

ENGLISH
BUSINESS
DICTIONARY

P. H. Collin



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PREFACE

This dictionary gives the user the basic business vocabulary used in both British and American English. The dictionary contains 4,500 words and phrases which cover all aspects of business life from the office to the Stock Exchange and the international trade fair. Each word is clearly defined in very simple English (only 470 words are used in the definitions which do not appear in the dictionary as main words); many examples are given to show how the words are used in normal contexts, and the examples themselves are "translated" into simple English. Some entries have simple grammar notes to remind the user of irregular word forms, constructions used with particular words, differences between American and British usage and other useful points. Because English is a world language of business, we have included short quotations to show how it is used in various countries round the world. These quotations are from newspapers and magazines published in England, the United States, Canada, Australia, Hong Kong and Nigeria.

At the back of the book, the user will find a supplement giving useful information about numbers (how to write and speak them), telephoning, writing business letters, understanding financial documents, together with a list of important world currencies.

I would like to thank the many people who have helped in the editing of this dictionary, in particular Derek Beattie and Françoise Collin, who read the early drafts and made a great many helpful suggestions; Lucy McCullagh who read the final version and added the grammatical notes; Tony Thorne, who wrote the supplement; and Peter Cartwright who was responsible for the design.

Numbers

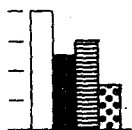
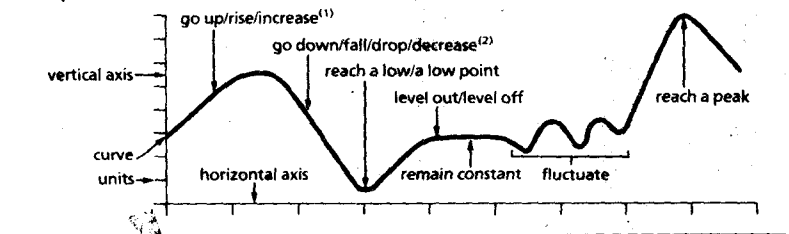
| <i>you write</i> | <i>you say</i> |
|----------------------------|--|
| 0 | zero or nought or oh |
| 0.4 ⁽¹⁾ | point four or nought point four |
| 0.5126 ⁽²⁾ | nought point five one two six |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ | one quarter or (informal) a quarter |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ | one half or (informal) a half |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ | three quarters |
| 5/16 | five sixteenths |
| 1 | one |
| 2 | two |
| 3 | three |
| 4 | four |
| 5 | five |
| 6 | six |
| 7 | seven |
| 8 | eight |
| 9 | nine |
| 10 | ten |
| 12 | twelve or (informal) one dozen ⁽³⁾ or a dozen |
| 15 | fifteen or one-five ⁽⁴⁾ |
| 50 | fifty or five-oh |
| 67 | sixty-seven |
| 100 | one hundred or (informal) a hundred |
| 106 | one hundred and six ⁽⁵⁾ or (US) one hundred six |
| 556 | five hundred and fifty-six |
| 1000 | one thousand or (informal) a thousand or one K |
| 5001 | five thousand and one ⁽⁶⁾ |
| 10,000 | ten thousand |
| 1,000,000 or 1m | one million or (informal) a million |
| 1000,000,000 or 1bn | one billion or (informal) a billion |
| | Telephone |
| 01-608-9940 ⁽⁷⁾ | oh one, six oh eight, double nine four oh |
| | Year |
| 1987 | nineteen eighty-seven |
| 1621 | sixteen twenty-one |
| 2000 | the year two thousand |
| 1905 | nineteen five or nineteen hundred and five or nineteen oh five |
| | Date |
| 2.1.70 ⁽⁸⁾ | the second of January nineteen seventy or |
| 2/1/70 | (US) the first of February nineteen seventy |
| 2 Jan 70 | |
| 2 January 1970 | the second of January, nineteen seventy |
| 2nd January, 1970 | |
| | Code number |
| 1600 | sixteen hundred or one six oh oh or one six zero zero |
| 45038 | four five oh three eight |

