

Your American English Magazine



VOCABULARY, GRAMMAR, AMERICAN CULTURE



PROSPERO
ENGLISH

Thematic Vocabulary

Winter

Story of the Month

Grammar
ain't and aren't I

USA
Route 66

Technical English
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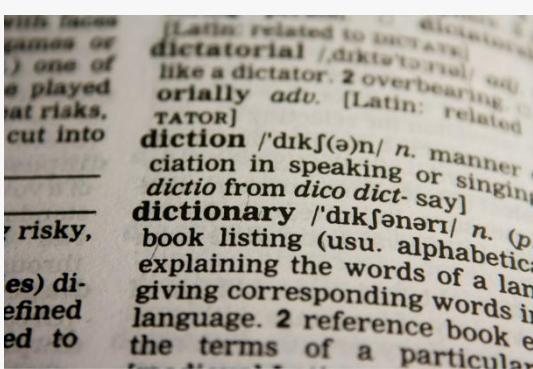
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Editor's Letter

Hey there, I'm excited to deliver this very first issue of Your American English Magazine to you. I don't know how this new magazine will be doing. Hopefully well, because if there is interest in it, I'll be publishing more issues on a regular basis.

So, what will you find in this issue? First, there's a story, *A Winter Hike*. I'm planning to write a story like that in each issue. It will contain useful vocabulary and grammar that will be explained alongside. This column will be called Story of the Month.

Next, we'll have a look at some winter-related vocabulary. We'll be talking about weather, clothes, transportation and heating, among other things.

In the Grammar column we'll be talking about the informal form *A/N'T* and the question tag *AREN'T I* used in first person singular.

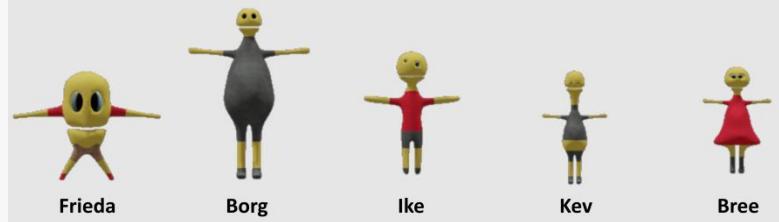
In the USA column we'll be talking about the famous Route 66. In this part of the magazine I would like to present content related to American history, geography and culture.

Next, in the Technical English column, we'll have a look at some geometry-related vocabulary, and in particular vocabulary related to the elements of a circle. In this column I would like to present technical vocabulary used in math, science, arts, politics, geography, law, technology, computer science and more.

Next, in the Phrasal Verbs column, you'll have the opportunity to learn some useful phrasal verbs related to traveling by car. In the following issues of the magazine I'd like to introduce other phrasal verbs by topic.

Throughout the articles of this and the following issues of the magazine I will be showing you the pronunciation of some more difficult or rarely used words. To do that we'll need a system of symbols representing the sounds of English. I'll be using the International Phonetic Alphabet as used in Merriam Webster's Learner's Dictionary. We'll have a look at this alphabet in the Pronunciation column near the end of this issue.

And now meet the characters that you will see a lot in the magazine. These are 3D models that I made in Blender. You will see them often in all the columns of the magazine. There will be more, but for now there are: Frieda, her husband Borg and their kids, Ike, Kev and Bree.



I really hope you'll like Your American English Magazine. I will be grateful for any feedback from you. What do you like? What don't you like? What would you improve? Maybe you have some ideas that you would like to read about in the future issues of the magazine. You can contact me via e-mail: americanenglishmagazine@gmail.com. Enjoy reading.

Kamil Pakula

Story of the Month

A Winter Hike



Yes, I know what you're thinking... Who is this beautiful lady in the picture? Well, it's Frieda. And there's her daughter, Bree. She's building a snowman. It's been a **clear**, sunny day, so Frieda, her husband Borg and their daughter Bree went for a **hike** in the forest. Now it's time to go back home, but Borg is missing.

FRIEDA: **There you go.** What a beautiful snowman. You did a **masterly** job. I think you have a **knack** for building things.

BREE: Oh, do you really think so, mom? I'd say it's just a **slipshod pile** of snow that slightly resembles a snowman.

clear - not having any clouds, fog, etc.
It was a beautifully clear night.

hike - a usually long walk especially for pleasure or exercise
a 5-kilometer hike around the lake

There you go - used to say that sb has accomplished sth
There you go, you did it. Congratulations.

masterly - showing great skill
It was a masterly presentation.

knack - an ability, talent, or special skill needed to do sth
She had a knack for telling jokes.

slipshod /'slɪp'shəd/ - very careless or poorly done or made
slipshod construction

pile - a group of things that are put one on top of another
a pile of wood / clothes / leaves

sweetie - a person you love very much
My sweetie is coming back tomorrow, I can't wait.

pick up - to go somewhere in order to get and bring back

FRIEDA: You are so modest, **sweetie**. By the way, have you seen your daddy?

BREE: No, I have no idea where he could be.

FRIEDA: Ike and Kev are coming to **pick us up**. This man is **driving me nuts**. Where is he?

Ike and Kev are Bree's brothers. They didn't go with them because Ike had to study for his math test and Kev wanted to visit his friend. But they promised they'd pick them all up before **sundown**.

By the way, Borg is 47 years old, Frieda is 46, Ike is 16, Kev is 14 and Bree is 12. Just so that you know.



Ike and Kev are coming in their **snowmobile**. There's a lot of snow everywhere.

IKE: It's getting dark. We better hurry.

KEV: Hey, Ike. Do you even know where we are? Let's stop here and **get our bearings**.

IKE: No, Kev, we don't have to do that. I know exactly where we are.

KEV: So, how much farther?

IKE: Five minutes, **tops**.

I picked up the car from the repair shop.
Pick the kids up from school.

drive sb nuts - to make sb crazy

sundown - the time when the sun goes below the horizon, sunset

Let's meet tomorrow at sundown.

WILL in reported speech

In reported speech WILL is replaced by WOULD:
direct speech:

He said: 'I **will** do that.'

reported speech:

He said he **would** do that.

snowmobile /'snoumōʊ,bi:l/ - a vehicle used for traveling on snow or ice

BETTER

BETTER is often used instead of HAD BETTER or 'D BETTER, so:

You **better** go.

= You'd **better** go.

= You had **better** go.

get/find your bearings - to find out your position

We had to find our bearings [= figure out exactly where we were] before we moved on.

farther vs further

We use **farther** for physical distance:

The village was **farther** away than I'd thought.

We use **further** in figurative sense:

We need **further** information.

But **further** may also be used for physical distance, so you can say:

How much **farther** to the city?
or
How much **further** to the city?

With physical distance **farther** is preferred, though.

tops - at the very most

It will cost \$5, **tops**.



Suddenly the snowman begins to **writhe**.

FRIEDA: What's going on? Why is the snowman writhing like this?

BREE: Yes, this is strange.

FRIEDA: **Shush! I could have sworn that** I heard him **snort**.

BREE: You mean the snowman?

FRIEDA: Yeah, who else?

BREE: How is it possible?

FRIEDA: **I smell a rat** here. Is there anything that you would like to tell me, sweetie?

writhe /'raɪð/ - to twist your body from side to side
The snakes were writhing on the floor.



a snake writhing on the floor

shush - used to tell sb to be quiet

I could have sworn that... - used to say that you feel completely sure about sth, though it appears not to be true

I can't find my keys. I could have sworn that I left them here on the desk.

snort - to force air noisily through your nose

He always snorts like a pig when he laughs too hard.

smell a rat - to think or suspect that sth is wrong about a situation



Suddenly Borg jumps out of the snowman and **lunges** at his wife. Bree is lying on the snow. She's **in stitches**.

BORG: **Gotcha!** Ha! That was funny!

BREE: **Yay**, that was **hilarious**, don't you think, mom?

lunge /'lʌndʒ/ - to move or reach forward in a sudden, forceful way

The lion lunged at its prey.
She lunged at him with an ax.

in stitches - laughing very hard

Your joke had us all in stitches.

gotcha /'gə:tʃə/ - used in writing to represent the sound of the phrase **got you** when it is spoken quickly

He ran after me, grabbed me by the arm and said "Gotcha!" [=I got you, I caught you]

yay - used to express joy, approval, or excitement
Yay, we did it!

hilarious - very funny



Ike and Kev finally arrive and see their parents lying on the snow and Bree laughing.

IKE: Hey, mom, dad! What's going on? We could hear you **horsing around** from quite a distance.

BORG: Hey boys, Bree and I played a joke on mommy. It was so funny.

FRIEDA: Borg, YOU are a **joke**. You should **set a good example** for the kids and what was that? You're such a **crank**!

BORG: Oh, come on, honey! It was just for fun.

FRIEDA: **Never mind!** Now everybody get on the snowmobile. We're going home.



Frieda, Borg, Ike, Kev and Bree are going home.

FRIEDA: It's been a long day, right? Did you enjoy it?

BREE: Yes, mommy. What I liked best was the joke we played on you. I wish you had seen your face when dad jumped out from the snowman.

horse around - to play in a rough or loud way
He likes horsing around with his kids.



father horsing around with his kids

joke - sb or sth that is not worth taking seriously
Your essay was a joke.
She became a national joke.

set an example / trend / standard - to cause sth to be accepted as an example, rule, etc., to establish a standard, trend, etc. for others to follow or try to copy
The law must set a higher standard for all producers.

crank - a person who has strange ideas or thinks too much about one thing

never mind - used to tell sb not to worry about sth
Yes, it was wrong, but never mind, it doesn't matter.

wish - to want sth to be true or to happen

Present:
I wish I knew you better.
implies: I don't know you too well.

Past:
I wish I had known you better.
implies: I didn't know you well back then.

leave it at that - not to change sth or discuss it further

make it - to reach a particular place, goal, etc.
We made it to the top.
We can still make it home before midnight.

BORG: OK, Bree, let's just **leave it at that**. Mommy didn't seem very excited about the joke. Hey, kids, are you as hungry as I am?

IKE: I think I could eat something. Let's go faster or else we won't **make it** home before dark.



Now they're going really fast. They are all **starving** and want to get home as soon as possible.

FRIEDA: Look at those snow-covered trees. Don't they look **gorgeous**?

KEV: I like snow. I like playing in the snow.

FRIEDA: You see, Borg? Your son **takes after** you in this **respect**. You also like playing in the snow, as you just demonstrated today.

(after a while)

Right, Borg?

There's no reply. It **turns out** Borg's **gone**.

