

Basic differences between British and American English

GRAMMAR

LEVEL
Intermediate

NUMBER
EN_BE_2637G

LANGUAGE
English

lingoda

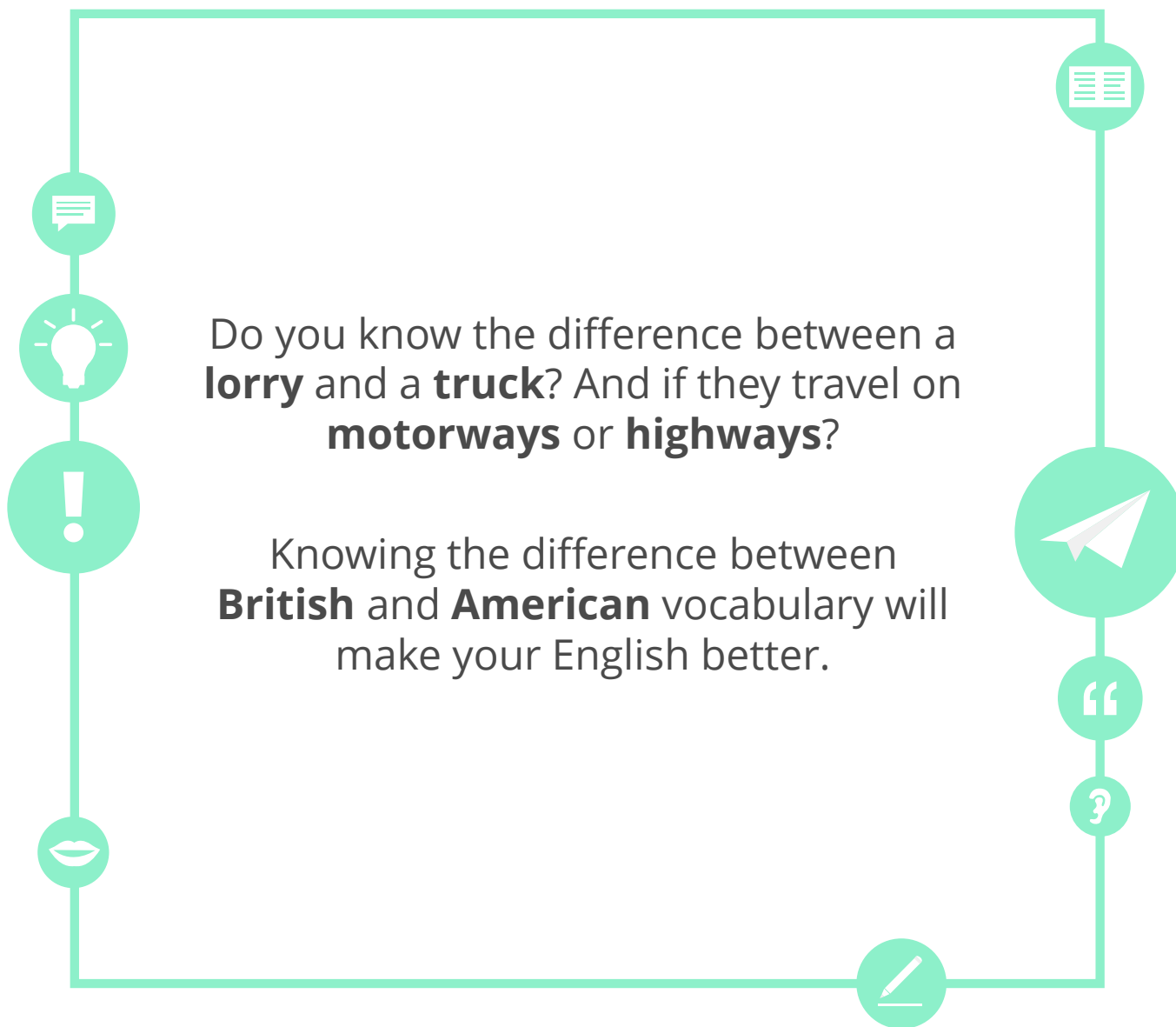




Goals

- Can identify simple vocabulary differences between British and American English.
- Can compare and contrast British and American English.





Do you know the difference between a **lorry** and a **truck**? And if they travel on **motorways** or **highways**?

Knowing the difference between **British** and **American** vocabulary will make your English better.



Preview and warm-up

In this lesson you are going to learn about some important **differences** between **British and American English**.



Are these **sweets** or **candies**?



Should I speak British or American English?

- Think about **where** you might be **working** or **visiting** in the future and where your **colleagues** come from. This might help you choose whether you want to learn **British or American English**.
- It doesn't really matter which **variety** of **English** you use. **English-speakers** all understand each other so it's up to you.

- **The US and Canada** use **American English**.
- Other English-speaking countries, including **the UK, Australia** and **New Zealand** use **British English**.





British vs American English

- The most important **differences** in **British and American English** are in **vocabulary**.
- It will make your **English** better if you are able to use the **correct vocabulary** for where you are or who you are talking to.

