



British English versus American English

EXAMPLE

Copyright: These materials are photocopiable but we would appreciate it if all logos and web addresses were left on materials. Thank you.

Teacher's Notes

EXAMPLE

Aim: To help students understand the differences between British and American vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation.

Time: 90 -120 minutes.

Lead in (10 minutes)

- Students discuss the differences between British and American English with their partner(s).
- Feedback - display ideas on the board.

Task 1 (10 minutes)

- Students fill in the table with the American English word.
- Students compare with a partner or a small group.
- Display **ANSWERS**.

Task 2-3 (20 minutes)

- Task 2: Students **highlight** 10 words that are not commonly used in British English (there are about 20 words that are not commonly used). Students compare with a partner or a small group. Display **ANSWERS**.
- Task 3: Students choose which is the correct British English word. Display **ANSWERS**.
- Task 3: Students read the paragraph, identify and highlight the 15 American English words, and then rewrite the paragraph using their British English equivalents. Display **ANSWERS**.

Task 5-7 (25+ minutes)

- Task 5: British versus American spelling. Students try to write the words in American English.
- Students compare with a partner or a small group. Display **ANSWERS**.
- Task 6: Students look at the differences in the spelling and try to identify any common patterns or spelling rules: students read the seven key rules.
- Task 7: Students read the 10 sentences to highlight the American spellings and change to British spelling. Students compare with a partner or a small group. Display **ANSWERS**.

Task 8-11 (25+ minutes)

- Teacher goes through the pronunciation example and encourages the use of the Cambridge Dictionary to check pronunciation differences.
- Task 8: Students try to say the word in British and then American English. They can add notes if they like on the different pronunciations.
- Task 9: Students check the pronunciation differences in pairs or small groups.
- Feedback: the tutor models the pronunciation differences.
- Task 10: Students read the pronunciation rules.
- Task 11: Students identify the pronunciation rule of each word.
- Display **ANSWERS**.

Task 12

- Reflection: Students reflect on what they have learnt from the lesson.

Differentiation Options

- Students can use the internet for research at any time.
- Students work in small groups, dividing the words among themselves, e.g., 10 words each and share their answers.

British versus American English **EXAMPLE**

Lead in

What words between British and American English? Write some of your ideas in the box below.

E.g., Trousers / pants

Task 1: VOCABULARY

The table shows 30 common words in British English; write the American English equivalent for each one.

	British English	American English
1	Biscuit	<i>Cookies</i>
2		
3	Football	
4	Flat	
5		
6	Mobile phone	
7	Pavement	
8		
9	Trainers (sports shoes)	
10		
11	City centre	
12	University	
13		
14	Chemist / pharmacy	
15	Cinema	
16		
17	Ground floor	
18	Lift	
19	Road	
20		
21	Off-license	
22	First year university student	
23		
24	Lorry	
25		
26	The underground / tube	
27		
28	Nappy	
29	Crisps	
30		
31	Courgette	
32		

Task 2: Many of these words are in the UK but 18 words are not. **Highlight** at that are not commonly used in the UK.

Task 3

Highlight the correct British English word.

1. The university implemented a new policy requiring students to [] trash before entering the soccer / []
2. [] / car park behind [] was completely full on Friday night.
3. The conference venue located downtown / [] by foot via the sidewalk / [] the nearby freeway / motorway.
4. Several varieties [] and courgette / [] in [] beds in the back yard / garden throughout the summer.
5. The tenant [] faucet / tap in the [] -floor [] / flat, along with a damp patch [] wall.

Task 4

Read this paragraph and **highlight** the 15 American English words.

A researcher recently spent a fall [] with convenient [], including drug stores, liquor stores, []. Located on the first floor, the apartment required [] away was a subway station. The area was extremely noisy due to its [], a major [] resulting [] the neighborhood was well-maintained, with numerous trash cans and a clear sense [] clean.

Rewrite the paragraph using British English.

Task 5: SPELLING

Look at this list of 30 British English words and fill in the table with the American spelling.

	British English Spelling	American English Spelling
1	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Color</i>
2	Maths	
3		
4	Defence	
5	Licence (noun)	
6		
7	Jewellery	
8		
9	Theatre / centre	
10	Programme	
11		
12	Sceptical	
13		
14	Skilful	
15	Ageing	
16		
17	Mould	
18	Sulphur	
19		
20	Catalogue	
21		
22	Paediatric	
23	Palaeontology	
24		
25	Anaesthesia	
26	Foetus	
27		
28	Aetiology	
29		
30	Tyre	

Task 6

Examine the spelling differences in the above table between British and American English and identify the underlying spelling patterns.