FRIEDA: So, **here we go again**.

(louder so that Borg can hear her wherever he is in the forest)

Borg, come here. Now. It's not funny at all.

But Borg doesn't come. They have to stop there and look for him.



starving / starved - very hungry

Let's stop here, I'm starved!
Give them sth to eat, they're starving.

gorgeous - very beautiful or attractive

Her dress is absolutely gorgeous.

take after sb - to be like sb, such as a parent, to resemble sb



respect - a particular way of thinking about or looking at sth

You were right in one respect.
Your book is perfect in all respects.

turn out - to happen, end, or develop in a particular way

The journey didn't turn out the way we had planned.
As it turned out, we still had a lot of time.

gone - not present, no longer at a place

How long will you be gone?
I wanted to see Markus, but it turns out he's gone.

here we go again - used when sth unpleasant is about to happen again



They're all looking for Borg.

- BREE:** Dad! Where are you?
- KEV:** Maybe he was eaten by a wolf.
- FRIEDA:** Oh, come on, Kev, I don't think there are any wolves here.
- IKE:** Daddy, where are you? This is an awesome joke, as always, but you can come now. We want to go home.
- FRIEDA:** Ike, maybe you were driving too fast and he **fell off** the snowmobile while you were turning.
- IKE:** Yes, it's possible. He may be **injured**.
- FRIEDA:** You're right. Let's find him.



In the meantime...

- BORG:** Give me those nuts. I'm hungry. And stop **barking** at me.

For the following couple minutes Borg is trying to persuade

Nouns Ending in -F and -FE

If a noun ends in -f or -fe, we sometimes change the 'f' to 'v' and add the plural ending -es or -s.

Examples:

wolf → wolves	shelf → shelves
wife → wives	thief → thieves
knife → knives	calf → calves
life → lives	loaf → loaves
half → halves	self → selves
leaf → leaves	

Some nouns don't follow this pattern and just add the regular plural ending.

Examples:

roof → roofs	safe → safes
chief → chiefs	belief → beliefs
reef → reefs	proof → proofs

There's also a group of nouns that form their plurals in either way (here the more common form is given first):

wharf → wharves / wharfs
dwarf → dwarfs / dwarves
handkerchief → handkerchiefs / handkerchieves
hoof → hooves / hoofs
scarf → scarves / scarfs

fall off - to stop being attached to sth

The handle was loose and fell off when I touched it.

injured - physically hurt or harmed

He was badly injured in the accident.

bark - to make a short, loud sound resembling a dog's bark

reluctant /rɪ'lʌktənt/ - feeling or showing doubt about doing sth, not willing or eager to do sth

She was very reluctant to talk about it.

harass /hə'ræs/ - to annoy or bother sb in a constant or repeated way

The girl was harassed by some students.

rodent /'rəʊdənt/ - a small mammal (such as a mouse, rat, squirrel, or beaver) that has sharp front teeth



rodents

the squirrel to give him the nuts, but the squirrel is very **reluctant** to do so.

Borg keeps **harassing** the poor **rodent** until it finally bites him. Frieda and the kids hear him **howl**.



IKE: Please, daddy, come down from the tree.

FRIEDA: What's wrong with you? What are you doing up there?

BORG: I was so hungry and suddenly there is this squirrel eating nuts. This **made my mouth water**.

FRIEDA: **Get a grip on yourself**, Borg! Come down immediately. We're going home.



Finally they can continue on their way home.

BREE: I'm tired, mom. I think I'll just **turn in** as soon as we get home.

FRIEDA: Yes, my child. It's been a long and **tiring** day. But don't worry. We're almost there.

howl /'hawəl/ - to cry out loudly in pain, anger, amusement, etc.

They howled with laughter.

THIS

THIS can be used to introduce sb or sth that has not been mentioned before, usually to add some excitement when telling a story.

I was waiting at the bus stop when **this** man comes up to me and asks for money. [= when a man came up to me and asked for money]

make one's mouth water - to make one's mouth wet with saliva especially because they want to eat or taste sth
Just smelling the delicious steak made my mouth water.
[= made me want to eat it]

The corresponding adjective is **mouth-watering**:
a mouth-watering aroma

get a grip on yourself / **get a grip** - to get control of your thoughts and emotions and stop behaving in a foolish or uncontrolled way

Get a grip on yourself! You can't take the zebra home!

turn in - to go to bed

It's eleven o'clock already? Time to turn in.

Time to turn in. Good night.



tiring /'tajərɪŋ/ - causing you to feel tired

This competition was extremely tiring.

Winter

Winter. The coldest season of the year. Let's have a look at some winter-related vocabulary. As you know, winter can be pretty cold, at least in some parts of the world. It may snow and the days are short. There are lots of ways of saying that it is cold or that you are cold.

It's Cold



As you can see, Jack Frost arrived early this year. We say **Jack Frost** to refer to frost or cold weather in general.

Now, what is frost in the first place? **Frost** is the occurrence of weather that is cold enough to make water freeze. Here Frieda isn't dressed appropriately because she wasn't prepared for the cold weather. It was the first frost of the season.

Frieda is out there, in **the cold**. We say so if we mean cold weather. Borg wants her to come back home. He opens the window and calls:

- Frieda, come in out of the cold!

Then he closes the window to keep out the **chill**. By **chill** we mean a cold feeling, a degree of cold that can be felt and that is usually unpleasant.

Maybe it's just a cold snap, but who knows? A **cold snap** is a brief period of very cold weather.

Anyway, yesterday the temperature was five degrees above zero. Today it fell below zero. By **zero** we mean the temperature shown by the zero mark on a thermometer. We're talking about the Celsius scale here. Zero degrees Celsius corresponds to 32 degrees Fahrenheit. This is the **freezing point**, so the temperature at which water freezes.

Frieda should be wearing warm clothes to prevent **frostbite**. This is a condition in which part of your body (such as your fingers or toes) freezes or almost freezes. If sth is affected or injured by frostbite, we say it's **frostbitten**, which is the past participle form of the verb **to frostbite**. The three irregular forms are: *frostbite, frostbit, frostbitten*.

Frieda may also suffer from **hypothermia** /haɪpərəʊ'θərmijə/, which is a condition in which the temperature of your body is very low. If you fall asleep in cold weather you can even die from hypothermia.

There are many adjectives that you can use to say it's cold. Here are some examples. You can say **nippy** if it's somewhat cold, chilly. For example, you can say it was a nippy morning.



But here you can see Borg has **numb** fingers, which means he is unable to feel anything in them because of cold. His toes probably also went numb. You can also use the adjective **benumbed**, which means made numb, for example by cold.

Anyway, if Borg has numb fingers and toes, it means it's not just somewhat cold, but rather very cold.

There are many adjectives you can use to express the same idea. You can say it's **freezing** or **freezing cold**. You can say the weather is **icy** and Borg's feet are **ice-cold**. And this wind... There's a **bitter** wind, it's **bitter cold**. You could also say there's a **biting** wind and it's **biting cold**. Or, you could say there's a **glacial** /'gleɪʃəl/ wind. These all mean very cold.

And look at the **frigid** /'frɪdʒəd/ water in the pond. It means very cold water.

It's going to be a frosty night. **Frosty** means cold enough to produce frost. We can also use the noun to talk about it. Then we would be talking about the **frostiness** of the night.

If sth is covered with ice, we say it's **icy**. Like the road you can see behind Borg. There may be icy roads, icy sidewalks and so on.

If you want to describe sth that is related to, happening during or typical of winter, you can use the adjective **wintry** (sometimes also **wintery**). For example dark, wintry days.

Now, about the winds. If they blow loudly and violently, they're **blustery** winds.



Here's Bree. She went for a walk to the park, but she forgot to dress warmly. She's **chilled** by the cold wind. It means she's cold. Or maybe she's even very cold, so **chilled to the bone** or **chilled to the marrow**. How do I know that? Look at her, she's shivering. **To shiver**

means to shake slightly because you are cold, afraid, etc.

- Hey, Bree, you're going to freeze out there without a jacket.

This is what I could tell her. **To freeze** also means to be very cold.

And she could say:

- I'm freezing. Hopefully not to death.

To be freezing means to be very cold too.



Here you can see Ike skating on a lake. There are some other kids as well. This can be dangerous. But how is it possible? It was so cold that the lake **froze over**. We can also say that the low temperature **froze** the lake. If the water in the lake froze completely, we say the lake **froze solid**. As you can see, the verb **to freeze** means to become or cause to become a hard substance (such as ice) because of cold.

Now, if you like fishing, you can still do it in winter. This is called **ice fishing** and is done through a hole that is cut in the ice on a lake, pond, etc. But maybe not on the lake Kev and the other kids are skating on.

Precipitations

Precipitation is water that falls to the ground as rain, snow, etc. It may rain in winter, but if it's cold, it usually snows. So, let's talk about all the possible forms of water that may come to the ground when it's cold.



First of all, there's snow. We use the word **snowfall** to talk about an amount of snow that falls in a single storm or in a particular period of time. If it snows a lot, there's a heavy snowfall.

A region that receives an appreciable amount of annual snowfall is known as a **snowbelt**.

A **shower** is a brief fall of snow over a small area. We can have a light shower for example.

A **flurry** is a brief and light snowfall. Flurries are expected today in the south of the country - this is what you could hear on TV.

A **snowstorm** is a storm with a large amount of falling snow.

A **blizzard** is a severe snowstorm that goes on for a long time. It's difficult to drive because of a blizzard.

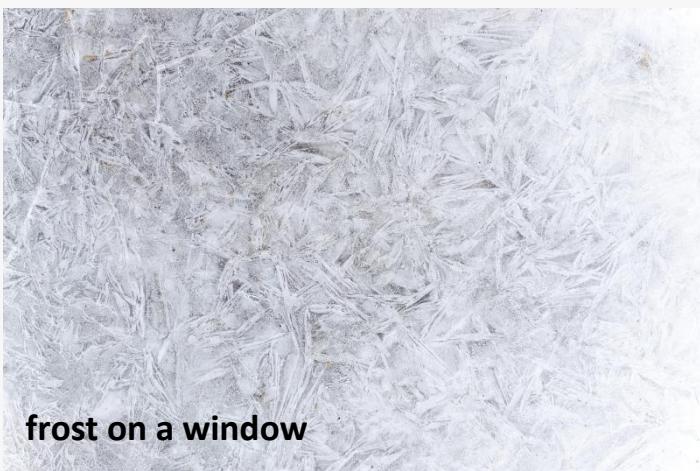
Another type of snowstorm is a **whiteout**. This is a snowstorm in which blowing or falling snow and clouds make it very difficult to see. You can get caught in a whiteout.