Note

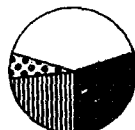
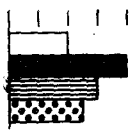
1. The point (.) is used to show decimals. The comma (,) to show thousands or millions or billions
2. After the decimal point you read number by number
3. The plural is 'two dozen', 'three dozen', etc
4. The difference between numbers like 13 (thirteen) and 30 (thirty) is sometimes difficult to hear so it may be necessary to say 'one-three', 'three-oh' when repeating
5. 'and' is normally said after hundreds; Americans often leave the word out
6. A comma (,) or a space is used to show thousands or millions or billions. There is usually no comma or space in 1000.
7. see also section on telephone
8. American dates use the order: month/date/year
European and British dates use the order: day/month/year

Movement of Numbers

A Graph



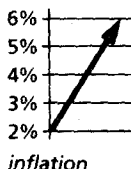
A column chart/bar chart



A pie chart

Note:

1. when describing increase or decrease you can say:



"inflation rose/fell
went up/went down to 6%"
increased/decreased

"inflation went up/went down
increased/decreased by 4%"
rose/fell

"inflation now stands at 6%"

2. when describing increase or decrease you can say:



"inflation fell/rose sharply"



"inflation fell/rose gradually"

Measurement

When you describe measurements you say:

"The pipe is five metres (5m) long" or "the pipe is five metres in length" but "It is a five-metre (5m) pipe".

You can say: "The cable is two hundred feet (200ft) long" but "It is a two-hundred-foot (200ft) cable"

The most common measurements are given on the table below:

| British and American | | Metric | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| we say | we write | | |
| Length | | | |
| inch | in or " | 0.039 | 25.40 |
| | | 0.394 | 2.540 |
| foot | ft or ' | 3.218 | 0.305 |
| yard | yd | 1.094 | 0.914 |
| mile | m or mi | 0.621 | 1.609 |
| | | | kilometre |
| | | | km |
| Weight | | | |
| ounce | oz | 0.035 | 28.350 |
| pound | lb | 2.205 | 0.454 |
| hundredweight | cwt | 0.196 | 50.18 |
| ton | | 0.984 | 1.016 |
| | | | metric tonne |
| | | | tonne |
| Capacity | | | |
| pint | pt | 1.70 | 0.568 |
| gallon | gal | 0.220 | 4.546 |
| | | | litre ⁽¹⁾ |
| | | | l |
| Area | | | |
| square inch | sq in or in ² | 0.155 | 6.452 |
| square foot | sq ft or ft ² | 10.764 | 0.093 |
| square yard | sq yd or yd ² | 1.196 | 0.836 |
| acre | | 2.471 | 0.4047 |
| square mile | sq m or mi ² | 0.387 | 2.59 |
| | | | hectare |
| | | | square kilometre |
| | | | ha |
| | | | km ² |
| Volume | | | |
| cubic inch | cu in or in ³ | 0.061 | 16.4 |
| cubic foot | cu ft or ft ³ | 35.315 | 0.0283 |
| cubic yard | cu yd or yd ³ | 1.308 | 0.765 |
| | | | cubic centimetre |
| | | | cubic metre |
| | | | cm ³ or cc |
| | | | m ³ |

Note

1. metre, litre, etc=US: "meter, liter", etc.

2. informal: 'kilo'