Example: *BrE: theatre & centre / AmE: theater & center* (-re and -er)

British Versus American Spelling Guide

Spelling Rules	
1) -re vs -er British English: <i>centre, metre, fibre</i> American English: <i>center, meter, fiber</i>	5) <input type="text"/> British English: <i>travelled, labelled, counselling</i> American English: <input type="text"/>
2) - <input type="text"/> British English: <i>colour, behaviour</i> American English: <input type="text"/>	6) -ae/oe vs e British English: <input type="text"/> , <i>manoeuvre</i> American English: <i>pediatric, fetus,</i> <input type="text"/>
3) -ce vs -se British English: <input type="text"/> (verb), <i>defence</i> American English: <i>license (noun and verb), defense</i>	7) Miscellaneous Differences British English: <input type="text"/> , <i>aluminium,</i> <input type="text"/> , <i>cheque</i> American English: <input type="text"/> , <i>aluminum,</i> <input type="text"/> , <i>check</i>
4) -ise vs -ize British English: <input type="text"/> American English: <i>organize, recognize</i>	
COPYRIGHT of www.academic-englishuk.com/british-vs-american-english	

Task 7

Read the 10 sentences below, identify the American English spellings, and change them to British English spellings.

- The counselor helped organize a new program to support students' emotional well-being.
- During the lawyer to the case.
- along with plans drawn in shades of gray.
- She bought beautiful jewelry made of aluminum at the .
- Although explained the etiology of the rare disease clearly.
- airplane through a during the descent.
- The research on aging populations.
- Paleontology result from sudden environmental shifts.
- He visited the having received a check in advance .
- The researcher's program.

Task 8: Pronunciation

Look at the example of aluminium and say the two different pronunciations.

aluminium

noun [U] UK

UK /,æɪ.ljəˈmɪn.i.əm/ US /,æɪ.ljəˈmɪn.i.əm/ (US **aluminum**)

Use the [Cambridge Dictionary](https://www.cambridge.org/dictionary) to help you identify the different pronunciations with their UK and US pronunciation. Make notes in the table below.

Words	Notes	Words	Notes
Advertisement	<i>Example: advertisement (UK) advertisement (US)</i>	Caffeine	
Schedule	<i>Example: /'ʃed.ju:l/ (UK) /'skɛdʒ.u:l/ (US)</i>		
Privacy		Dynasty	
Leisure		February	
Route			
		Vase	
Vitamin			
		Address (verb)	
Inquiry			
		Status	
Garage			
Zebra		Research	
Economics		Pasta	
		Clerk	
Defence			

Task 9

The words are presented again with their phonetic transcriptions; read each pair aloud in sequence.

Word	British English (IPA)	American English (IPA)
Advertisement	/ədˈvɜːtɪs.mənt/	/,æd.vəˈtaɪz.mənt/
Schedule	/'ʃedʒ.u:l/	/'skedʒ.u:l/
Leisure	/'leɪ.ə/	/'liː.ʒə/
Route	/ru:t/	/raʊt/
Vitamin	/'vɪt.ə.mɪn/	/'vaɪ.tə.mɪn/
Inquiry	/ɪnˈkwaɪr.i/	/'ɪn.kwə.ri/
Garage	/'gær.ɑːʒ/	/gəˈrɑːʒ/
Zebra	/'ze.brə/	/'ziː.brə/
Economics	/,iː.kəˈnɒm.ɪks/ /,ek.əˈnɒm.ɪks/	/,iː.kəˈnɑː.mɪks/ /,ek.əˈnɑː.mɪks/
Process	/'prəʊ.ses/	/'praː.ses/
Caffeine	/'kæf.iːn/	/'kæf.iːn/
Dynasty	/'dɪn.ə.sti/	/'daɪ.nə.sti/
February	/'feb.ru.ər.i/	/'feb.ruː.ər.i/
Vase	/vɑːz/	/veɪs/
Address (verb)	/əˈdres/	/'æd.res/
Status	/'steɪ.təs/	/'stæ.təs/
Research	/rɪˈsɜːtʃ/	/'riː.səːtʃ/
Pasta	/'pæs.tə/	/'paː.stə/
Clerk	/kla:k/	/klɜːk/
COPYRIGHT of www.academic-englishuk.com/british-vs-american-english		

Task 10

Read through the three main pronunciation rules.