Sometimes the rain freezes as it lands. Then we have an **ice storm**. We can also use the term **freezing rain**. You can see a glaze of freezing rain on the windshield.

We call frozen or partly frozen rain **sleet**. The snow may turn to sleet. There's also the verb **to sleet**. You can say it's sleeting outside.



Then there is **frost** - a thin layer of ice that forms on the ground, on grass, etc., when the air becomes cold. On a cold morning grass and leaves in a forest are often covered with frost.



Frost can also form on windows. If sth is covered with frost, you can use the adjective **frosty** to describe it, just like the frosty window in the picture. There's also the verb **to frost** or **to frost up**. It means to cover sth with frost or to become covered with frost. In the picture you see that the cold frosted the window. Or, in other words, the window frosted (up).

Snow and Ice Formations

Snow and ice can be found in different forms.

a snow crystal



If you look closer, you will see all the particular **ice crystals**, also known as **ice needles**. These are ice particles that float in the air in cold weather. A single ice crystal that has achieved a sufficient size becomes a **snowflake**. Snowflakes are soft pieces of frozen water that fall from the sky as snow.



Snow often accumulates where it falls. You can collect it and make snowballs. A **snowball** is a ball of snow that you can throw. Not all snow is good for making snowballs. In the picture you can see a **snowball fight** - a playful fight in which people throw snowballs at each other.

- Let's have a snowball fight! - Kev suggested. And now they're fighting.

You can also build a **snowman**, just like Bree did in the story at the beginning of this issue of the magazine. A snowman is a figure made of snow that is shaped to look like a person.



snowdrift

Snowballs, and even more so snowmen, are artificial forms. But there are many natural forms of accumulated snow. One of them is a snowdrift. A **snowdrift** is a hill of snow that is formed by wind.

If you're driving and there's a snowdrift in front of you, you have to stop the car. Your car may also slide into a snowbank. A **snowbank** is a pile of snow especially along the side of a road.



We use the adjective **snowy** to describe sth that has a lot of snow or is covered in snow. We can have a snowy winter. Which was the snowiest winter in your life? You can also say snowy mountaintops, streets or fields.

If there is too much snow, you may get **snowed in**, which means unable to leave a place because a lot of snow is falling or has fallen so you are or blocked with snow. You can get snowed in at the hotel for a couple days. You can also say that a road was snowed in, so it's blocked with snow. In a situation like this you can also use the adjective **snowbound**. If you are snowbound somewhere for a week, you can't leave the place because of the snow blocking the roads,

airports, etc. We then have snowbound roads or airports.

A **snow day** is a day when schools and businesses are closed because a lot of snow is falling.



snowcap

Snow may cover the peaks of mountains. This covering cap of snow is called **snowcap** and we say the mountains are **snowcapped**, which means they have their tops covered with snow.



ice floe

Sometimes you can see flat pieces of ice floating on water. These are **ice floes**.



icicles

Another ice formation are icicles. An **icicle** /'aɪ,sɪkəl/ is a hanging piece of ice formed when water freezes as it drips down from sth (such as a roof).

Finally, an **icy patch** is an area of ice that is surrounded by areas without ice. Icy patches may be dangerous if they are on a road.

Watch Out!



Snow and ice are slippery. **Slippery** means difficult to stand on, move on, or hold because of being smooth, wet, icy, etc. If there is ice on your stairs, your stairs are slippery. If sth is slippery, you can easily **slip**, so lose your balance and tumble. This is what happened to Kev in the picture and to some other guys. They slipped on the ice.

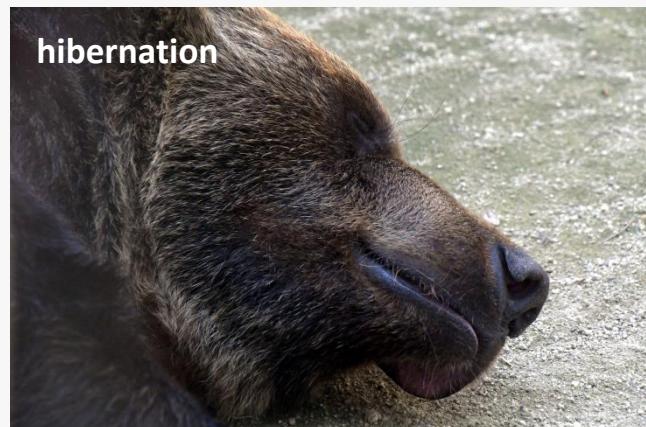
There are a few verbs with a similar meaning. One of them is **to slide**. It means to move over ice or snow smoothly and often in a way that cannot be controlled. A car can slide across the ice.

Another verb is **to skid**. It also means to slide along a road or other surface in an uncontrolled way. If you can see a car off an icy road that's probably because it skidded off the road. You can also use the noun **skid**, which means a sudden, uncontrolled sliding movement. So, in the situation described above you would say that the car went into a skid. The marks made by a skidding vehicle are called **skid marks**. If you see skid marks on the road, this may be where an accident happened.

The act of sliding or slipping may be referred to as **slippage**. You should wear boots with soles that prevent slippage.

Wintertime

Wintertime is the season of winter. There are lots of things you can do in the wintertime. Some people always go skiing in the wintertime. Others prefer to spend the winter months in a warm place, like Florida for example. We call such people **snowbirds**.



What about animals? Some animals spend the wintertime sleeping or resting. We say they **hibernate** /'haɪbə,næt/. For example bears hibernate in their dens. There is a corresponding noun, too, **hibernation** /,haɪbə,'neɪʃən/. In the picture you can see a bear in hibernation.

Some animals **overwinter**, which means spend or survive the winter, in warmer places. Many birds overwinter in Africa.



As far as plants are concerned, some of them have leaves that remain green all year long, for example pines and many other conifers. We say these are **evergreen** (adjective) trees or just **evergreens** (noun). We also say evergreen forests or leaves.

Heating

We can protect ourselves against the cold. There are many ways we can do it. One of them is by using a system that provides warmth to a room or building. We call such a system **heating** or just **heat**.

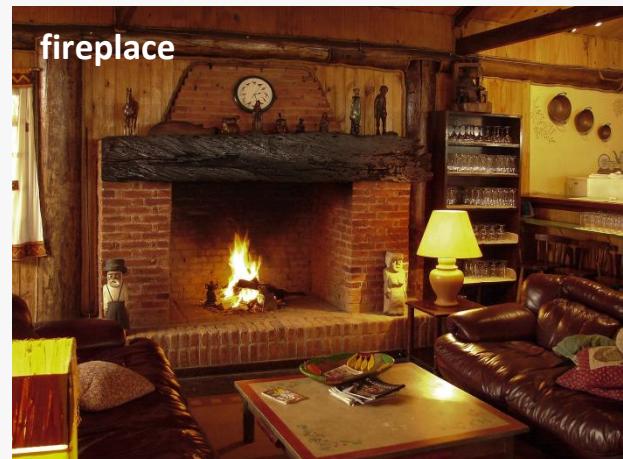
There are many types of heat: electric heat, gas heat, oil heat, solar heat, and so on. You may also have **central heating**, which is a system that heats all parts of a building. You may turn up the heat if it's very cold or turn it down if it starts getting too warm.



If you have central heating, you probably have radiators in your house. A **radiator** is a large, metal device next to the wall in a room that becomes hot and provides heat for the room when hot water passes through it.



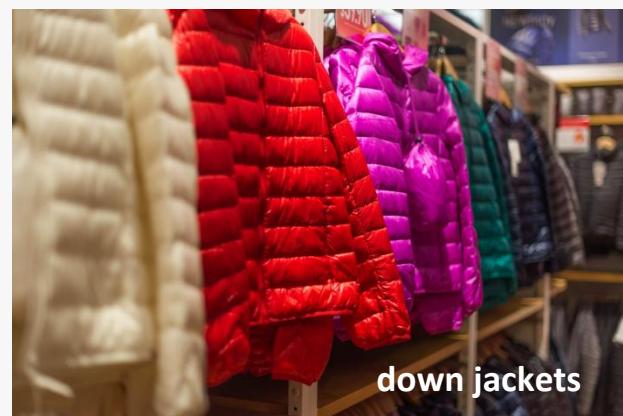
In some houses stoves are used. A **stove** is a device that burns fuel for heating or cooking. There are different types of fuel you can use. There are gas stoves and wood-burning stoves for examples. The latter are also called **woodstoves**.



Sometimes, especially in older houses, you can see a **fireplace**, which is a specially built place in a room where a fire can be built. It may be a stone or brick fireplace, as these are the most common materials used to build a fireplace. Anyway, you can build a **fire** in the fireplace. By this we mean a controlled occurrence of fire created by burning sth (such as wood or gas) in a special area (such as in a fireplace or stove). It's always nice to warm your hands over the fire. And the wood used to make a fire, so wood used as fuel, is called **firewood**. Always remember to chop enough firewood for the winter.

Clothes

You can also protect yourself against the cold by wearing warm clothes. There are many options.



First of all, you'll need a **coat**. This is an outer piece of clothing that can be long or short and that is worn to keep warm or dry. There are winter coats, fur coats, wool coats, etc.

By the way, by **fur** we mean the fur of an animal used for clothing, so you can have not only a fur coat, but also a fur collar or gloves lined with fur, to mention just a few.

Typically you'll wear a **jacket**, which is a usually short and light coat. This may be a fleece jacket or a down jacket, like the ones in the picture.

Fleece is a soft cloth that is used to make warm clothes. **Down** is a material consisting of small and very soft feathers.

You may also wear a **parka** - a very warm jacket with a hood.

Another option is an **overcoat** - a long coat that is worn to keep a person warm during cold weather.

So, this is about your body. What about your legs? If you are a man, you can wear **long johns** under your pants. They are also called **long underwear** and they are underwear that covers your legs and that is worn in cold weather.

As for your feet, you usually wear boots. A **boot** is a covering usually of leather or rubber for the entire foot and the lower part of the leg. Get some really warm boots for the winter.

To protect your neck from cold, you can wear a **scarf** which is a long piece of cloth that is worn on your shoulders, around your neck, or over your head. A scarf worn around the neck is also called a **muffler**.