Abbreviations

You can find abbreviations of business terms in the body of the dictionary and abbreviations of measurements in the measurement section. These are commonly used abbreviations⁽¹⁾. If the abbreviation is marked (*), you can say it as well as write it⁽²⁾.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| a/c or acc or acct | account |
| a.m.* or am | in the morning, before midday |
| approx | approximately |
| arr | arrival or arrived |
| cc | copies (on a letter, to show that copies of the letter have been sent) |
| c/o* | care of (on an address to show that the person lives at the address but only as a visitor) |
| COD* or c.o.d. | cash on delivery |
| cont or cont'd | continued |
| dep or dept | department |
| ditto or do | the same (to show that an item, for example in a list, is the same as the previous one) |
| e.g.* or eg | for example |
| encl or enc | enclosure (on a letter, to show that another written paper has been sent in the same envelope) |
| esp | especially |
| et al | and others |
| etc | etcetera, and so on |
| fig | figure |
| HQ*(3) | headquarters |
| i.e.* | that is, in other words |
| K* | thousand |
| max | maximum |
| misc | miscellaneous, mixed and various |
| NB | note, take special note that... |
| no | number |
| ono or o.n.o | or near offer (after a price) |
| p.m.* or pm | in the afternoon, in the evening, after 12 midday |
| ps or PS | post script (in a letter, to introduce an added message after the signature) |
| qty | quantity |
| recd | received |
| re* or ref | reference, with reference to |
| RSVP | please reply (on an invitation) |
| SAE or sae | stamped addressed envelope |
| tel | telephone |
| v or vs | versus, against |
| wk | week |
| x or ext | extension (after a telephone number) |

Note:

1. abbreviations can be written in different ways and sometimes the same letters can have more than one meaning:

m million *or* mile *or* metre

min minimum *or* minute

MD managing director* *or* doctor of medicine

p.a. *or* P.A. per annum (every year) *or* personal assistant*

pp* on behalf of (used on letters below a signature when one person signs on behalf of another) *or* pages

2. in modern English writing, many abbreviations can be written with *or* without punctuation, in capital letters *or* small letters:

fmcg *or* FMCG *or* F.M.C.G. fast-moving customer goods

plc *or* p.l.c. *or* PLC *or* P.L.C. public limited company

3. you say a headquarters, but *an* HQ

a managing director, but *an* MD

PUNCTUATION

| | |
|---|--|
| • full stop <i>or</i> point, US: period | - dash <i>or</i> hyphen |
| , comma | / stroke <i>or</i> oblique <i>or</i> solidus |
| : colon | () brackets |
| ; semi-colon | [] square brackets |

SYMBOLS**ROMAN NUMERALS**

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------|
| % per cent | I <i>or</i> i | 1 |
| ° degrees | II <i>or</i> ii | 2 |
| = equals | III <i>or</i> iii | 3 |
| ≈ is approximately equal to | IV <i>or</i> iv | 4 |
| ≠ is not equal to | V <i>or</i> v | 5 |
| < is less than | VI <i>or</i> vi | 6 |
| > is more than | VII <i>or</i> vii | 7 |
| + plus | VIII <i>or</i> viii | 8 |
| - minus | IX <i>or</i> ix | 9 |
| ÷ divided by | X <i>or</i> x | 10 |
| × multiplied by | XI <i>or</i> xi | 11 |
| ∴ therefore | XX <i>or</i> xx | 20 |
| & and | L | 50 |
| ∞ infinity | C | 100 |
| √ root | D | 500 |
| | M | 1000 |

Business Letters

A letter to a company

printed letterhead
(company name, address,
postcode, telephone and
telex numbers)

company name & address

reference codes

"salutation" or opening
phrase⁽¹⁾

opening sentence

text

closing sentence

"complimentary close"⁽²⁾

writer's signature

name and position of writer

Calvite International plc
48 Hilt Street, London W8 5LJ
Tel: 01-881 8020
Telex: 300199 Calvit

11 July 1987

Export Components
245 Ocean Road
SYDNEY
N.S.W.
AUSTRALIA

Your ref: AK/381
Our ref: OS/6

Dear Sirs

With reference to your advertisement in the 5th July edition of "Export Magazine", we would want to draw your attention to the services we can offer, and therefore the possibility of co-operating on the project, as it is in an area which we understand and have experience

We look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully

H. Roberts
H. Roberts
Purchasing Manager

Micro Aerospace
48 Hilt Street, London W8 5LJ
Tel: 01-881 8020
Telex: 300199 Calvit

Bonnet R. Lee
Production Director
Micro Aerospace
175 Golden Crescent
Aberdeen, SCOTLAND

11 July 1987

Dear Mr Lee

Thank you for your letter of 3rd July which I found very encouraging.

