



# AMERICAN VS. BRITISH ENGLISH

British English is the form of English used in the United Kingdom. It includes all English dialects used within the United Kingdom.



American English is the form of English used in the United States. It includes all English dialects used within the United States of America.

## THE DIFFERENCES



### ▪ Use of the Present Perfect

	
<p>The present perfect is used to talk about a past action which has an effect on the present moment.</p> <p><i>I've lost my purse. Can you help me look for it?</i> <i>I have lost my pen. Can you borrow me yours?</i></p> <p>Other differences include the use of <b>already</b>, <b>just</b> and <b>yet</b>.</p> <p>The British use the present perfect with these adverbs of indefinite time.</p> <p><i>He has just gone home.</i> <i>I've already seen that film</i> <i>She hasn't come yet.</i></p>	<p>In American English both simple past and present perfect are possible in such situations.</p> <p><i>I lost my purse. Can you help me look for it?</i> <i>I lost my pen. OR I have lost my pen.</i></p> <p>In American English simple past and present perfect are both possible.</p> <p><i>He just went home. OR He has just gone home.</i> <i>I've already seen that film. OR I already saw that film.</i> <i>She hasn't come yet. OR She didn't come yet.</i></p>



▪ **Possession**

	
<p>British people normally use <b>have got</b> to show possession.</p> <p><i>Have you got a car?</i>  <i>He hasn't got any friends.</i>  <i>She's got a beautiful new home.</i></p> <p><b>BUT!</b> Both forms are correct (and accepted in both British and American English).</p>	<p>In American English have and have got are both possible.</p> <p><i>Do you have a car? OR Have you got a car?</i>  <i>He doesn't have any friends.</i>  <i>She has a beautiful new home.</i></p>



▪ **The Verb Get**

	
<p>In British English the past participle of “get” is <b>got</b>.</p> <p><i>He has got a prize.</i>  <i>I have got two sisters.</i></p>	<p>The past participle of the verb get is <b>gotten</b> EXCEPT when have got means have.</p> <p><i>He has gotten a prize.</i>  <i>I have got two sisters. (=I have two sisters.)</i></p>



▪ **Will/Shall**

	
<p>In British English it is common to use shall with the <b>first person</b> to talk about the future.</p> <p><i>I shall/will never do it again.</i></p> <p>In offers the British use <b>shall</b>.</p> <p><i>Shall I help you with it?</i></p>	<p>The Americans rarely use shall.</p> <p><i>I will never do it again.</i></p> <p>The Americans use <b>should</b>.</p> <p><i>Should I help you with it?</i></p>



- **Need**

	
<p>In British English needn't and don't need to are both possible.</p> <p><i>You needn't learn it.</i>  <i>OR You don't need to learn it.</i></p>	<p>The Americans use don't need to.</p> <p><i>You don't need to learn it.</i></p>



- **Use of the Subjunctive**

	
<p>In British English the subjunctive is formal and unusual.</p> <p>British people normally use should + Infinitive or ordinary present and past tenses.</p> <p><i>We insisted that something should be done about the problem.</i>  <i>It is essential that every child gets an opportunity to learn.</i>  <i>She suggested that I should see a doctor.</i></p>	<p>In American English it is common to use subjunctive after words like essential, suggest, insist, demand, ask, advice etc.</p> <p>(Subjunctive is a special kind of present tense which has no -s in the third person singular.)</p> <p><i>We insisted that something be done about the problem.</i>  <i>It is essential that every child get an opportunity to learn.</i>  <i>She suggested that I see a doctor.</i></p>



- **Collective Nouns**

	
<p>Collective nouns like jury, government etc., can take both singular and plural verbs in British English.</p> <p><i>The team is/are going to lose.</i></p>	<p>In American English they normally take a singular verb.</p> <p><i>The team is going to lose.</i></p>



- **Auxiliary verb + do**

	
<p>In British English it is common to use do as a substitute verb after an auxiliary verb.</p> <p><i>May I have a look at your book?</i>  <i>You may (do).</i>  <i>You were supposed to have finished your work before you left.</i>  <i>I have (done).</i></p>	<p>Americans do not normally use do after an auxiliary verb.</p> <p>...  <i>You may.</i></p> <p>...  <i>I have.</i></p>



- **As if/ like**

	
<p>In American English it is common to use like instead of as if/ as though. This is not correct in British English.</p> <p><i>He talks as if he knew everything.</i></p>	<p><i>He talks like/as if he knew everything.</i></p>



- **The indefinite pronoun One**

	
<p>In British English one is used throughout the sentence.</p> <p><i>One must love one's country.</i></p>	<p>The Americans normally use him/her, and his/her to refer back to one.</p> <p><i>One must love his/her country.</i></p>



