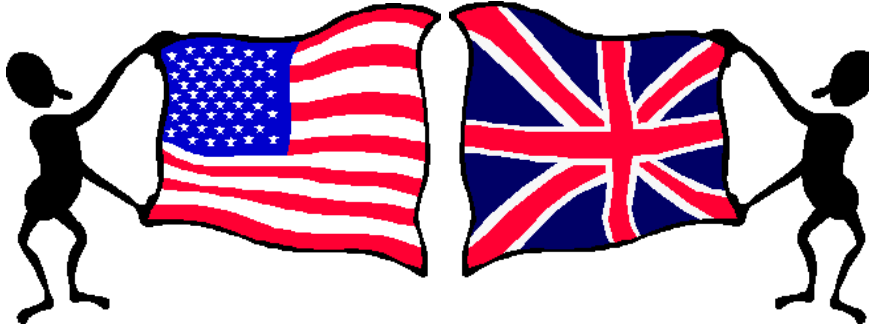


American x British English



As you know, even though North America and Great Britain share the same language, some words are completely different. Here are some of the most common differences.

American Word	British Word
Flashlight	Torch
Gas	Petrol
Soccer	Football
Cookie	Biscuit
Diaper	Nappy
Can (of food)	Tin
Elevator	Lift
Truck	Lorry
Eraser	Rubber

Check Your Understanding - Can you fill in the blanks without looking back?

1. In North America, a person drives a **truck** down the road. In Great Britain, a person drives a
2. In Great Britain, people put **petrol** in their cars to make them go. In North America, people put in their cars.
3. In North America, people eat **cookies**. In Great Britain, the same things are called.....
4. In Great Britain, people play **football**. In North America, the game is called.....
5. In North America, when you make a mistake with a pencil, you can erase it with an **eraser**. In Great Britain, you use a
6. In Great Britain, food can be bought in **tins**. In North America, food is bought in.....
7. In Great Britain, you go up the building in a **lift**. In North America, you use an.....

Answers: 1. lorry, 2. gas, 3. biscuits, 4. soccer, 5. rubber, 6. cans, 7. elevator.

American x British English

Grammar

Americans use the **present perfect** tense less than speakers of British English and a British teacher might mark wrong some things that an American teacher would say are correct.

- **US** *Did you do your homework yet?* x **Brit.** *Have you done your homework yet?*
- **US** *I already ate.* x **Brit.** *I've already eaten.*

In British English, '**have got**' is often used for the possessive sense of '**have**' and '**have got to**' is informally used for '**have to**'. This is much less common in American English.

- **Brit.** *I've got two sisters.* x **US** *I have two sisters.*
- **Brit.** *I've got to go now.* x **US** *I have to go now.*

Vocabulary

There are a lot of examples of different words being used in British and American English. Here are a few of the commonest:

- *angry (Brit.) = mad (US)*
- *autumn = fall*
- *boot (of a car) = trunk*
- *chemist's = drug store*
- *cupboard = closet*
- *flat = apartment*
- *lift = elevator*
- *nappy = diaper*
- *pavement = sidewalk*
- *petrol = gas/gasoline*
- *rubbish = trash*
- *tap = faucet*
- *trousers = pants*

There are British words which many Americans will not understand and vice versa. There are also words which exist in both British and American English but have very different meanings.

Spelling

There are also a number of different spelling rules between British English and American English.

1. Some words that end in '-tre' in British English end in '-ter' in American English.

- **US** *theater, center*
- **Brit.** *theatre, centre*
-

2. Some words that end in '-our' in British English end in '-or' in American English.

- **US** *color, labor*
- **Brit.** *colour, labour*
-

3. Some words are shorter in American English than in British English.

- **US** *catalog, program*
- **Brit.** *catalogue, programme*

Decide whether these sentences were said by an American or a British person:

1. I already took the trash out.
2. I've got to put some petrol in the car.
3. I just spilled wine on my pants.
4. Take the elevator up to my appartment.
5. Have you changed the baby's nappy yet?
6. He got mad to know his son's poor grades.

Answers: 1. US, 2. Brit, 3. US, 4. US, 5. Brit, 6. US.