What about your hands? Naturally, you can wear gloves. A **glove** /'glʌv/ is a covering for the hand that has separate parts for each finger. You will usually wear a pair of gloves.

mittens

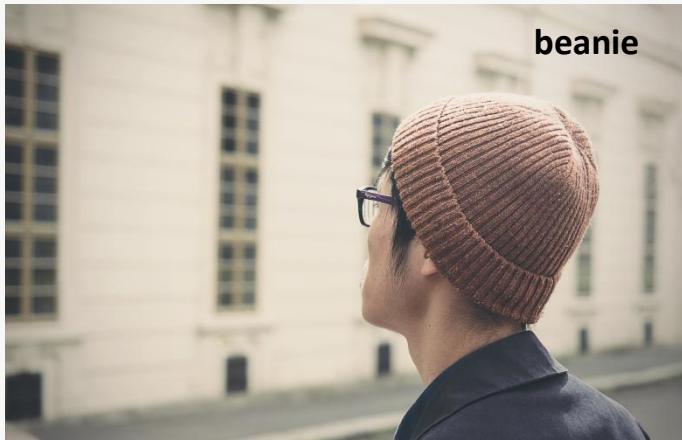


You can also wear mittens. A **mittens** /'mɪtn̩/ is a covering for the hand that has a separate part for the thumb only, like in the picture. If you wear mittens, you can say you have **mittened** hands.

muff



Another way of protecting your hands from the cold is by wearing a **muff**. This is a warm covering for your hands that is shaped like a tube with open ends in which both hands may be placed. To tell you the truth, I never saw anyone wearing a muff except in old movies or books. How about you?



To protect your head you can wear a **beanie**. This is a small, round, tight-fitting hat or cap.



To protect your ears, you can wear **earmuffs**. These are a pair of pads that cover the ears to keep them warm and that are connected by a flexible band.



Or you can wear a cap with earflaps. An **earflap** is a warm covering for the ears, usually an extension on the lower edge of a cap that may be folded up or down.

Finally, if all of these fail, just stay home and use a blanket. A **blanket** is a covering made of cloth that is used especially on a bed to keep you warm. You can have a wool blanket or an electric blanket [= a blanket warmed by electricity].

Coping with Snow and Ice

You can protect yourself from the cold by wearing warm clothes and heating your house. But how do you protect yourself from too much snow or from slippery sidewalks? Well, there are a couple options available.



The simplest thing you can do if there is too much snow is use a shovel. A **shovel** /'ʃəvl/ is a tool with a long handle that is used for lifting and throwing dirt, sand, snow, etc. There's also the verb **to shovel**, which means to remove snow from (a sidewalk, driveway, etc.) with a shovel. So, you can shovel the sidewalk. To shovel also means to create (a path) by removing snow with a shovel. So, if the snow is too deep to get to your front door, you may need to shovel a path to it.

**snowblower**

You can also use a **snowblower**, also known as a **snow thrower**. This is a machine that picks up snow from a driveway, sidewalk, etc., and throws it aside.



If there is even more snow to be removed, you may need a **snowplow**. This is a flat or curved piece of metal that is attached to the front of a vehicle and used for clearing snow from a road, driveway, etc. It's also what we call a vehicle (such as a truck) that has a snowplow attached.

To protect yourself from slippage you can **sand** your sidewalk or an icy street. In other words, you spread sand over it. There is even a machine that can do it for you, especially on larger surfaces. The machine that is used for spreading sand on icy roads is called a **sander**.

Moving on Snow

Even if you shovel all day long, sometimes you just can't remove all the snow from the street. And what if you have to go somewhere?

You can drive your car, but then it's advisable to get snow tires. A **snow tire** is a special tire that is used to give a vehicle better control when you are driving on snow and ice.



But if you can't drive your car, you can drive a **sleigh**. It's a large, open vehicle that is usually pulled by a horse over snow or ice. If you're Santa, you should be even able to fly it. Here you can see Frieda and Borg. Borg seems to have some issues with the horse.

If a sleigh seems too big for you, use a **sled**. This is a small vehicle that has a flat bottom or long, narrow strips of metal or wood on the bottom and that is used for moving over snow or ice. Children often sled for fun. By the way, **sled** can be used as a verb as well and it means to ride on a sled especially down a hill. So, take your sled and go sledding on a hill.

There's also a special type of sled that is pulled by dogs. It's called a **dogsled**. Again, this can be used as a verb too, so **to dogsled** means to ride on a dogsled. In the north people often dogsled across the tundra.



There's one more popular type of sled, the **toboggan** /tə'ba:gən/. It's a long, light sled that has a curved front and that is used for sliding over snow and ice. The corresponding verb is **to toboggan**, which simply means to ride on a toboggan especially down a hill. Have you ever tobogganed down a hill?

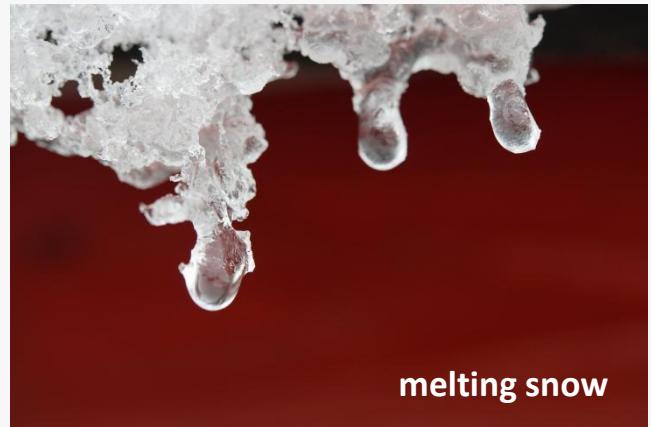


Naturally, you can use a **snowmobile** as well. Ike and Kev used one in the story at the beginning of this issue.

Getting Warmer

Even an unusually harsh winter finally comes to an end. When the temperature rises, we can say that the cold lets up. **To let up** means to stop or to become less intense.

The snow starts to melt. **To melt** means to change or to cause sth to change from a solid to a liquid usually because of heat. We use the term **meltwater** to refer to water derived from the melting of ice and snow.



Another verb with a similar meaning is to **thaw** /'θa:/-. It means to stop being frozen or to cause sth to stop being frozen. You can say that the ice on the river is beginning to thaw. Or you can say that the sun is thawing the snow and ice. The verb may also mean to become warm enough that snow and ice melt. So, you can say that the weather is beginning to thaw. Finally, the verb also means to return to a normal temperature after being very cold. So, you can say that your cold fingers and toes eventually thawed. You can also use the form **to thaw out**, like for example when you sit in front of the fire and let your feet thaw out.



When the snow is only partly melted, we call it **slush**. You can also use the adjective **slushy**, like in slushy snow.

Naturally, there's much more winter-related vocabulary, but let's leave it for another occasion. I hope you didn't get too cold reading about winter.



Substituting Relative Pronouns

January 25, 2022

Today we'll be talking about substituting relative pronouns for other relative pronouns. If you haven't read my Relative Pronouns in... [Read More »](#)



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January 15, 2022

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ain't and aren't I

You are reading my article now, **aren't you?** Sure you are. It's gonna be interesting, **ain't it?** Well, you won't know until you read it.

What I want to direct your attention to is the question tags at the end of the sentences and in particular when the verb TO BE is used.

In the first sentence you can see the question tag **aren't you**. You probably use it a lot yourself when talking to people. Here we're using the second person singular or plural form, depending on whether you're talking to one person or more. Naturally, it doesn't matter so much as these two forms are identical in English. Have a look.



Here Frieda is talking to just one person, her beloved husband Borg:

- *Borg, you are tired, aren't you?*



And here she's talking to more people:

- *Children, you are tired, aren't you?*

As you can see, there is no difference as far as the question tag is concerned. I'm sure you also use question tags with the third person singular and plural a lot:



Frieda is beautiful, **isn't she?**

Borg is so tall, **isn't he?**

The kids are extremely smart, **aren't they?**

Also with the first person plural things are pretty straightforward. Frieda could say:

- *We are very intelligent, aren't we?*

But did you ever wonder how to use the corresponding tag in first person singular? I mean when you need the negative form like above. Then, the sentence could begin like that:

I'm reading an article, ...?

or, Borg could say something like this:

I'm rather good-looking, ...?

Now, exactly, what question tags would you use? There would probably be no problem if there was a different auxiliary verb like DO, DID or a modal verb:

I know you well, don't I?

I won the race, didn't I?

I can read, can't I?

But what if the auxiliary verb BE is used?

First Person Singular Negative Question Tag

As far as prescriptive grammar is concerned, so the branch of grammar that tells us how to speak correctly, the preferable form would be **am I not**. So, the sentences would now be:

I'm reading an article, am I not?

I'm rather good-looking, am I not?

Although this approach is correct, it's rarely used in real-life conversation. The predominant form in real-life conversation is rather ***aren't I***. So now we would have:

I'm reading an article, aren't I?

I'm rather good-looking, aren't I?

This form is used not only in question tags, though. You'll find it in regular questions as well:

Aren't I supposed to wait for them here?

The Form ***ain't***

Another form that is quite frequently used is ***ain't I***. You must remember, though, that this form is considered substandard. Therefore try to limit yourself to informal conversation, where it's pretty popular, and rather avoid the form in formal or written language. You can use it in both question tags and regular questions. Some examples:

I'm reading an article, ain't I?

I'm rather good-looking, ain't I?

Ain't I supposed to wait for them here?

Ain't* instead of *Be* and *Have

But this substandard form is much more versatile than this. Not only does it occur with all persons, not just the first person singular, but it can also replace the negative forms of both *be* and *have* (only when used as an auxiliary verb). In particular, it can stand for the following forms: ***am not, are not, is not, have not, has not***.

Let's have a look at some examples. First let's see how it is used instead of the verb *BE*:

STANDARD FORM

I'm not doing this!

If you aren't a murderer, I'll let you in.

She's waiting for you, isn't she?

They aren't home.

Just tell me it isn't true.

There isn't any water in the lake.

There isn't anything you can do about it.

AIN'T

I ain't doing this.

If you ain't a murderer, I'll let you in.

She's waiting for you, ain't she?

They ain't home.

Just tell me it ain't true.

There ain't any water in the lake.

There ain't anything you can do about it.

Substandard Contexts

One interesting thing I could add here is that because the form is substandard, it usually occurs in substandard contexts, which means you can see other substandard words or constructions as well. So, for example there can be double negation. It's frowned upon in standard English, but it's pretty widespread in substandard language.

So, the last two examples could equally well be rewritten as:

There ain't no water in the lake.

There ain't nothing you can do about it.