British English	American English
underground	subway
queue	line
chemist's	drugstore
bank holiday	national holiday
ill	sick



Examples

- Here are some examples in context:



The New York **subway** is different from the London **underground**.

British people love **queuing**.



I feel **sick**, I need to go to the **drugstore**.



British vs American English

- Here are some more common **vocabulary** differences:

British English	American English
post	mail
holiday	vacation
autumn	fall
toilet	restroom
mobile phone	cell phone





Examples

- Here are some examples in context:



Has the **post** arrived?

I love **fall**.



Where is the **restroom**?

No **mobile phones** in here.





Write the American English of these British words

1. post

→ mail

2. toilet



3. underground



4. queue



5. autumn





What can you see?

What can you see in these pictures? Try to remember the words in British and American English.





Rewrite the sentences

Rewrite these sentences in British English.

Is there a restroom in the subway?

I love going on vacation in the fall.

I am standing in line at the drugstore.

A notebook page with horizontal lines and circular icons, intended for writing the rewritten sentences.



Food in Britain vs America

- A lot of **foods** have different names in **British and American English**.
- Here are some common ones:

British English	American English
sweets	candy
biscuit	cookie
chips	French fries
crisps	potato chips
courgette	zucchini



Examples

- Here are some examples in context:



I love **sweets** and **biscuits**!

I eat **potato chips** when I'm watching TV.





Travel and transport

- Here are some words related to **travel and transport** in **British and American English**:

British English	American English
motorway	highway
lorry	truck
pavement	sidewalk
zebra crossing	crosswalk
diversion	detour



Examples

- Here are some examples in context:



I drive fast on the **motorway**.

Trucks deliver food.



We walk on the **sidewalk**.

We cross at the **zebra crossing**.





Categorise

Categorise the words into British or American English.

motorway

detour

sweets

zucchini

truck

pavement

cookie

crisps

British English

American English



Match the words to the pictures

1. potato chips

2. truck

3. sidewalk

4. French fries

5. biscuits

6. courgette

7. highway

8. diversion

A



C



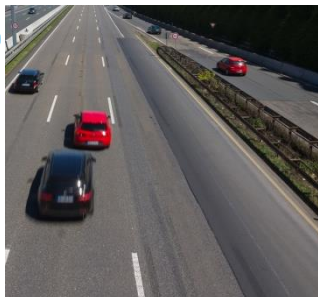
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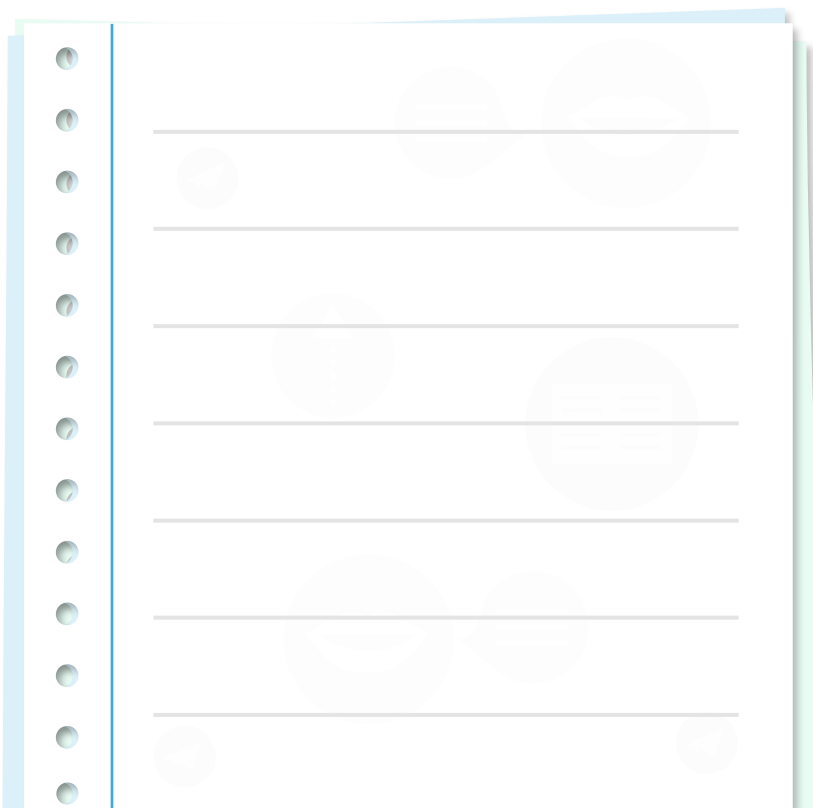
H





Writing in British English

Write three sentences in British English and give them to a partner to change into American English.





Spelling differences

- Lots of words are the same in **British and American English** but they are **spelt differently**.

Spelling change	British English	American English
-re/-er	centre	center
ou/o	colour	color
-s/-z	organise	organize
ence/ense	offence	offense



More spelling differences

- Here are some more examples of words with **spelling differences**:

British English	American English
neighbour	neighbor
humour	humor
favourite	favorite
apologise	apologize



He has a great sense of **humor**.