I look forward to hearing from you with few weeks.

Yours Sincerely

H. Roberts
H. Roberts
Purchasing Manager

A letter to an individual⁽³⁾

Calvite International plc
48 Hilt Street, London W8 5LJ
Tel: 01-881 8020
Telex: 300199 Calvit

11.7.87

Dear John

Further to our short telephone conversation yesterday, I'd like to say how glad we are

Best wishes

Yours

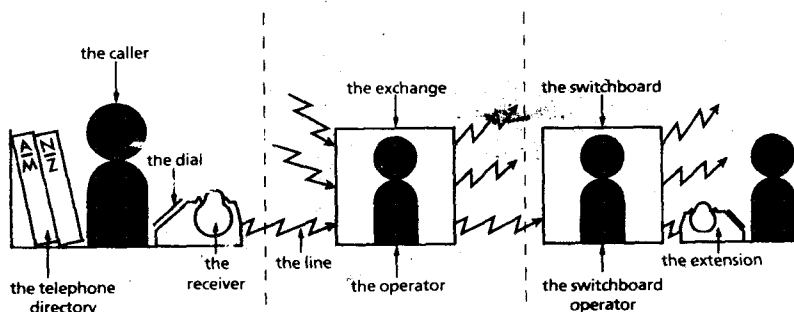
Harry
H. Roberts

A letter to a colleague or friend

Note:

1. In modern business letters punctuation is kept to a minimum. Commas (,) are possible after "Dear Sir", "Yours faithfully", etc, but are not necessary.
2. If you begin a letter "Dear Sir", you must end with "Yours faithfully". If you begin "Dear Mr X", you must end with "Yours sincerely" or "Sincerely yours".
3. If you are writing to a woman, begin the letter "Dear Madam" if you don't know her name. If you know her name, you can begin "Dear Miss X" or "Dear Mrs X", but many women now prefer "Dear Ms X". (Ms is pronounced "Miz")
4. For business and personal letters in English many styles and layouts are acceptable. The examples shown here are probably the most common and widely accepted forms.

The Telephone

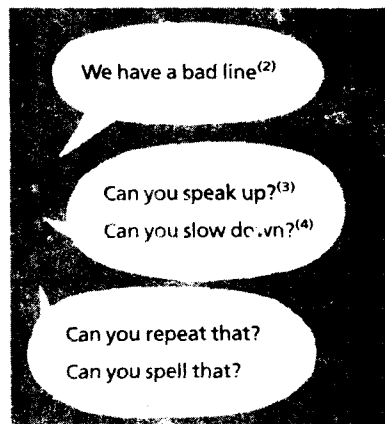
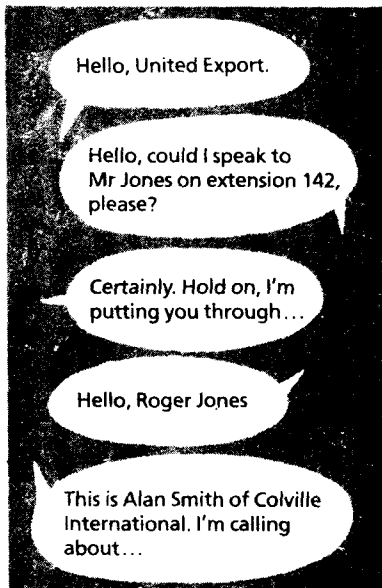
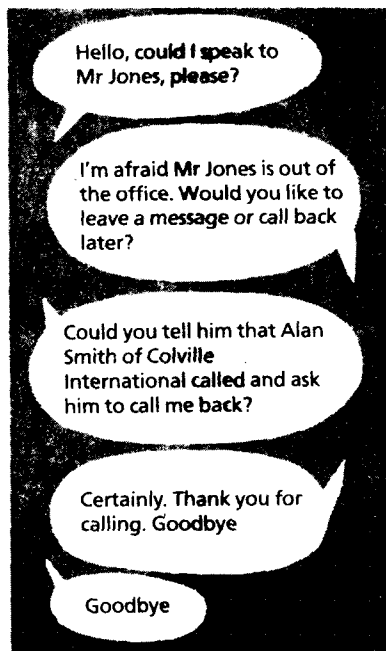
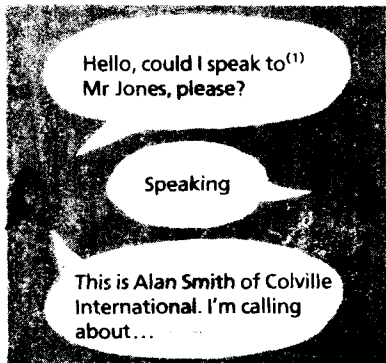