And now some examples where the form stands for the negative auxiliary *HAVE*:

STANDARD FORM

Even now, after two days, she hasn't had enough of it.

We haven't been there before.

He hasn't been able to speak since he had the accident.

She's stolen it, hasn't she?

You haven't heard the best part yet.

He hasn't done anything useful.

I haven't seen any books here.

AIN'T

Even now, after two days, she ain't had enough of it.

We ain't been there before.

He ain't been able to speak since he had the accident.

She's stolen it, ain't she?

You ain't heard the best part yet.

He ain't done anything useful.

I ain't seen any books here.

Again, in the last two examples you could use *nothing* instead of *anything* and *no* instead of *any* respectively:

He ain't done nothing useful.

I ain't seen no books here.

Just remember that this form shouldn't be overused, especially in more formal contexts.



Route 66

Here we are, in Chicago, Illinois. This is where the **historic** Route 66 starts.

Historic is used to speak about people, places, or events that have a prominent place in history or have great and lasting importance.

- a historic battle
- a historic occasion
- the historic flight over the Atlantic
- a historic decision
- a historic day

Historical is used to speak about things that relate to or are based on history.

- historical map
- historical accuracy
- historical facts
- historical research
- a historical museum
- a historical novel



So, get on your Harley-Davidson or into your car and let's get moving.

Route 66 was definitely the most famous American highway, although it was neither the oldest nor the longest. It was established on November 11, 1926 and ran from Chicago, Illinois (East end) to Santa Monica, California (West end), covering a total length of 2,448 miles or 3,940 km. This was the original length because later, over its 60 years of existence as a national highway, some changes were occasionally made.

Route 66 was the shortest route between the Midwest and the Pacific Coast. In 1938 it also became the first national highway to be completely **paved**.

The numerical designation of U.S. Route 66 was assigned on April 30, 1926. But this is not the only **name it's known under**. In his 1939 novel "The Grapes of Wrath" John Steinbeck nicknamed the highway *The Mother Road*. Besides, you can come across the names *The Main Street of America* or *Will Rogers Highway*.

The name *The Main Street of America* was first used by Cyrus Avery, a Tulsa businessman who is considered the father of Route 66.



Route 66 traverses eight states: Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California, with the longest **mileage** in New Mexico (487 miles) and the shortest in Kansas (13 miles).

When the Federal Interstate Highway System was introduced, Route 66 was **decommissioned**. It wasn't decommissioned all at once, but rather piece by piece, with the last segment, in Arizona, being removed from the Federal System in 1985. Route 66 was replaced by modern interstate highways running from Chicago to Los Angeles.

Harley-Davidson, Inc., H-D, or Harley, is a legendary American motorcycle manufacturer founded in 1903 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

to pave - to cover sth (such as a road) with a material (such as stone, tar, or concrete) that forms a hard, level surface for walking, driving, etc.

The crew was paving the road.

The driveway was paved with concrete.

under the name of... - used to say that a particular name is used to indicate sth

The table is reserved under my last name.

Denali, previously known under the name of Mount McKinley

wrath /'ræθ/ - (formal + old-fashioned): extreme anger

the wrath of the gods

— sometimes used figuratively

Hardly anything survived the hurricane's wrath.

mileage /'maɪlɪdʒ/

1) distance in miles

What's the mileage from here to New York? [= how many miles is it from here to New York?]

2) distance traveled in miles by a vehicle

His car has a lot of mileage on it. [=it has been driven for a large number of miles since it was new]
a car with high/low mileage

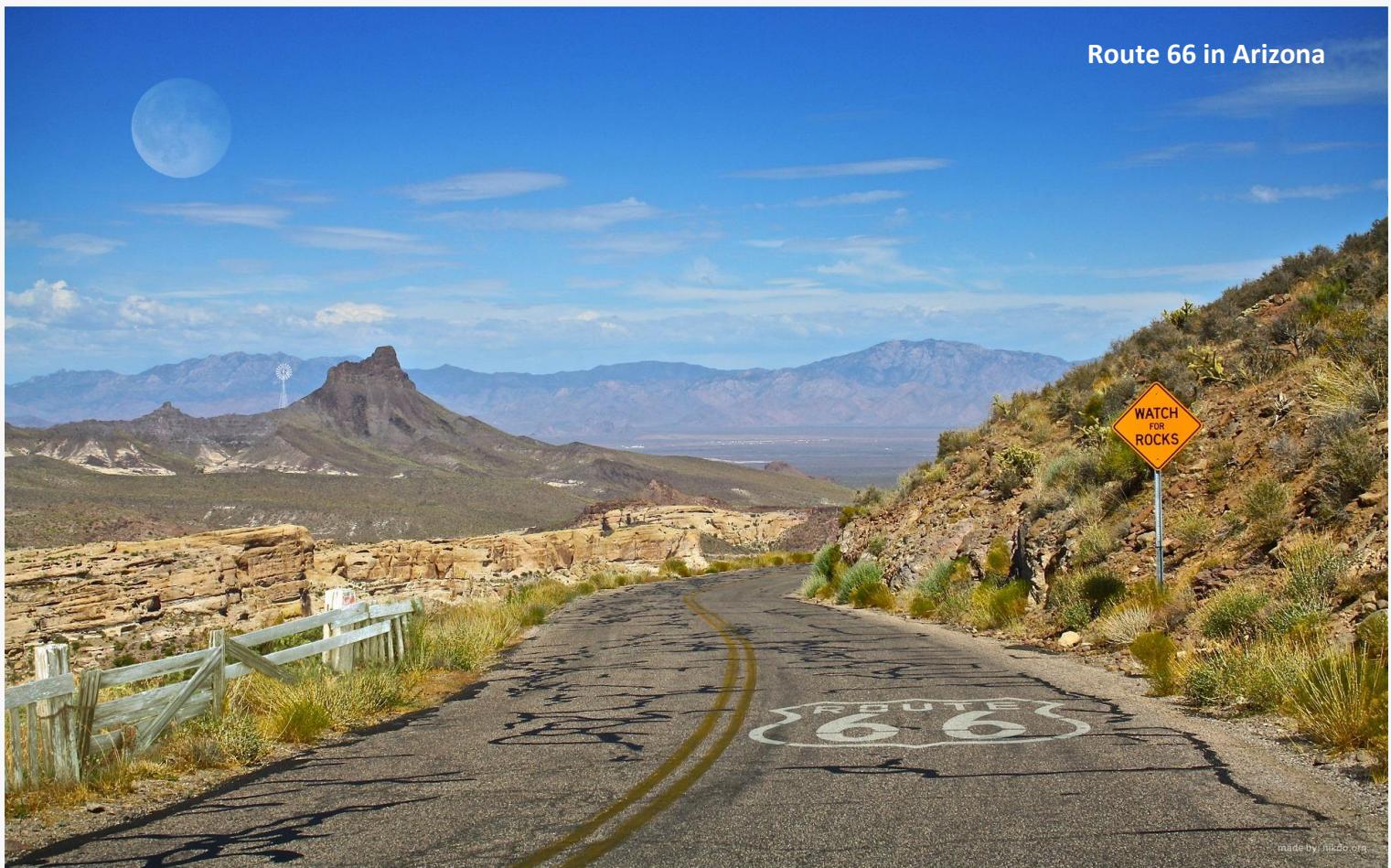
The car's rental rate includes unlimited mileage. [= the rate does not increase no matter how far the car is driven]

decommission - to officially stop using sth (such as a ship, weapon, dam, road, etc.), to remove sth from service

The military base will be decommissioned.

This type of weapon was decommissioned after the war.

Route 66 in Arizona

made by nikdo.org

Although Route 66 is no longer used as a national highway, you can still drive large portions of it. But take it slow. There's so much to see on the way. There are so many places to stop at.

OK, finally we arrive in Santa Monica. This is the end of the trail.

Circle Terminology

Here's some math. Let's have a look at a circle. You probably remember from school that a circle has a center, a radius, a diameter. Maybe you also know what a chord is or how to draw a tangent. Anyway, if you want to recap on circle terminology, here it is.

But what is a circle in the first place? A **circle** is a shape consisting of all points in a plane that are at a given distance from a given point, the center. Here's some circle terminology.

center - the point equidistant from all points on the circle

circumference /sə'kʌmfrəns/ - the distance around the circle.

radius /'reɪdijəs/ (plural: **radii** /'reɪdi,ai/) - a line segment joining the center of a circle with any single point on the circle

chord /'koəd/ - a line segment whose endpoints lie on the circle, thus dividing a circle into two segments.

diameter /daɪ'æmətər/ - the longest chord whose endpoints lie on the circle and that passes through the center

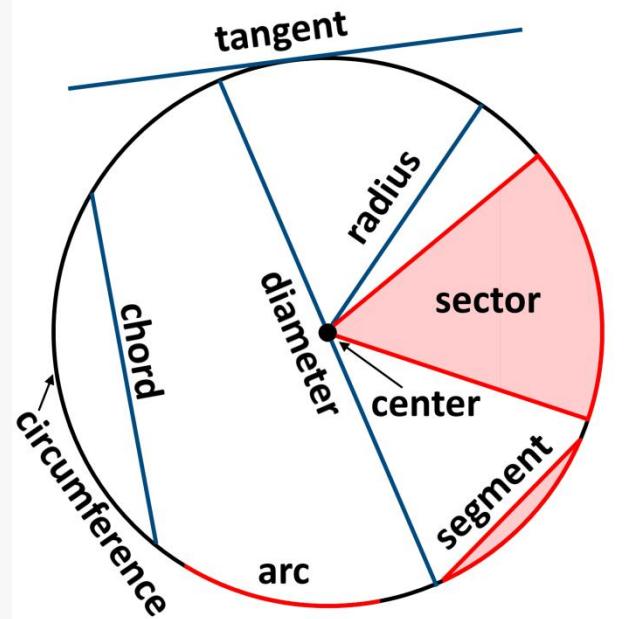
arc - any connected part of a circle

semicircle /'səmi,sækəl/ - one of the two possible arcs between the endpoints of a diameter

sector - a region bounded by two radii and one of the arcs between their endpoints

segment - a region bounded by a chord and one of the arcs connecting its endpoints

tangent /'tændʒənt/ - a line that touches the circle at only one point





Traveling by Car

There are lots of phrasal verbs in English. Some of them are related to driving and traveling by car. Let's have a look at the most important ones.

Prep

Let's start with some prep. It's important, especially if your journey is going to be long. First of all, if your car is relatively new, you may want to **break it in**. Before you do that, maybe you shouldn't drive your car too fast.

