

Noah Webster had a lasting impact on language in the United States. Before publishing his *American Dictionary of the English Language*, he produced a series of spelling books (one is pictured above) that dominated American classrooms for almost a century. He was a proponent of spelling reform, believing that more regular orthography would not only make learning easier, but more importantly, it would distinguish the American way from the British, “an object of vast political consequence” to a young nation. Some of his suggested reforms caught on and still mark a difference between American and British writing: he replaced “colour” with “color,” “centre” with “center,” “defence” with “defense,” “plough” with “plow,” “draught” with “draft,” and “gaol” with “jail.”

However, many of Webster’s reforms went nowhere. Here are some spellings that didn’t catch on—at least until the dawn of LOLcats.

1. Cloke — cloak
2. Soop — soup
3. Masheen — machine
4. Tung — tongue
5. Greef — grief
6. Dawter — daughter
7. Korus — chorus
8. Nightmar — nightmare
9. Turnep — turnip
10. Iland — island

11. Porpess — porpoise
12. Steddy — steady
13. Hainous — heinous
14. Thum — thumb
15. Gillotin — guillotine
16. Spunge — sponge
17. Ake — ache
18. Wimmin — women
19. Determin — determine
20. Giv — give
21. Bilt — built
22. Beleev — believe
23. Grotesk — grotesque
24. Stile — style
25. Neer — near
26. Sley — sleigh