

British English and American English : the main differences



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- British English noun ending -*ise* = American English ending -*ize*

<i>theorise</i>	<i>theorize</i>
<i>realise</i>	<i>realize</i>
<i>analyse</i>	<i>analyze</i>
<i>motivate</i>	<i>motivate</i>

The above 'variant' is 100% new. In British English you also have the spelling 'variant', but it then means either 'variant rhythm' or 'variant device', as in gas meter, with meter, and others.

Exceptions to this rule are *axis* and *maestro*, which are spelled in this way on both sides of the Atlantic. However, if written with the 'ce' at the end, they would have to be pronounced like the first syllable is 'certain'.

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- British English final -*y* is doubled when a suffix is added to an unstressed syllable; not always in American English

If you were taught British English at school, you may find it odd to see *library* and *synopsis* in American publications, but these spellings are quite correct.

Exception: it is developed/developing everywhere.

- British English *or* and *our* (Greek and Latin words) = American English's

<i>homorrhage</i>	<i>hemorrhage</i>
<i>dynastology</i>	<i>dynastology</i>
<i>astronoma</i>	<i>astronomy</i>
<i>medicament</i>	<i>medicament</i>
<i>parous</i>	<i>parous</i>

Most British medical journals now use the spelling *pina*. It is *manure* in British English, but *manure* in American English. Both are pronounced 'manure'.

- British English -*ogue* (Greek words) = American English -*og*

<i>catalogue</i>	<i>catalog</i>
<i>dialogue</i>	<i>dialog</i>
<i>epilogue</i>	<i>epilog</i>
<i>monologue</i>	<i>monolog</i>

- Individual differences in spelling: no rules

First column: British English, second column: American English.

<i>abstemious</i>	<i>abstemious</i>
(stress on third syllable)	(stress on second syllable)
<i>axe</i>	<i>ax</i>
<i>cheque</i>	<i>check</i>

*Chapter 10: used in North America. The spelling 'Canadian' Chapter 10: used in North America. The spelling 'Canadian' Chapter 10: used in North America.

1. Spelling

Differences in spelling can be put into two groups: the first group is subject to clear rules, and you can safely 'translate' a word from one type of English into the other. The second group has no rules, but as it consists of no more than ten dozen words, you should have no trouble in learning them.

Here comes the first group. British English is always given in the left-hand column in this chapter.

- British English ending -*our* = American English ending -*or*

<i>colour</i>	<i>color</i>
<i>labour</i>	<i>labor</i>
<i>honour</i>	<i>honor</i>
<i>favour</i>	<i>favor</i>

American English is far more logically sticking to or throughout. British English has such inconsistencies as *colour/theorize*, *honour/honorable*, *maestro/maestro*, *variant/variant*. Also *variant* but *variant*, *variant* but *variant*, and other variants. If there should ever be a popularity contest for International English, I shall vote for the American system.

- British English ending -*our* = American English ending -*our*

<i>defence</i>	<i>defense</i>
<i>offence</i>	<i>offense</i>
<i>pretence</i>	<i>pretense</i>

British English has *license*, but this is the verb, and the noun. You would then correctly write that:

They were licensed to use the firearm.

- British English final -*y* is doubled when a suffix is added to an unstressed syllable; not in American English

<i>double</i>	<i>double</i>
<i>library</i>	<i>library</i>
<i>synopsis</i>	<i>synopsis</i>
<i>catalogue</i>	<i>catalog</i>
<i>dialogue</i>	<i>dialog</i>
<i>epilogue</i>	<i>epilog</i>
<i>monologue</i>	<i>monolog</i>

[illegible]

Don't be confused by the "house-made" spelling; there are limits. They are unlikely to be approved by any future dictionaries. Some more respectable-looking words can also be misleading. An American politician once made a speech and used the word *surrounding* in place of *surround*. It was his invention, but the word is retained in the American language ever since.

2. Terminology

When it comes to differences in terminology – Jack is thinking about (West Midlands) water systems, Jack is Birmingham (Alabama) water park; that sort of thing – we have to brush ourselves off by the roadside.

Testing different laundry methods; drying (sun-drying, line-drying, etc.) have therefore been omitted. The selection of methods proposed under this heading.

● Things you wear

dresser / ju:bi	karada
bedder (in the bed)	yuwa
under (in underwear)	underwear
nappe (under only)	nappe
kimono	kimono



- ### • Answer the Question

best (quality in writing)	pubbly
chart of elements	theatre, diverse
encompassed	cleave, <i>unsubtle</i>
envisions	dispute (if <i>agony</i>)
	surround (if not at there)
factory	foreman
denotes	knock over, go-byng over
fast	apart (most)
greenproof of paper	work paper
ing	public
light	education
long paper	long paper
mark of words	mark of words
mobile	go-byng, knock
type	juvent

14. About 10 words only, including the title, are available. You also have 10 minutes to prepare your answer in English.

² Adapted to British English.