Now, before you actually **set off** on your journey, there are a couple things you should take care of.

Maybe there's too little air in the tires. If so, just **pump them up**.

Next, make sure you have enough gas. If not, go to a gas station to **fill it up**. There are a couple ways to say this. You can **top off** the car's tank. You can **fuel up** for your journey. Or, you can **tank up** before you leave.

prep = preparation

break in - to operate (a new machine) carefully for a period of time until it is ready for regular use

set off - to begin traveling

pump up - to fill (sth, such as a tire) with air by using a pump, inflate

fill up - to fill the tank of your car with gasoline

top off - to fill completely with a liquid

fuel up - to put fuel into a car, airplane, etc.

tank up - to fill a vehicle with fuel

run out - to become used up



This is important because if you forget to tank up, you may **run out of** gas before you get to your destination. You may also say the gasoline will **run out** before you get there.

Before You Drive Off

You're almost ready to **start out**. Hopefully your car isn't **blocked in**, or, in other words, no one has blocked your car in.

Fine, you can now **get in** your car. Don't forget to **buckle up** before you start driving. **Start up** the engine and **drive off**.

Or, if you're in a hurry, just **hop in** the car and drive off.

On Your Way

If necessary, **put** your car **in/into reverse** and **back out of** the garage. **Back up** slowly on your driveway.



run out of sth - to use up the available supply of sth

start out - to begin to travel

block in - to put sth in front of sb/sth so that person or thing cannot leave

get in - to enter

buckle up - to fasten your seat belt in a car or other vehicle

start up - to begin to function or to make sth begin to function

hop in - to move or go quickly into sth

put in/into reverse - to shift into reverse gear

back out of - to leave a place moving backward

back up - to move backward

driveway - a short private road from a street to a house or other building where cars can usually be parked

You must be careful when you're leaving your driveway. Look both ways before **pulling out** into the traffic.

You're still moving slowly. You can now **shift into** second gear. If there aren't too many cars on the road, you can **step on the gas**, or, in other words **step on it**.

If you want to travel with someone who doesn't live with you, don't forget to **pick them up** or otherwise you will have to later **turn around** and **go back**.

While driving, always be careful. There are so many things that could go wrong. For example you could **turn off** onto the wrong road. Or, which you usually can't predict, the engine can suddenly **cut off** for some reason. You can also say the engine **cuts out**. Anyway, hopefully your car won't **break down**.



There are some rules you should obey. For example you are not allowed to **speed up** while someone is trying to pass you. Or, another rule, you should never **cut** other drivers **off**. This can be very dangerous.



pull out - to move a vehicle from or to a particular place

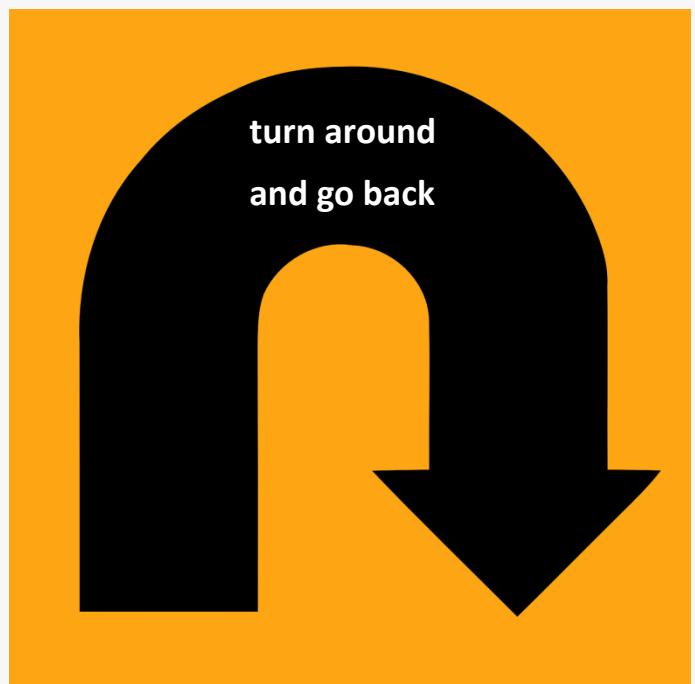
shift into - to change the gear you are using in a vehicle

step on the gas / step on it - to drive faster

pick up - to go somewhere in order to get and bring back

turn around - to cause a vehicle to travel in the opposite direction

go back - to return to a place



turn off - to go in a direction that moves you away from a straight course or main road

cut off / cut out - to stop working suddenly

break down - to stop working

speed up - to become faster or to make faster, to accelerate

pass - to move past someone or something that is moving more slowly in the same direction

cut sb off - to drive in front of (sb in another vehicle) in a sudden and dangerous way

Sometimes you may not know exactly where you are. If your GPS isn't working, just **pull over** and look at the map. You can also say you're pulling your car over to look at the map.

Danger on the Road and Accidents

The road can be a dangerous place. Not all drivers are good drivers. Sometimes it's necessary to **slam on the brakes**, or, in other words, **jam on the brakes**, in order to avoid hitting another car.

Sometimes an animal or a human may be crossing the street. How would you feel if you **ran down** a dog, or, even worse, a human? Hundred of dogs and other animals are **run over** by a car every year.

Make sure you don't fall asleep while driving. This may end tragically. First of all, you could **run off the road**. By the way, sometimes other drivers may try to run you off the road, which is very dangerous, but fortunately this happens mostly in movies. Anyway, you could **go off the road** and **run into** a tree. Or, you could **crash into** a fence, a wall or another car. Not all drivers survive accidents like these.

These cars have crashed into each other.



If there's a dangerous situation on the road, it may be your fault. For example, if you drive too fast, you can be **pulled over** by the police for speeding. If this is the case, don't even think about **getting away**. They probably know all the shortcuts and will **cut you off**.

pull over - to move a vehicle to the side of the road and stop

slam/jam on the brakes - to apply the brakes very quickly

run down - to hit and knock down (a person or animal) with a vehicle

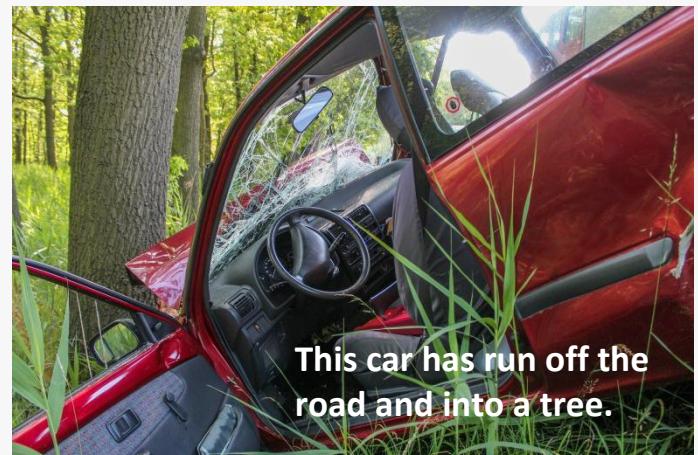
run over - to knock down and drive over or go over

run off the road - to move or cause (a driver or vehicle) to move off the road and, for example, into a ditch

ditch - a long narrow hole that is dug along a road, field, etc., and used to hold or move water

go off the road - to move off the road

run into - to move into sb or sth in a sudden or forceful way



crash into - to hit sth hard enough to cause serious damage or destruction

pull over - to force (a driver or vehicle) to move to the side of the road and stop

get away - to avoid being caught, to escape

cut off - to move ahead and force sb to stop

The End of Your Journey

Your journey is coming to an end. If there's someone with you in the car, you may want to **drop** them **off** somewhere before reaching your destination. If your kids are with you in the car, for example, you may want to drop them off at school.

If you're going to visit your friends, you can **pull up** in front of their house. In other words, you can pull your car up in front of their house. They will be glad you finally **pulled in**.

You've reached your destination. **Get out of** the car.



drop off - to take to a place and then leave

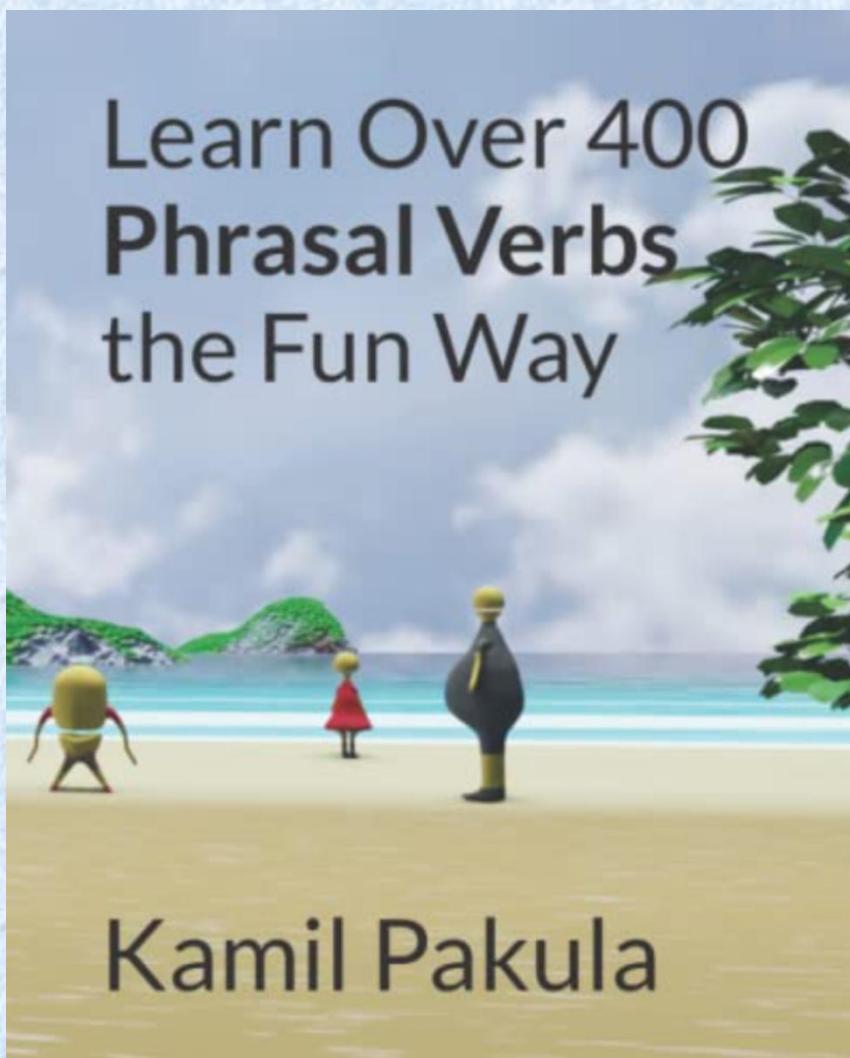
pull up - to stop a vehicle at a particular place

pull in - to arrive at a place and come to a stop

get out of - to leave

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Pronunciation

played at risks, cut into

risky,

(es) defined d to

[Latin: related to dictator] **dictatorial** /diktə'tɔriəl/ adj. like a dictator. 2 overbearing.

orially *adv.* [Latin: related to TATOR]

diction /'dikʃ(ə)n/ *n.* manner of speaking or singing; *dictio* from *dico dict-* [say]

dictionary /'dikʃənəri/ *n.* book listing (usu. alphabetically) words of a language, giving corresponding words in another language. 2 reference book defining the terms of a particular subject.

