

Words ending in -ise and -ize

Many English words can be spelt with either -ise and -ize. In American English, the spelling with -ize is preferred. In British English, both forms are usually possible.

Examples are:

British English	American English
Realize / realise	Realize
Mechanize / mechanise	Mechanize
Computerize / computerise	Computerize
Baptize / baptise	Baptize

Some words have -ise in both British and American English. Examples are:

Surprise; revise; advise; comprise; despise; compromise; exercise; supervise; televise; advertise

In American English *advertize* is also sometimes possible.

Exception

Capsize has -ize in both British and American English.

If you are in doubt, remember that in British English the forms with -ise are almost always possible.

Adverb formation

We normally change an adjective into an adverb by adding -ly.

Real – really

Definite – definitely

Pale – palely

Complete – completely

Words ending in -ise and -ize

Right – rightly

There are some exceptions to this rule.

True – truly (NOT Truely)

Due – duly

Whole – wholly

Full – fully

Y and i

-y usually changes to -i

Happy – happily

Easy – easily

Dry – drily or dryly

Gay – gaily

Exceptions are:

Shy – shyly

Sly – slyly

Coy – coyly

Adjectives ending in consonant + le

-le changes to -ly after a consonant.

Idle – idly

Noble – nobly

Able – ably

Adjectives ending in ic

If an adjective ends in -ic, the adverb ends in -ically.

Words ending in -ise and -ize

Tragic – tragically

Phonetic – phonetically

Note that public is an exception to this rule.

Public – publicly