

# Australian English

**Australian English** is the kind of [English language](#) used in [Australia](#).

## History

[[change](#) | [change source](#)]

People from [Britain](#) and [Ireland](#) first came to live in Australia in 1788 (colony of [New South Wales](#)). They brought different [dialects](#) of English along with them. These different kinds of English began to mix and change. The newcomers soon began to speak with their own distinctive accent and vocabulary.

More and more people came to Australia in the [19th](#) and [20th](#) centuries. Many people came looking for [gold](#). Some came from Britain and Ireland. Others came from non-English speaking countries. Australian English continued to grow and change.

Australian English has also been influenced by [American English](#). During the [Second World War](#), there were many [American soldiers](#) staying in Australia. American [television](#) shows and [music](#) have been popular in Australia since the 1950s.

## Accent

[[change](#) | [change source](#)]

[The Australian](#) and [New Zealand accents](#) are similar.

In Australian English the /r/ sound can only occur before a vowel. Many words which sound different in other accents sound the same in Australian English. Some examples are:

- *caught* and *court*
- *raw* and *roar*
- *aunt* and *aren't*
- *formally* and *formerly*

Some Australian English vowels sound different to vowels of other kinds of English. For example, the vowel in *day* starts with a very open mouth. This makes the Australian *day* sound close to the *die* of most British or American people. Days of the week, however, are sometimes different and the *day* can sound like *dee* (usually short and sharp like the letter D).

- *Sunday* becomes *Sun-dee*
- *Monday* - *Mun-dee*
- *Tuesday* - *Choose-dee* (see further explanation below)

- *Wednesday* - *Wens-dee* (1st D and 2nd E are rarely pronounced and if so, it sounds more like *Weddinsday* but never *Weddinsdee*)
- *Thursday* - *Thurs-dee*
- *Friday* - *Fri-dee*
- *Saturday* - *Satta-dee/Sadda-dee* or even shorter *Sat-dee/Sad-dee* (both D's pronounced separately with the syllable break between them)

Australian English has some vowels not used in some other kinds of English. For example, the words *bad* and *lad* do not rhyme because *bad* has a long vowel and *lad* has a short one. Also, *cot* does not sound like *caught* and *bother* does not rhyme with *father*.

As with American English the /t/ sound can sometimes sound like a /d/ sound. This usually happens between vowels. So, for example,

- *waiter* can sound like *wader*
- *betting* can sound like *bedding*
- *got it* can sound like *god it*
- *thirty* can sound like *thirdy*

Also in the Australian accent a /t/ sound plus the sound of *you* comes out sounding like *chew* and a /d/ sound plus the sound of *you* comes out sounding like *Jew*. Here are some examples of things which sound the same.

- *Tuesday* and *choose day*
- *lightyear* and *lie cheer*
- *due* and *Jew*
- *dune* and *June*

Australians pronounce *wh* and *w* the same. Some examples are:

- *which* and *witch*
- *whether* and *weather*
- *whales* and *Wales*

## Words

[[change](#) | [change source](#)]

Australians use many words that other English speakers do not use. The famous Australian greeting, for example, is *G'day!*. A native forest is called [the bush](#) and the deserts in Australia is called the [outback](#).

Many words were brought to Australia from Britain and Ireland. For example, *mate* meaning "friend" which is still used in Britain. Some of these words have changed in meaning.

A few words have come from [Australian Aboriginal](#) languages. These are mainly names for animals, plants and places. Some examples are [dingo](#) and [kangaroo](#).

Sometimes we do not know where a word came from. For example, *dinkum* or *fair dinkum* means "true", "is that true?", "this is the truth". But nobody

knows where the word is from: some say the word comes from [Chinese](#), others say the word comes from [England](#).