International Phonetic Alphabet

In English it's sometimes very hard or even impossible to predict how to pronounce a word that you see in written form. You either know the word and know how to read it or you don't and then you can only guess how it's pronounced. Some words, especially the ones that are not used very often or that belong to technical vocabulary, may be pronounced differently even by particular native speakers of English. It's even more difficult to tell how proper names are pronounced.

Sometimes even native speakers of English have to look up a word in a dictionary to make sure how to pronounce it. But how can a dictionary help you with that? Well, if it's a good dictionary, it can. By good I mean, among other things, one that tells you how to pronounce each word correctly. A good example of a good dictionary like that is Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary that you will find at <https://learnersdictionary.com/>. I use it on a regular basis because it's a great dictionary in each and every

respect. It demonstrates all the entries on numerous examples, highlights the differences between American and British English and gives you lots of information about each entry. Anyway, one of its great features is that it provides pronunciation for each word. Let's check out the pronunciation of the word MUSTACHE for example. This is a good example, because it differs in both spelling and pronunciation between American and British English. The dictionary provides both pronunciations:

Learner's Dictionary

mustache

2 ENTRIES FOUND:

- mustache** (noun)
- handlebar mustache** (noun)

mustache (US) noun

or chiefly British **moustache** /'mʌstæf/ Brit /mə'staʃ/ [Speaker icon]

plural **mustaches**

Learner's definition of MUSTACHE

[count]
: hair growing on a man's upper lip
▪ He used a small pair of scissors to trim his *mustache*.



So, now everything is clear, you know how to pronounce this word and we can wrap up this article... provided you know what all these strange symbols mean. If you don't, keep reading, I'm going to explain them all to you.

IPA

What you just saw is the International Phonetic Alphabet, or IPA for short. What is IPA? Well, let's check it out in the dictionary:

Learner's Dictionary

IPA

1 ENTRIES FOUND:

- IPA** (noun)

IPA /'aɪ.pi:.'eɪ/ [Speaker icon] noun

Learner's definition of IPA

[noncount]
: a system of symbols that represent all of the sounds made in speech
◊ IPA is an abbreviation of "International Phonetic Alphabet."



So, IPA is an abbreviation that is pronounced /'aɪ.pi:.'eɪ/, so letter by letter. The full name, as just mentioned, is International Phonetic Alphabet. It is a system of symbols that represent all of the sounds made in speech.

There are many sounds a human larynx can produce. The IPA contains all sounds from all languages, not just English. This is why there are lots of symbols so that you can represent them all. For example, in a French or German dictionary you will find symbols that are not present in English. This is because these languages use sounds that are not used in English. And the other way around. A Spanish or Greek dictionary will lack some of the symbols that are used in English because not all English sounds are used in those languages. Here's an example from the Collins French Dictionary:

English translation of 'bonjour'

bonjour

[bɔ̃ʒuʁ] [Speaker icon]



EXCLAMATION

1. (= salutation)

(*le matin*) **good morning**

(*l'après-midi*) **good afternoon**

(*moins formel*) **hello**

Here we can see symbols that are not used in English, like for example the ÿ symbol which represents a nasal vowel.

Another great feature of the Merriam Webster's Learner's Dictionary, the Collins French dictionary and many other dictionaries is that you can actually hear the pronunciation of the word. Just click the red loudspeaker icon to hear the recording.

Anyway, in this article we'll focus on the symbols used in English. So, what symbols do we use in English and what sounds do they correspond to? Let's explore.

But before we do, just three remarks:

Firstly, in order to be able to use the IPA symbols, you have to know them. Learning them all seems like a lot of work and so it is. But if you really want to master the symbols, you can learn them gradually, one by one. You can use this article as a quick reference.

Secondly, the IPA system is pretty complex. There are many subtleties that I'm not going to cover in this article because it would have to turn into a book. For example there is broad notation and narrow notation. The former takes into account many additional nuances like for example the fact that the same consonant is pronounced differently depending on its position in the word. In the Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary as well as in this article narrow

notation is used, so the simpler one. Besides the symbols are between slashes //, although these are usually used for broad notation (narrow notation normally uses square brackets []).

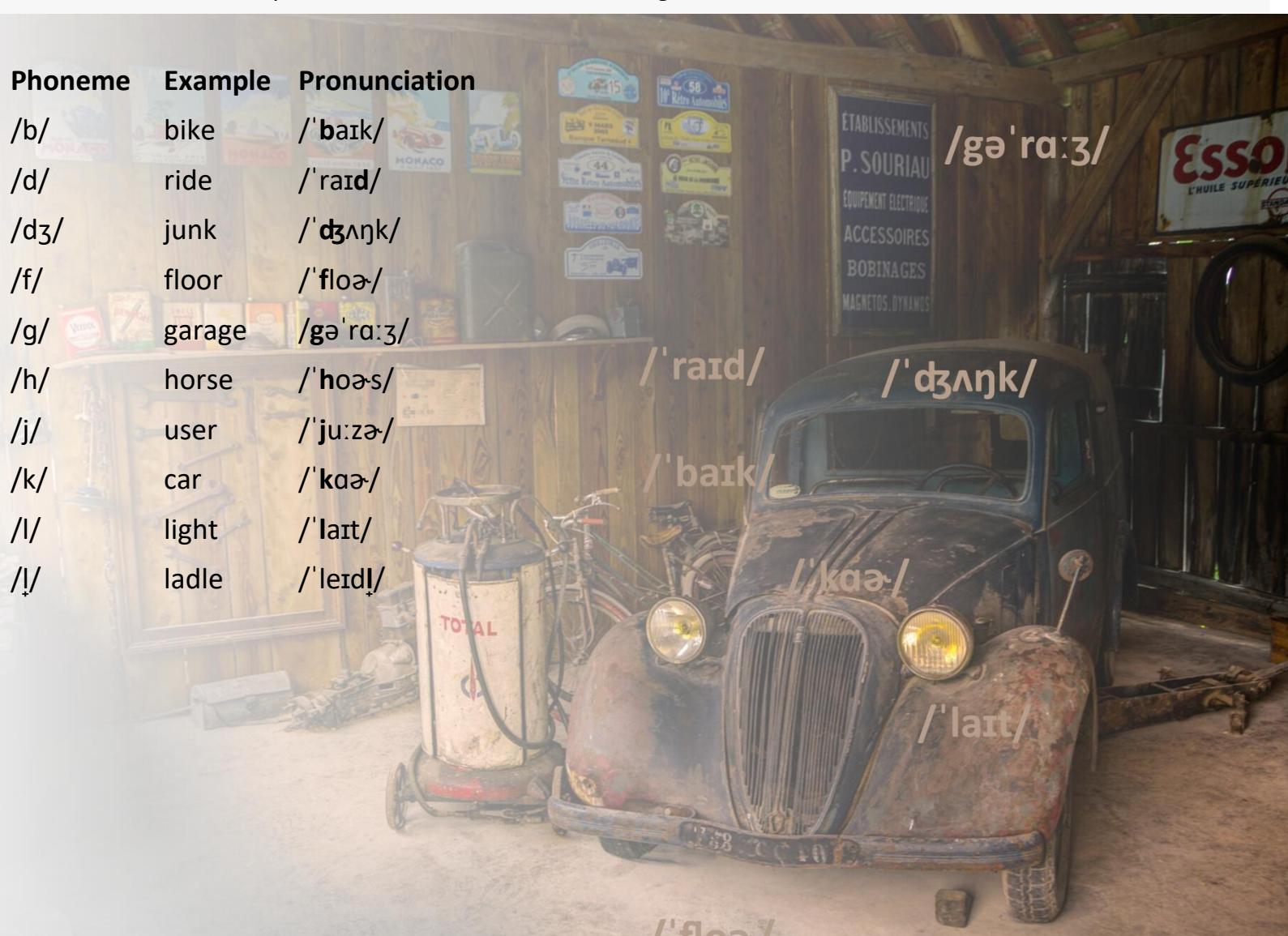
Thirdly, you must be aware that some dictionaries use slightly different symbols for some sounds. In this article I'm going to present the symbols used in the Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary because probably this is the dictionary many of you use. Also in my other articles whenever I provide the pronunciation of difficult or rare words, I use the symbols presented below.

So, let's get started. First the consonants, then the vowels and diphthongs.