country code code private number extension

we write: (44) 01-221 6010 x142

we say: "four four, oh one, two two one, six oh one oh, extension one four two"

Certain key phrases are used in most telephone conversations. Opposite are three model telephone calls and five phrases used when there are problems on the line.



Note:

1. American: 'speak with'
2. = it is difficult to hear
3. 'You are speaking too quietly'
4. 'You are speaking too quickly'

Financial Documents

British cheque-American check

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| name of bank account | name and address of bank branch | person or company to whom money is being paid | bank branch sorting code |
| COLVILLE INTERNATIONAL plc Northern Bank plc Thorpe Street Office 24 Thorpe Street, London EC1S 2BE | | | 91-05-065 |
| DATE | PAY TO THE ORDER OF | AMOUNT | |
| 18 - NOV - 87 | CRANBOURNE LTD | £ 2500.60 | |
| tens of thousands → ZERO | thousands TWO | hundreds FIVE | tens ZERO |
| pence in figures 60 | | units ZERO | |
| For and on behalf of COLVILLE INTERNATIONAL plc <i>Alan Smith</i> <i>D. Martin</i> | | | |
| amount in words | bank branch code | authorized signatures | amount in numbers |
| cheque serial number | bank account number | | |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| name of the bank account and address of the account holder | person or company to whom money is being paid | check serial number |
| Import Consultants Inc. P.O. Box 314 Menlo Calif 416 | | No. 773 |
| | | OCT 24 19 87 |
| Pay to the order of | COLVILLE INTERNATIONAL PLC | \$ 360 - 50/100 |
| | | 2-204/672 |
| | THREE HUNDRED SIXTY DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS | DOLLARS |
| CORPORATE BANK OF NEW YORK 248 Fifth Avenue New York New York 20016 | | <i>Foster C. Barnes</i> Authorized Signatory |
| name and address of bank | account number | amount in words |
| bank branch code | check serial number | amount in numbers |
| | | signature |
| | | American Bank Association routing code |

The balance sheet

A balance sheet shows the financial position of a company at a particular time, such as the end of a financial year or the end of a quarter:

| Colville International plc | |
|---|---|
| Balance sheet ⁽¹⁾ as at 31 December 1987 | |
| things of value owned by the company | ASSETS £000 |
| | Fixed Assets |
| | Land 210 |
| | Buildings 160 |
| | Plant and machinery 90 |
| | Total fixed assets 460 |
| US: inventory | Current Assets |
| money owed to the company | Raw materials } Stocks 110 |
| US: 'accounts receivable' | Work in progress } |
| | Finished goods } |
| | Debtors 45 |
| | Cash in hand at bank 35 |
| | Total current assets 190 |
| amounts owed by the company | Current Liabilities |
| money owed by the company | Creditors 40 |
| US: 'accounts payable' | Bank overdraft 25 |
| | Taxation 35 |
| | Total current liabilities 100 |
| money owed to a bank account | Net current assets (working capital) 90 |
| current assets less current liabilities | Net assets 550 |
| fixed assets plus net current assets | CAPITAL |
| | Share capital |
| give a variable dividend | Ordinary shares 400 |
| give a fixed dividend | Preference shares 100 |
| | Reserves 50 |
| total capital employed should equal net assets | Total 550 |

