

International Spellcheck: story vs. storey

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<http://greatstorybook.com/international-spellcheck-story-vs-storey/>

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I recently submitted my work to a publisher in London ([Pushkin Press](#) - you can read about the [Open Call for Submissions](#) here). After hitting send and feeling really good about myself, I went to bed. The next morning, I woke up with a start and rushed to my computer.

I had to quickly double-check if I had used the right spelling for story - or storey. I'm in need of an international spellcheck! I thought you might too, so here's the first bit of word clarification.

Why need an International Spellcheck? As a writer, it's important to be aware of the different *spellings* and *meanings* of common English words around the world.

King's English and American Standard are not the same.

If you want to have your writing considered by an English-language publishing house that is outside your native country, you need to know about certain linguistic and cultural differences.

Cultural Differences – from a single word?

You bet.

Take the **Fanny Pack**, an American purse (an 80's variation of the buffalo pouch) that has spread worldwide. You wear it around the waist like a belt. Originally, the fanny pack was meant to be worn with the pouch facing backward, but most people who use a fanny pack wear them towards the front.

In America, a *fanny* is a sort of cute word for bottom. Not in the U.K. An Englishman would never utter such a word in polite conversation. It's very rude slang for vagina. So it shouldn't be too much a surprise that most English people do not use the term Fanny Pack because it's insanely rude.

While you might not personally wear one of these pouches, you might write a character who does.

It's important to know, for contextual purposes, where that character is from and where they are wearing this thing. Here are some international variations for naming a fanny pack (in alphabetical order):

- Belly Bag
- Belt Bag (Philippines)
- Buffalo Bag
- Bum Bag (South America, New Zealand)
- Gee Bag (Ireland)
- Hip Pack (U.K.)
- Hip Sack
- Waist Bag or Waist Pack
- Waist Wallet (Canada)

Story

A story is what we write and read or orally tell. A story can be fictional or a true account. If I write many *stories*, that is the only spelling we would use - across the world.

But what if I'm talking about the floor of a building? That's where things get a little tricky.

Story or Storey

Is *storey* a word? You bet it is. Any British colony uses this spelling for the floor of a building.

In the United States, *storey* is a misspelling. Story is the only spelling used (in America) whether it's an architect's term or a writer's term.

Storeyed

Storeyed looks to the American eye like a nightmare. As an American, my brain automatically divides the word this way:

stor eyed

Storeyed is used to describe a 3-storeyed (for me, a 3-storied) building, not a stor-eyed thing, whatever a *stor* might be. This could be eye storage, or perhaps “stor” is a definer for some kind of eye condition. She isn’t walleyed; she’s storeyed. Oh no!

Storeys vs. Stories

A U.K. floor of a building is a storey. More than one storey would be stories or storeys – either way is accepted, even on the island.

In the U.S., we only have stories.

Favorite Wordage

Do you have a favorite – or favourite – spelling/definition point of confusion? Write below, let me know – or, as ever, just send me an email.

Keep creating, no matter what.

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