English Consonants

Here are the consonant symbols that are used in American English:

Phoneme	Example	Pronunciation
/b/	bike	/'baɪk/
/d/	ride	/'raɪd/
/dʒ/	junk	/'dʒʌŋk/
/f/	floor	/'floə/
/g/	garage	/gə'ra:ʒ/
/h/	horse	/'ho:s/
/j/	user	/'ju:zə/
/k/	car	/'ka:/
/l/	light	/'laɪt/
/ɾ/	ladle	/'leɪdɻ/



/'skai/

/'tri:/

'fəns/

/faəm/

Phoneme	Example	Pronunciation
/m/	farm	/'faəm/
/n/	fence	/'fəns/
/ɳ/	button	/'bʌtɳ/
/ŋ/	donkey	/'daŋki/
/p/	picture	/'piktʃə/
/r/	tree	/'tri:/
/s/	sky	/'skai/
/ʃ/	wash	/'waʃ/

/daŋki/

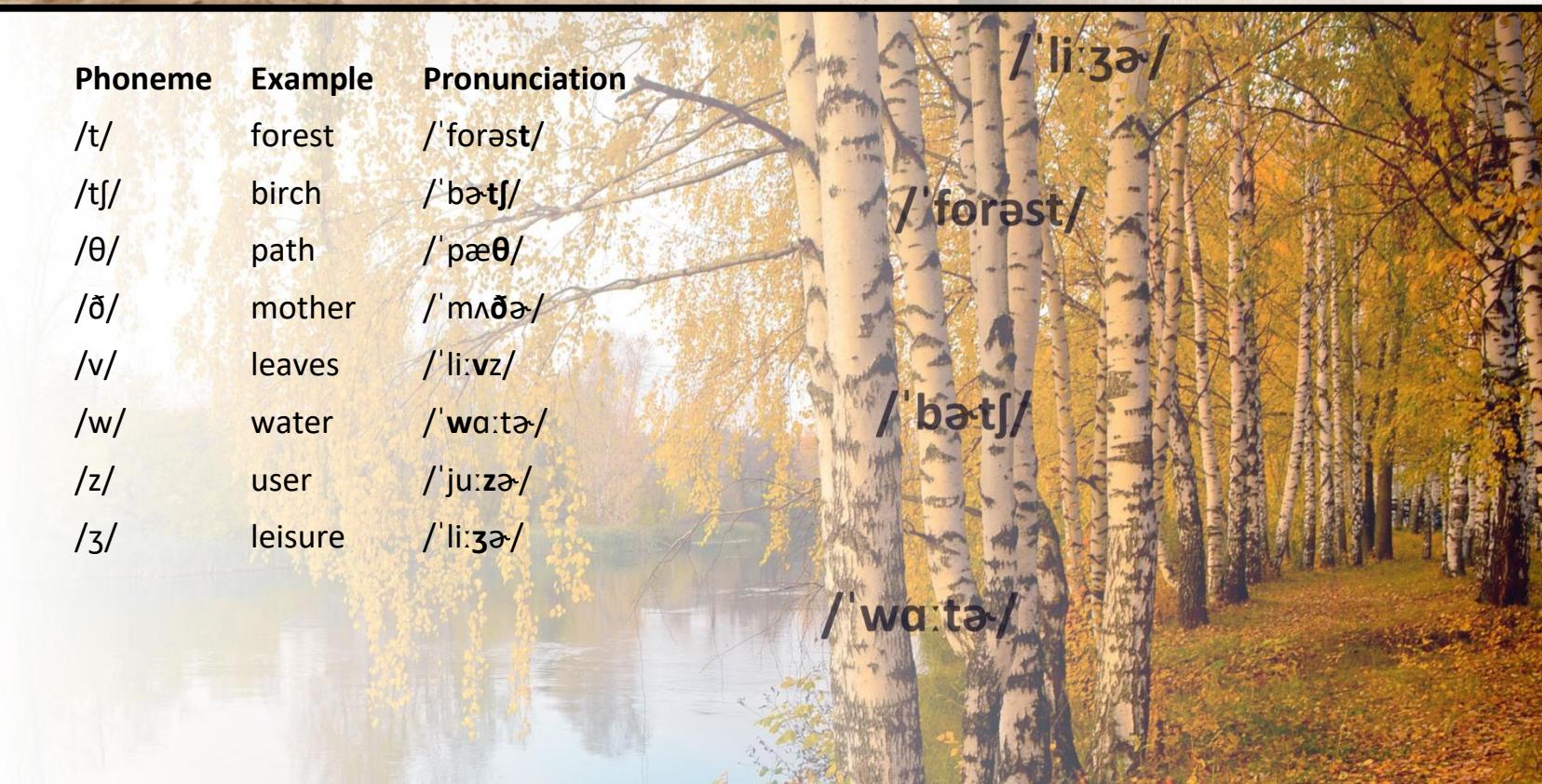
Phoneme	Example	Pronunciation
/t/	forest	/'forəst/
/tʃ/	birch	/'bətʃ/
/θ/	path	/'pæθ/
/ð/	mother	/'mʌðə/
/v/	leaves	/'li:vz/
/w/	water	/'wa:tə/
/z/	user	/'ju:zə/
/ʒ/	leisure	/'li:ʒə/

/li:ʒə/

/forəst/

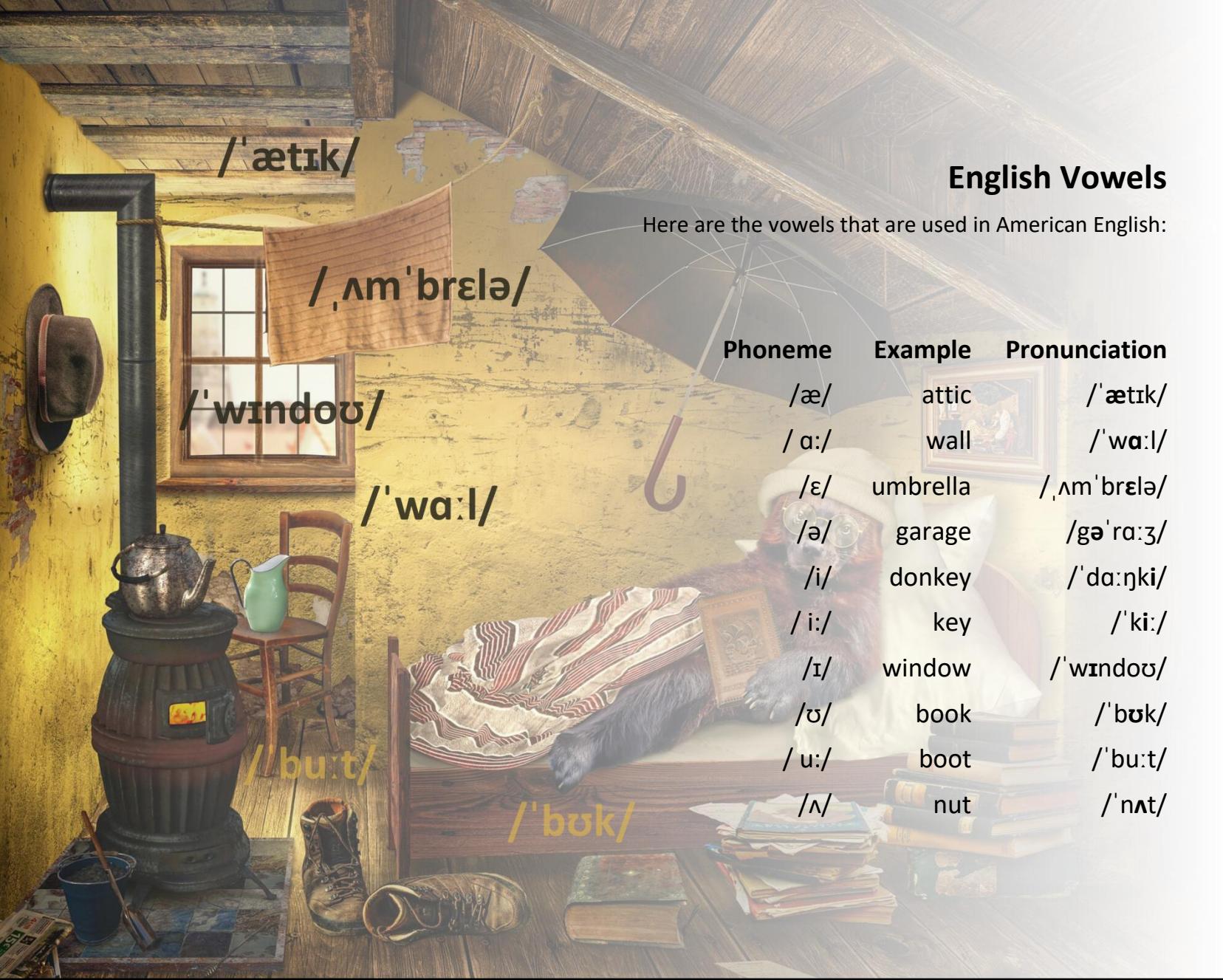
/bətʃ/

/wa:tə/



English Vowels

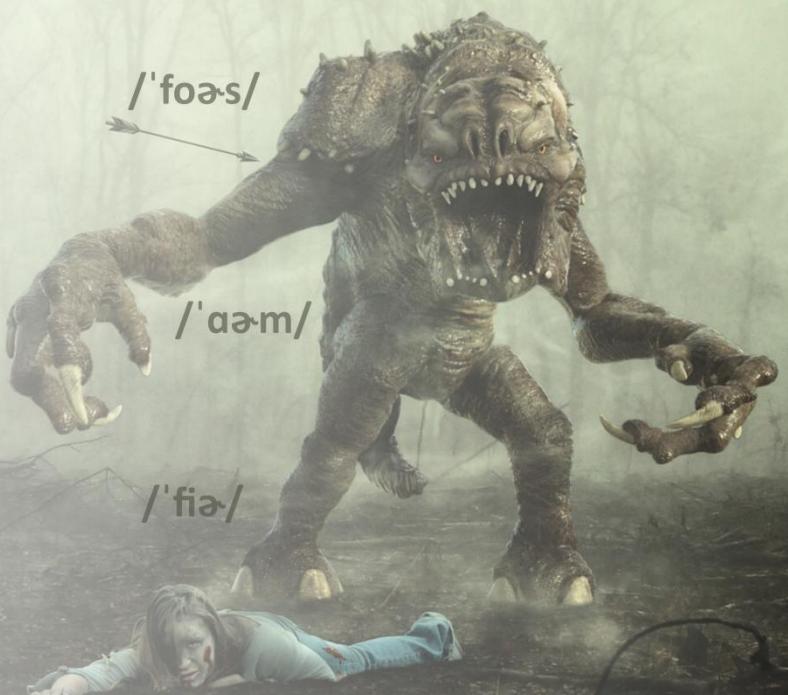
Here are the vowels that are used in American English:



Here are the symbols of vowels followed by the consonant R.

Phoneme	Example	Pronunciation
/ə/	monster	/'ma:nstə/
/əə/	arm	/'aə:m/
/eə/	chair	/'tʃeə/
/iə/	fear	/'fiə/
/oə/	forse	/'fəəs/
/uə/	tour	/'tuə/

/'ma:nstə/



English Diphthongs

Here are the diphthongs that are used in American English:



Phoneme	Example	Pronunciation
/aɪ/	night	/'nart/
/aʊ/	clown	/'klaʊn/
/eɪ/	table	/'teɪbəl/
/oɪ/	joy	/'dʒɔɪ/
/oʊ/	nose	/'nəʊz/

Other Symbols

Besides symbols that represent sounds, there are also symbols that represent word stress. Here belong:

Symbol	Meaning
/ '	primary stress
/ , /	secondary stress

So, I hope now it will be much easier for you to tell how to pronounce new words that you come across.

Credits