Rule 1. Vowel Sounds			
<p>i) /ɒ/ (BrE) → /ɑː/ or /ɑ/ (AmE)</p> <p>Example words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">lot /lɒt/ → /lɑːt/stop /stɒp/ → /stɑːp/ <p>Explanation: The [] BrE is replaced by an unrounded open back /ɑː/ in AmE.</p>		<p>iv) []</p> <p>Example words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">[] student /'stjuːd(ə)nt/ → /'stuːdənt/ <p>Explanation: AmE tends [] simplifying the diphthong.</p>	
<p>ii) /æ/ (BrE) → /æ/ or /ɑː/ (AmE)</p> <p>Example words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">[]ask /ɑːsk/ → /æsk/ <p>Explanation: BrE uses broad /ɑː/ in words like bath, []</p>		<p>v) /əʊ/ (BrE) → /oʊ/ (AmE)</p> <p>Example words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">go /gəʊ/ → /goʊ/ <p>Explanation: The diphthong shifts slightly in articulation, [] further back and more rounded.</p>	
<p>iii) []</p> <p>Example words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">idea /aɪ'dɪə/ → /aɪ'dɪr/[]tour /tʊə/ → /tʊr/ <p>Explanation: AmE often [] with r-coloured vowels due to rhoticity.</p>		<p>vi) []</p> <p>Example words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">glass /glɑːs/ → /glæs/ <p>Explanation: The "broad a" found in BrE is not typically []</p>	
Rule 2. Consonant Sounds			
<p>i) []</p> <p>Example: butter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">BrE: /'bʌtə/AmE: /'bʌrə/ <p>Explanation: In AmE, [] pronounced as a "flap" [r], which sounds like a quick /d/. []</p>		<p>iii) /r/ Pronunciation (Rhoticity)</p> <p>Example: car</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">BrE: /kɑː/ <p>Explanation: Standard BrE is non-rhotic, meaning /r/ is not [] AmE is rhotic, [] pronounced in all positions.</p>	
<p>ii) /j/ Dropping After /t/, /d/, /n/ in AmE</p> <p>Example: Tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">BrE: /'tʃuːzdeɪ/AmE: /'tuːzdeɪ/ <p>Explanation: In [] after /t/ and /d/ before a /uː/ sound. This glide is []</p>		<p>iv) []</p> <p>Example: bottle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">BrE /'bɒəl/ <p>Explanation: In some regional BrE accents, /t/ is [] common in AmE, where a flap /r/ is used instead.</p>	
Rule 3. Syllable Stress			
Some words are pronounced with different primary stress placement in BrE and AmE.			
Word	BrE	AmE	Explanation
advertisement	/əd'vɜː.tɪs.mənt/	/,æd.və'taɪz.mənt/	BrE stresses the second syllable, while AmE moves the stress to the third.
garage	[]	[]	[]
research	/'riː.sɜːtʃ/	/rɪ'sɜːtʃ/	BrE stresses the first syllable; AmE prefers stress on []
COPYRIGHT of www.academic-englishuk.com/british-vs-american-english			

COPYRIGHT of www.academic-englishuk.com/british-vs-american-english

Task 11

Decide which rule applies to the American pronunciation of each word.

Rule 1.	Vowel Sounds
Rule 2.	Consonant Sounds
Rule 3.	Syllable Stress

Word	Rule	Word	Rule
Advertisement	3	Caffeine	
Schedule	2		
Privacy	1	Dynasty	
Leisure		February	
Route			
		Vase	
Vitamin			
		Address (verb)	
Inquiry			
		Status	
Garage			
Zebra		Research	
Economics		Pasta	
		Clerk	
Defence			

Task 12

Reflection: What have you learnt from this lesson? Write down key learning points or create a mind map on the differences between British English and American English in terms of vocabulary / spelling / pronunciation.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their reflection or create a mind map. A faint, diagonal watermark reading 'www.academic-englishuk.com' is visible across the box.

ANSWERS

Task 1

	British English	American English
1	Biscuit	<i>Cookies</i>
2	Rubbish	Trash
3	Football	Soccer

ALL ANSWERS INCLUDED IN PAID VERSION...