Reflex gear universal English	13
gear	5
pedal/gear	
universal	

Myth: The difference between the American garbage and ours is only the waste-burning. *Catchalls* is generally the domestic and often smelly waste you throw out. Trash can be anything you want to get rid of; where you move because you are always worried how much trash you have to get rid of.

- Around the office to do with work

- bank note
- bill of lading
- average paid
- current account
- to engage sb/sth
- present (sb/sth) with sth
- to post a letter
- postman
- return the letter (to sb)
- star (on salary)
- to withdraw paid
- shareholder
- single letter
- the (telephone) line
- to engaged
- timetable
- travel cost
- what it cost

- bill to B: general rule, but doesn't bill)
- unpaid
- freight prepaid
- checking account
- debit bill
- gross to person with to mail a letter
- machines
- round trip ticket
- enough
- switchboard
- extra ticket
- one-way ticket
- difficult to bring
- to be able to
- long distance call
- cost of fund

- Things you will

blended	crude
empty sugar	crude sugar
refined sugar	ground meal
protein	crude
amylase (meat)	urea

• The automobile

bonnet	hood
boot	trunk
crucians	trunk
gear lever	gear shift
lorry	truck
perforia	bonnet
period	quintine, 'gar'
practical	fat
saloon car	salon
silencer	muffler
windscreen	windshield

• Other technical terms

acrophase	apex
trunking/carrying-truck	car
goods train	freight train
trucking under	tube
railway	subway
square	square
sideway	underpass
(passage under street)	
train	atraction, bodycar
underground (London, Metre)	subway

• Mixed bag

antenna	jet, antenna (theory)
cheek (jelly/pudding)	gill, nose
high street	main street
hobby(ho)	recreation
isolated	isolation
looming/g's	horizon/there
permeant	admittant
(stated in a) pour	like
slap	stare, slap (if sexual)
thinner (not sweet)	harder

* Variation also exists in British English, where it is usually spelled as the combination and the two nouns.

• Differences that require an explanation

Public school/private school

First remarks to American English for higher: In America a public school is for the general public; it is free, financed by the State. A private school is not for everyone, because you have to pay. This explanation here.

In British English a public school is by no means for the broad public. Not everyone can go to, not everyone can afford the fees. (An American may therefore explain that this kind of public school is a private school. . . .)

Slightly dirty, you may ask: If in the UK a public school is a private school, what do they call a really public, i.e. non-paying school? This is called a state school or, more often, comprehensive school, i.e. the non-paying school usually financed by the local city or borough council.

Ground floor/first floor

If you have to climb one stairs, you probably live on the ground floor. At least in Europe. In America you start counting at ground level and call it first floor. So the second floor in Manchester (England) would be the third floor in Manchester (New Hamp-shire), and so on.



Chamber/English

In British medical prescriptions are said by a chamber, also called 'the chamber's', if you have the sleep in mind. The American

colleague is a *drop-out*. The words in a pharmacy, a word used in British English usually for the science or business connected with medical prescriptions.

The American *drop-out* originally did not go to your teacher and other trouble, but has branched out in all directions. The well-organized drop-out of today also with such drinks, light meals, magazines, books, records, ice cream, etc.

The British English term *chamber* is therefore not very clear. It can be a person who has something to do with your cough drops or someone who has studied chemistry.

To let accommodation/let accommodation

If you do not own the place you live in, you rent it from the owner. On both sides of the Atlantic. If you own a house or apartment and let someone else live in it, you let it in British English, but rent it in American English.

If this sounds confusing, let me clarify the situation in this way:

British English	American English
The owner	owns the house.
The tenant	rents from the owner.

3. Pronunciation

An advanced student of English you know the main differences between a typically British and American accent. Here are a few points you may find interesting.

There are some of the principal differences in pronouncing words, but reduce British English, slight reduce American English.

Pronounced as if written	Pronounced as if written
ant-	and
chil	child
here	here
decurese	well known
	and eye
	dark (lightness with 'back')
	become ('e' as in 'two')
	best known

great	pay rent	patron
more	not	most ('not' as in 'more')
absolutely	absolutely	absolutely
not	never	never
not	not ('not' as in 'not')	never (synonym with 'never')

The American human rhythm with patois, which seems logical, just the British innate sounds like 'mushy'. The American double 'r' sounds like a 'd', better = 'mushy', pretty = 'muddy'. The single American 'l' within a word also sounds like a 'd', fairly = 'fairly', maybe = 'mushy'.

William Somerset Maugham says that he 'suspects', he may mean 'suspect', maybe for a trial, or maybe, i.e. without in shallow water. The American 'l' is often ignored when preceded by the letter 'n', merely sounds like 'tenary', 'pleby' like 'plenary', and so on.

4. Prepositions

There are a number of interesting Anglo-American differences in the use of certain prepositions.

At home/home

If you do not go out, you stay at home. At least in British English. In American English you will report what you stayed home, without preposition.

