

# Using the dictionary

## American English

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**A** Are the following words used in British or American English?

1 tram

2 roundabout

3 row house

4 sidewalk

5 chemist's

6 tights

7 sales clerk

8 railroad

9 eggplant

10 estate agent

Check your answers in your dictionary.

**B** Use the notes at **rubbish**, **platform**, **holiday** and **floor** to decide whether these statements are true or false.

1 *Garbage* is the word American speakers use when British speakers say *rubbish*.

2 An American speaker could ask 'Is this the right platform for the train to Chicago?'

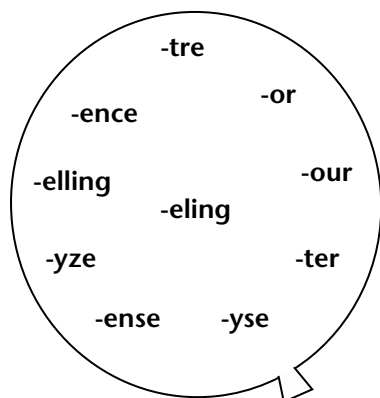
3 Some American friends might tell you about their *holiday* in Florida.

4 An elderly British lady who can't walk upstairs very well would ask for a room on the *first floor*.

**C** You can use British spellings or American spellings, but it is important to use only one or the other, not a mixture! Look up these words in your dictionary and fill in the table below.

British spelling 	American spelling 
centre	
colour	
	pajamas
traveller	
	tire ( <i>noun</i> )
	mold
fulfil	
	catalog
	defense
manoeuvre	
	medalist
analyse	

- D** There are some common differences in spelling. Match the two forms below.  
Which one is British and which one American?



All the words below contain one of these forms. Use your dictionary to complete the words.

**British spelling**

fav\_\_\_\_

off\_\_\_\_

paral\_\_\_\_

chann\_\_\_\_

li\_\_\_\_

**American spelling**

fav\_\_\_\_

off\_\_\_\_



paral\_\_\_\_

chann\_\_\_\_

li\_\_\_\_

Can you think of any other words that follow a similar pattern to the words above?

- E** Some sounds are pronounced differently in Britain and the US. Look up these words and find out how they are pronounced in each country. Write down the phonetic transcriptions in the table below.

	 GB	 USA
past	/pɑːst/	/pæst/
hot		
coat		
new		
aunt		
long		

- F** Look at these phonetic transcriptions and write the words beside them. Now try to speak the words.  
Which two words sound American to you?

/ˈdɑːmɪnənt/

/ˈpætriət/

/ˈbɑːθruːm/

/ˈliːzər/

/ˈtɜːnteɪbl/

In the words above, only one syllable is pronounced differently. Underline that syllable.

**G** Some words contain similar sounds, but the stress is different. Look at the entry for **cliché**.

**cli-ché** (also **cliche**) /'kli:ʃeɪ; NAmE kli:'ʃeɪ/ noun (disapproving) **1** [C] a phrase or an idea that has been used so often that it no longer has much meaning and is not interesting: *She trotted out the old cliché that 'a trouble shared is a trouble halved.'* **2** [U] the use of clichés in writing or speaking ► **cli-chéd** adj.: a clichéd view of upper-class life

Underline the part of the words below which has the main stress a) in British English, and b) in American English.

**a) British English**

cafe

rotate

brochure

perfume

debris

beret

laboratory

decor

**b) American English**

cafe

rotate

brochure

perfume

debris

beret

laboratory

decor