Note:

- This is the normal layout of a modern balance sheet. The balance sheet can also be arranged:

| CAPITAL LIABILITIES | ASSETS |
|------------------------|--------|
| _____ | _____ |
| Total | Total |

or

| CAPITAL | _____ |
|---------|-------|
| | Total |
| ASSETS | _____ |
| | Total |

The bank statement

name of bank where account is held

name of bank branch

number of statement

name and address of account holder

period covered by statement

serial number of account

details of deposits and withdrawals

money out of the account (debit)

money paid into the account (credit)

* (or 'C' or 'CR') means the account is in credit; 'DR' or ('OD') means the account is overdrawn

Statement of accounts with Southern Bank plc

SOUTHERN BANK plc
Kemptown

Cranbourne Ltd
103 FAIRFAX RD
BRIGHTON
BA2 4XL

Sheet number 343

All entries to 21 JUL 87 inclusive are complete

Cheques are designated by serial number

ACCOUNT NUMBER 600360

| DATE | PARTICULARS | PAYMENTS | RECEIPTS | BALANCE |
|--------|-----------------|----------|----------|------------|
| 1987 | opening balance | | | 4620 80 * |
| 3 JUL | 46120 | 100 00 | | 4520 80 * |
| 6 JUL | 46195 | 150 00 | | 4370 80 * |
| 8 JUL | 461200 | 250 00 | | 1420 80 * |
| 10 JUL | BANK CREDIT | | 470 00 | 1900 80 * |
| 12 JUL | 461203 | 5500 00 | | 3598 20 DR |
| 1 JUL | SUNDRY CREDIT | | 67 70 | 3531 50 DR |
| 16 JUL | SUNDRY CREDIT | | 650 00 | 2881 50 DR |
| 17 JUL | 461207 | 240 00 | | 3121 50 DR |
| 20 JUL | FOREIGN CREDIT | | 9500 00 | 6378 50 * |

The profit and loss account

A profit and loss account shows the income and expenditure of a company over a particular period balanced to show the pre-tax profit (or loss) made by the company:

| Cranbourne Limited | | | |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|
| PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT | | | |
| Year ending 31 December 1987 | | | |
| | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Sales income | | 853 | |
| Cost of sales | | | |
| Materials | 340 | | |
| Labour | 300 | | |
| | | 640 | |
| Gross margin (profit) | | | 213 |
| Expenses | | | |
| Salaries | 30 | | |
| Distribution | 30 | | |
| Advertising | 18 | | |
| Administration | 25 | | |
| Financial charges | 15 | | |
| Rent and rates | | | |
| Heat | | 35 | |
| Light | | | |
| Depreciation | 10 | | |
| | | 163 | |
| Profit before tax | | | 50 |

Money

| British | | American | |
|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| you write | you say | you write | you say |
| 1p | one penny or one pence or one p | 1¢ \$0.1 | one cent |
| 56p £0.56 | fifty six pence or fifty six p | 56¢ | fifty six cents |
| £1 | a pound or one pound | \$1 | a dollar or one dollar |
| £1.20 | one pound twenty or one pound and twenty pence | \$1.20 | one dollar twenty or one dollar and twenty cents |
| £3.75 | three pounds seventy five or three pounds (and) seventy five pence | \$3.75 | three dollars seventy five or three dollars and seventy five cents |
| £5m | five million pounds | \$3bn | three billion dollars |
| £5.5m | five point five million pounds or five and a half million pounds or five million, five hundred thousand pounds | | |

Note:

1. The letters 'p' and '¢' are written when no pounds or dollars are shown
2. A decimal point is used to divide pounds from pence and dollars from cents.
A comma is used after millions and thousands: \$15,621,202.75
3. You say: 'The bonus is worth two thousand pounds' but 'it is a two thousand pound bonus'
4. When we write, the symbol or abbreviation (\$, DM, F, etc) comes first, when we say the figure, the number comes first