## Spelling

[[change](#) | [change source](#)]

Australian spelling mostly comes from British spelling. In words like *organise*, *realise*, where *-ise* is the expected and taught spelling method. In words like *colour*, *favourite*, *-our* is the norm, but there are exceptions such as the *Labor* Party (which was deliberately chosen on the formation of the Party to avoid confusion with the British Labour Party), *Victor Harbor* and *Outer Harbor* (*geographically unique to the State of South Australia as opposed to place names in other States, e.g., Boat Harbour and Coffs Harbour*).

*Program* and *jail*, on the other hand, are more common than *programme* and *gaol*. Another couple of preferences of the American spelling is with *analog*, not, *analogue* (in general, the *-ue* is dropped), *livable*, not *liveable*, *guerilla* not *guerrilla*, *verandah* not *veranda*, *burqa* not *burka*, and *pastie*, not *pasty*. With the exception of "spelt", words that use *-t* in en-GB and end in *-ed* in en-US, Australia follows the US usage.

## Kinds of Australian English

[[change](#) | [change source](#)]

Most [linguists](#) split Australian English up into three main kinds. These are Broad, General, and Cultivated Australian English.

Broad Australian English sounds very strongly Australian, when compared to other kinds of English. [Steve Irwin](#) spoke Broad Australian English.

General Australian English is the middle ground. It is used by most Australians, and can be heard in Australian-made films and television programs. [Hugh Jackman](#) and [Nicole Kidman](#) speak General Australian English.

Cultivated Australian English is similar to "[Received Pronunciation](#)", the type of [British English](#) spoken by people such as [David Attenborough](#). [Cate Blanchett](#) and [Geoffrey Rush](#) speak Cultivated Australian English.

Australian English demographics change from state to state but it's only slight compared to the variety of British and American English accents. A mixture of Broad and General Australian English accents can be heard across Southern and Western Australia, while Broad Accents are more common by themselves in states such as the [Northern Territory](#) and Central Australia. Large metropolitan areas such as Melbourne, Sydney and Southeast Queensland share large portions of each accent. Cultivated Australian English is rare compared to the rest but can be observed in the upper and middle classes, from migrant families with recent British ties (up

to a century and a half in some cases) and in performing arts communities where pronounced English is of most benefit.

Subtle changes on an individual level include how the letter 'a' sounds like in the words *castle*, *dance*, *chance*, *advance*, etc. Some use the vowel in *calm* others use the vowel in *mat* or *mad*. Another regional difference is the pronunciation of 'e' sounds especially followed by 'l', such as *Melbourne*, *helped*, *cellist*, with Victorians generally transposing the 'a' and 'e' vowel sounds in many words. For example, pronouncing an 'e' sound in words such as *alchemy* or *chalice*, yet an 'a' vowel sound for *Celery*.

There are also geographical differences in the definition of words Australians use in different parts of the country as well. For example, *football* (or *footy* for short) means "[rugby league](#)" in NSW, Queensland and the ACT, but "[Australian rules football](#)" in everywhere else in Australia. In NSW, a swimming costume is called a *cossie* or *swimmers*, in Queensland it is called *togs* and *bathers* in Victoria.

## Other websites

[[change](#) | [change source](#)]

- [Australian National Dictionary Centre](#)
- [Australian Word Map](#) (ABC and Macquarie Dictionary) - documents regionalisms
- [Introduction to Australian Phonetics and Phonology](#)
- [Macquarie Dictionary](#)
- [World English Organisation Archived](#) 2005-07-11 at the [Wayback Machine](#)
- [Aussie English for beginners -- the origins, meanings and a quiz to test your knowledge Archived](#) 2006-10-06 at the [Wayback Machine](#) at the National Museum of Australia.
- [Strine - Australian Terms Explained Archived](#) 2008-07-23 at the [Wayback Machine](#) -- basic list of Strine words at [School Spirit Archived](#) 2006-10-19 at the [Wayback Machine](#) webstrip.

Retrieved from "[https://simple.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Australian\\_English&oldid=9846493](https://simple.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Australian_English&oldid=9846493)"