Grammatical differences

- Sometimes, **British English** and **American English** use **different grammar**.
- Look at some examples below:

Grammar change	British English	American English
present perfect/past simple	I have already eaten.	I already ate.
have/take	I am having a shower.	I am taking a shower.
shall/should or can	Shall I open the window?	Can I open the window?



Grammatical differences

- Here are some more examples of **grammatical differences** in context:

British English	American English
I have seen that film.	I saw that movie.
I need to have a rest.	I need to take a rest.
Shall we meet at 7?	Should we meet at 7?



Spelling

Spell these words in British or American English.

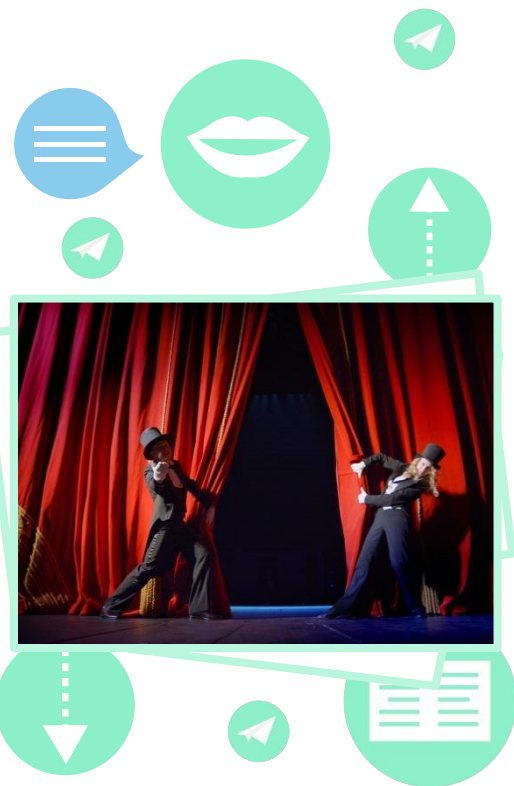
theatre

liter

analyze

favour

labour





British or American English?

	BRITISH	AMERICAN
1. I have just got home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. He is taking a walk.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I live in the city center.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Heather already finished the lesson.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I enjoy going to the theatre.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I am having a shower.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Transform the sentences from British to American English

1. I have just spoken to him.



I just spoke to him.

2. Shall I call Jim?



3. I want to have a bath.



4. I have watched this show before.



5. Dan has been to Italy.





Pronunciation in British and American English

- **Pronunciation** is quite different in **British and American English**.
- The most obvious difference is that in **British English** the letter *r* is **soft** or **silent**.
- Practise saying the sentences below:



I rode my **horse** to the **park**.

I went **further** than **Lorelei**.





Pronunciation in British and American English

- Another **pronunciation difference** is with the letter **a**. It is a **long unrounded sound** in **British English** but a **shorter sound** in **American English**.
- Practise saying the sentences below:



I **have half** a pint of beer.

I **can't** come **after** class.





Practise saying these sentences in British or American English

I'm going to park my car.

I didn't get a chance to try the chair.

I want a roast dinner with pork sirloin.

I ate a banana in the cabana.



Reflect on the goals

Go back to the second slide of the lesson and check if you have achieved all the goals of the lesson.

yes

no





Reflect on this lesson

Think about everything you have seen in this lesson.
What were the most difficult activities or words? The easiest?



If you have time, go over
the most difficult slides again



Answer key

Exercise p. 10

2. restroom, 3. subway, 4. line, 5. fall

Exercise p. 12

Is there a toilet in the underground? I love going on holiday in autumn. I am standing in a queue at the chemists.

Exercise p. 17

British English: motorway, pavement, sweets, crisps,
American English: truck, detour, cookie, zucchini!

Exercise p. 18

1. C, 2. G, 3. F, 4. D, 5. H, 6. A, 7. B, 8. E

Exercise p. 24

theater, litre, analyse, favor, labor

Exercise p. 25

1. British, 2. American, 3. American, 4. American, 5. British, 6. British

Exercise p. 26

2. Should I call Jim? 3. I want to take a bath. 4. I watched this show before. 5. Dan went to Italy.





Categorise the words

British English

American English

highway

crisps

zucchini

restroom

truck

zebra crossing

sidewalk

detour

autumn

candy



Transform the sentences

Transform the sentences from British to American English.

1. Where is the toilet?
2. I like eating sweets and biscuits.
3. This is the pavement and this is a zebra crossing.
4. There are a lot of lorries on the motorway.



Homework answer key

Exercise p. 35

1. Where is the restroom? 2. I like eating candy and cookies. 3. This is the sidewalk and this is a crosswalk. 4. There are a lot of trucks on the highway.

Exercise p. 34

British English: crisps, zebra crossing, autumn
American English: highway, zucchini, restroom, truck, sidewalk, detour, candy



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