In the list of world currencies that follows, words marked (*) usually have no plural
e.g. 1 kyat, 'one kyat', 200 kyat, 'two hundred kyat'

| Country | Currency | Divided into | Abbreviation |
|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Afghanistan | Afghani* | puli | Af or Afs |
| Albania | Lek* | qindars | Lk |
| Algeria | Algerian dinar | centimes | AD or DA |
| Andorra | French Franc | centimes | |
| Angola | Kwanza* | cents | KW |
| Antigua | East Caribbean Dollar | cents | ECar\$ or EC\$ |
| Argentina | Austral | centavos | |
| Australia | Australian Dollar | cents | A\$ |
| Austria | Schilling | groschen | Sch or ASch |
| Bahamas | Bahamian Dollar | cents | Ba\$ |
| Bahrein | Bahreini Dinar | filis | BD |

| Country | Currency | Divided into | Abbreviation |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| Bangladesh | Taka* | poisha | Tk |
| Barbados | Barbados Dollar | cents | Bds\$ BD\$ |
| Belgium | Belgian Franc | centimes | BFr or Bf or FB |
| Belize | Belize Dollar | cents | B\$ or \$B |
| Benin | CFA Franc | centimes | CFA Fr |
| Bermuda | Bermuda Dollar | cents | Bda\$ |
| Bhutan | Ngultrum* | tikchung | N |
| Bolivia | Bolivian peso | centavos | B\$ or \$b |
| Botswana | Pula | cents | Pu or P |
| Brazil | Cruzeiro | centavos | Cr or Cr\$ |
| Brunei | Brunei Dollar | cents | Br\$ or B\$ |
| Bulgaria | Lev* | stotinki | Lv |
| Burkina Faso | CFA Franc | centimes | CFA Fr |
| Burma | Kyat* | pyas | Kt |
| Burundi | Burundi Franc | centimes | Bur Fr or FrBr |
| Cambodia | | | |
| (see Kampuchea) | | | |
| Cameroon | CFA Franc | centimes | CFA Fr |
| Canada | Canadian Dollar | cents | Can\$ or C\$ |
| Cape Verde Islands | Escudo Caboverdianos | centavos | CV esc |
| Cayman Islands | Cayman Island Dollar | cents | Cayl\$ |
| Central African Republic | CFA Franc | centimes | CFA Fr |
| Chad | Cfa Franc | centimes | CFA Fr |
| Chile | Chilean Peso | centavos | Ch\$ |
| China | Yuan* or renminbi* | fen | Y |
| Colombia | Colombian Peso | centavos | Col\$ |
| Comoros | CFA Franc | centimes | CFA Fr |
| Congo | CFA Franc | centimes | CFA Fr |
| Costa Rica | Colón* | centimos | CR¢ or ¢ |
| Cuba | Cuban Peso | centavos | Cub\$ |
| Cyprus | Cyprus Pound | Mils | £C or C£ |
| Czechoslovakia | Crown or Koruna | hellers, halern | Kčs |
| Dahomey (see Benin) | | | |
| Denmark | Krone | ører | DKr or DKK |
| Djibouti | Djibouti Franc | centimes | Dj Fr |
| Dominica | East Caribbean Dollar | cents | ECar\$ or EC\$ |
| Dominican Republic | Dominican Peso | centavos | DR\$ |
| Ecuador | Sucre* | centavos | Su |
| Egypt | Egyptian Pound | piastres | £E or E£ |
| Eire (see Irish Republic) | | | |
| El Salvador | Colón* | centavos | ES¢ or ¢ |
| Equatorial Guinea | Ekuele* or ekpwele or peseta Guineana | centimos | E |
| Ethiopia | Birr* or Ethiopian Dollar | cents | Br |
| Fiji | Fijian Dollar | cents | \$F or F\$ |
| Finland | Marakka* or Finnmark | pennia | Fmk |
| France | French Franc | centimes | Fr or F or FF |
| French Guiana | French Franc | centimes | Fr or F or FF |