between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, but also within them. Received Pronunciation (RP) refers to a way of pronouncing standard English that is actually used by about two percent of the UK population. It remains the accent upon which dictionary pronunciation guides are based, and for teaching English as a foreign language. It is referred to colloquially as "the Queen's English," "Oxford English" and "BBC English," although by no means do all graduates of the university speak with such an accent and the BBC no longer requires it or uses it exclusively. Australian English likewise shares many American and British English usages alongside plentiful features unique to Australia, and retains a significantly higher degree of distinctiveness from both the larger varieties than does Canadian English. An unofficial standard for spoken American English has also developed, as a result of mass media and geographic and social mobility, and broadly describes the English typically heard from network newscasters, commonly referred to as non-regional diction, although local newscasters tend toward more parochial forms of speech. Regional dialects in the United States typically reflect some elements of the language of the main immigrant groups in any particular region of the country, especially in terms of pronunciation and vernacular vocabulary. After the American Civil War, the settlement of the western territories by migrants from the east led to dialect mixing and levelling, so that regional dialects are most strongly differentiated in the eastern parts of the country that were settled earlier. English has 44 sounds: 24 consonants and 20 vowels.