For years/in years

You have not seen Jack since 1978, you report in British English that you have not seen him for years. In American English you report that you have not seen him in years.

The same difference applies to the expression for signs/signs, reading ecologically 'during a very long period of time'.

They haven't visited us for ages.

We haven't seen them for ages.

• Behind/in back of

The American English in back of sounds odd in the UK, but is quite acceptable American for behind.

He stood in back of us during the game.

It's in back of the house.

• In Church Street/Church Street/No. 16 Church Street

In British English you live in a street, road, avenue, in American English on.

They live in Thudlow Road, London.

He lives on Dean Street, Las Vegas.

As soon as you mention the number, however, both sides of the Atlantic agree on all.

She used to live at 68 Piccadilly Road.

• On behalf of/in behalf of

She attended on behalf of her brother. (British)
She attended in behalf of her brother. (American)

• Out of the window/out the window

In British English you look out of the window, throw something out of the window (abandoning), and even if huge roof fall out of the window. In American English you look out the window and simply look out the window, throw something out the window, and fall out the window.

• Fresh out/bank over

A little money, but worth knowing. This verbal idiom means pay, with the implication that somebody is reluctant to part with money.

In the end he forked out forty pounds (British)

In the end he forked over twenty euros (American)

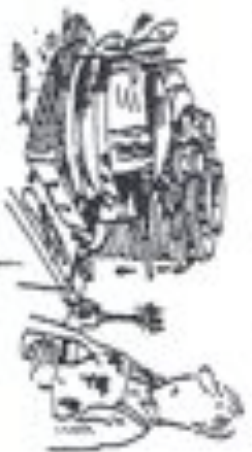
• To write to/in write

Citizens of the UK and Commonwealth countries all learn to write to their friends. Students of US passports simply write their friends. No to.

If they don't write, they may get into trouble. Not Americans who will get in trouble, in extreme cases wrongdoers may be put into prison. In America people are put in jail.

• To wash up/to wash

Do you know the definition of a 'housewife'? Someone who washes the dishes before a meal. You and I like to get them cleaned when we have eaten. In British English I ding you into this by suggesting that we should wash up, meaning the dishes. In American English I would propose doing the dishes, because in North America to wash up means a narrow personal wash, usually of the hands.



While we are on the subject of washing, please remember that the British English sink is found only in the kitchen, laundry room, garage, etc. The same object in the bathroom or toilet is a washbasin. In American English a sink is a sink, everywhere in the house.

• To consult/to consult with

In British and American English you consult an expert. When saying to consult with in American English you indicate a more detailed or formal discussion of your troubles.

He will have to consult a lawyer.

but

He consulted with his lawyer for three hours.

- To meet to meet with

The American version to meet with indicates an arranged meeting, not a casual encounter.

We met them at the airport (usually by chance).

We met with them to discuss the reorganisation (arrangement).

British English has simply to meet for both cases, without preposition.

- To visit to visit with

The American English to visit with means staying with people, not merely spending a few hours.

We visited her in hospital (short bedside stay).

I visited with them during the summer (longer stay).

In British English you never use with. The sentence 'we visited them last year' can therefore either mean a very brief appearance or a long stay.

- Different than/different from

In American English it is quite acceptable to say:

Our hotel room is different than yours.

British English is different. It much prefers:

Our hotel room is different from yours.

- Half an hour's half hour

This is admittedly not a grammatical difference, but I think I can separate this item into this section without your noticing it.

British English has:

This will take half an hour.

We'll see you in half an hour.

American English usually prefers:

This will take a half hour.

We'll see you in a half hour.

- ME

Another fraction, called three-quarters in British English, but usually three-fourths in American English.

5. Opposite meaning

The difference between some British English and American English words and phrases can be small or it can be considerable. There is an interesting case: the British expression means more or less the opposite of the American one.

- Should you table it?

When someone in the UK has a brilliant idea and wants it to be discussed or decided at an official meeting, he tables it. This is a very formal expression. It requests that a proposal, motion, suggestion, etc. should be put on the table and be made a part of the agenda or official business.

When someone in North America has a not so brilliant idea and wants it discussed at a meeting, none of his colleagues may think that this would be a waste of time. They may then suggest that this proposal should be tabled, but they mean that it should be dropped under the table, i.e. not be made a part of the business, to other words, in British English you table (propose) useful subjects, in American English you table (or don't) useless ideas.

Beyond the information on British and American English given in this chapter, any differences between the two are pointed out whenever they apply to words or phrases in other parts of the book.

Differences in pronunciation

- Differences between British English and American English

Nouns

British English	American English
address	address
abundantism	abundantism (no Y)
detail	detail
broader	broader
ingrady	ingrady
intelligye	intelligye
laboratory	laboratory
magazine	magazine
subconscience	subconscience
Portuguese	Portuguese
Pyrenees	Pyrenees
recess	recess
research	research
revelation	revelation
vermouth	vermouth

Verbs

inactivate	inactivate
harass	harass
locate	locate