▪ **Mid position adverbs**

	
<p>In British English they are placed after auxiliary verbs and before other verbs.</p> <p><i>He has probably arrived now.</i> <i>I am seldom late for work.</i></p>	<p>In American English mid position adverbs are placed before auxiliary verbs and other verbs.</p> <p><i>He probably has arrived now.</i> <i>I seldom am late for work.</i></p>

▪ **Prepositions**

	
<p>British speakers say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- at the weekend, at weekends</li> <li>- in a team</li> <li>- write to me</li> <li>- (to live) in a street</li> <li>- different from/different to</li> <li>- Monday to Friday</li> </ul>	<p>American speakers use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- on the weekend, on weekends</li> <li>- on a team</li> <li>- write me</li> <li>- (to live) on a street</li> <li>- different from/different than</li> <li>- Monday through/to Friday</li> </ul>

▪ **Past Simple/Past Participles**



	
<p>The irregular form of following verbs is generally more used in British English and the regular form is more common to American English.</p> <p>Burn - burnt Dream - dreamt Lean - leant Learn - learnt Smell - smelt Spell - spelt Spill - spilt Spoil - spoilt</p>	<p>burned dreamed leaned learned smelled spelled spilled spoiled</p>

▪ **Spelling**



Here are some general differences between British and American spelling:

British English	American English	Example (British - American)
words ending in -re	change to -er	centre - center; theatre - theater; metre - meter
words ending in -our	change to -or	colour - color; favourite - favorite; honour - honor
words ending in -ogue	change to -og	catalogue - catalog; dialogue - dialog; analogue - analog
words ending in -ise/ize	ending only in -ize	realise/realize - realize; analyse - analyze; criticise - criticize
final -l doubled after short vowel	final -l not always doubled	travelled - traveled; fulfill - fulfil; modelling - modeling
words ending in -ence	change to -ense	defence - defense; licence - license
words ending in - que	change to -ck or -k	banque - bank; cheque - check;

▪ **Adverbs**



	
<p>The Americans tend to use adjectives instead of adverbs.</p> <p><i>He did that really quickly.</i> <i>Let's take things slowly.</i></p>	<p><i>He did that real quickly.</i> <i>Let's take things slow.</i></p>

▪ **Plurals**



	
<p>There are a number of nouns that are uncountable in British English while they do have a plural form in American English.</p> <p><i>types of accommodation</i> <i>types of food</i> <i>strands of hair</i></p>	<p><i>accommodation</i> <i>foods</i> <i>hairs</i></p>

▪ **American English Reductions Definition**

It is useful to know how reductions are used in American English. You sound more natural and understand conversations between native American speakers.

	
<p>Reductions are reduced forms of English words.</p> <p>Reductions <b>are not real words</b> in English.</p> <p>Examples:            want to            going to            got to            let me            give me            don't you            get you            want you</p>	<p>wanna            gonna            gotta            lemme            gimme            doncha            getcha            wancha</p>

▪ **Abbreviations**

	
<p>In British English abbreviations are usually written without full stop.</p> <p><i>Mr</i>  <i>Dr</i>  <i>Ltd</i></p>	<p>Full stops are normal in American English.</p> <p><i>Mr. (Mister)</i>  <i>Dr. (Doctor)</i>  <i>Ltd. (Limited company)</i></p>

▪ Vocabulary

American 	British 	Czech 
apartment	flat	byt
argument	row	pře
baby carriage	pram	kočárek
band-aid	plaster	náplast
bill	banknote	bankovka
can	tin	plechovka
check	bill	účet
chopped meat	mince-meat	mleté maso
cookie	biscuit	sušenka
cop	bobby	policajt
corn	maize	kukuřice
diaper	nappy	plena
elevator	lift	výtah
eraser	rubber	guma
fall	autumn	podzim
flashlight	torch	baterka
fries	chips	hranolky
first floor	ground floor	přízemí
gas	petrol	benzin
guy	bloke	chlap
highway	motorway	silnice
hood (car)	bonnet	kapota
jell	jelly	želé
jelly	jam	džem
kerosene	paraffin	petrolej
lawyer	solicitor	právní zástupce
line	queue	fronta
mail	post	pošta
movie theater	cinema	kino
muffler	silencer	tlumič
napkin	serviette	ubrousek
overpass	flyover	nadjezd
pacifier	dummy	dudlík
pants	trousers	kalhoty
parking lot	car park	parkoviště
period	full stop	tečka
pharmacist	chemist	lékárník



potato chips	crisps	brambůrky
store	shop	obchod
sidewalk	pavement	chodník
soccer	football	fotbal
sweater	jumper	svetr
candy	sweets	cukroví
trash can	bin	popelnice
truck	lorry	nákladní vůz
trunk (car)	boot	kufr auta
subway	underground	metro
vacation	holiday	prázdniny
vest	waistcoat	vesta
windshield (car)	windscreen	čelní sklo
zip code	postal code	směrovací číslo