Word for Word

-log or -logue?

Several English words end in the sound “log,” but this syllable can be spelled either “-log” or “-logue” (with a silent “ue”). A few of these words appear regularly in scientific articles and grant applications. Is the correct spelling analog or analogue? Dialog or dialogue? Catalog or catalogue?

For each of these words, both spellings are generally acceptable. However, there are preferred spellings for specific meanings of each word. Also, U.S. and British usage can differ; we focus here on U.S. usage.

Catalog or catalogue? Catalog is preferred in all cases.2

Example:
Include catalog numbers for key reagents in the Methods section of the manuscript.

Analog or analogue? In general, analogue is preferred when referring to an item that is analogous, or similar, to something else.3,4 When referring specifically to similar chemical compounds, we follow the AMA Manual of Style’s recommendation of analogue,3 but analog is also acceptable.4,5 Analog is used as an adjective, especially when referring to something mechanical rather than computerized.6

Examples:
We synthesized a more potent analogue of the existing drug.
I like an analog watch better than a digital one.
**Dialog or dialogue?** Use *dialogue* as a noun or verb when referring to a conversation or exchange of ideas.⁷ Use *dialog* when referring to a *dialog box* on a computer screen.⁸

**Examples:**
We had a fruitful dialogue about future research directions.
Click “Save” in the dialog box that appears when you exit the program.

A few additional words that are related to discourse and literature are, like *dialogue*, almost always spelled with “-logue”: *monologue, prologue,* and *epilogue*.

When in doubt, look up the word in a dictionary; if two spellings are given, the first one listed is preferred.

**References**

--Sunita Patterson

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