

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Glimpse on British and American English

G. Shravan Kumar , K Srikanth*

Professor and University Head, Department of English & Controller of Examinations

Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, Rajendranagar,

Hyderabad,*Teaching Associate, Agricultural College, Warangal

Abstract

The English Language was first introduced to the Americans by British colorization, beginning in 1607. Over the past 400 years, the form of the language used in America and the United Kingdom has diverged in a few ways, leading to the versions now referred to as American English and British English. While there are undoubtedly many more varieties of English, American and British English are the two most important for students and teachers. This article highlights the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation differences between British and American English.

Keywords: English language, British English, American English, Grammar, Vocabulary.

Grammatical differences

In British English, the present perfect is used to express an action that has occurred recently and affects the present moment. The words such as just, just now, yet ever, never, etc., are used in the present perfect tense. But in American English, simple past tense is used.

A. There are two forms to express “Possession” in English, have or have got. Americans don’t use “got” after **has** and **have**.

British English	American English
Ravi has just gone to college.	Ravi just went to college.
I have come here just now.	I came here just now.
We have already seen this movie.	We already saw this movie.
Hasn’t she got up yet?	Didn’t she get up yet?

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Have you ever seen the Tajmahal?	Did you ever see the Tajmahal?
I have never drunk	I never drank.

B. There are two forms to express "Possession" in English, have or have got. Americans don't use "got" after **has** and **have**.

British English	American English
We have a son	We have got a son
She has a long hair	She has got a long hair

C. The past participants of the verb **get gotten** in American English, but in British, it is called Americans use '**been**' instead of **gone** to convey the meaning.

British	American
I have been to my home recently	I have gone to my house recently
Have you ever been to England?	Have you ever gone to England?

D. Some more differences in verb forms

British	American
Burn- burnt	Burn- burned
Dream-dreamt	Dream-dreamed
Lean-leant	Lean-learned
Smell-smelt	Smell-smelled
Spell-spelt	Spell-spelled
Spill-spilt	Spill-spilled
Spoil-spoilt	Spoil-spoiled

E. To denote future action in British English, "Shall" or "Will" is used in American English, and only "will" is used.

British	American
I shall / will go to Bombay	I will go to Bombay
We shall / will participate in it	We will participate in it

F. There are some differences in the usage of prepositions and adverb participles.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

British	American
In the street	On the street
From Monday to Saturday	From Monday through Saturday
Check the fuse	Check the fuse out
Could you do it again?	Do it over
Write to Ravi	Write Ravi / Write to Ravi
Visit him	Visit with him / visit him
Talk to her	Talk with/to her
Stay at home	Stay home
Protest about/against government	Protest government economic policy
Fill in / up the form	Fill out / the form
Meet Hari	Meet with Hari
At the weekend	On the Weekend
The player in the team	Player on the team
A student in the course	A student in the course
Ten (minutes) past nine	Ten (minutes) after nine
Ten (minutes) to nine	Ten (minutes) of nine
Different from/to	Different than/from
July second / July second	July second

Differences in Vocabulary:

British English	American English	British English	American English
Access road	Slip road	Curtains	Drapes
Aerial	Antenna	Dessert spoon	Tablespoon
Anywhere	Anyplace	Dining hall	Mess hall
At sunrise	At sunup	Diversion	Detour
At sunset	At sundown	Dustbin	Garbage can
Barrister	Attorney	Dynamo	Generator
Biscuit	Cookie	Engine driver	Engineer (on the main)
Car park	Parking lot	Engine	Motor
Cock	Roster	Estate agent	Realtor / real

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Conference	Parley	Film	Movie
Constable	Patrolman	Finished	Through
Cooker	Stove	Fire engine	Fire truck
Corn/wheat	Wheat	Flat	Apartment
Cot	Crib	Flyover	Overpass
Cotton	Thread	Ground floor	First floor
Crisps potato	Chips	Tennis-shoes	Sneakers
Crossroads	Intersection	Pram	Baby carriage
cupboard	Closet	Post	Mail
Current account	Checking account	Postcode	Zip code
Curriculum vitae / CV	Resume	Postman	Mail mam/mail carrier
Handbag	Pocketbook/purse	Pub	Bar
Hire	Rent	Public toilet	Restroom
Hoarding	Billboard	Puncture / flat tire	Flat
Holidays	Vacation	Puncture	Blow-out
Homework	Assignment	Pushchair	Stroller
Housewife	Homemaker	Queue	Line
Ill	Sick	Railway	Railroad
Interval	Intermission	Reel of cotton	Spool of thread
Journalist	Newsman	Return (ticket)	Round-trip
Jug	Pitcher	Roundabout	Traffic circle
Lift	Elevator	Rubber	Eraser
Lodger	Roomer	Rubbish	Garbage/trash
Luggage	Baggage	Shop	Store
Madam	Ma'am/madam	Shopping bag	Carrier bag
Main road	Highway	Solicitor	Attorney
Maize	Corn	Somewhere	Someplace

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Maths	Math	Staff (of a University)	Faculty
Mean (opposite of generous)	Stingy	Sweet	Dessert
Motorway	Expressway	Sweets	Candy
Motorway	Freeway	Tablespoon	Serving spoon
Mum	Mom	Underpants	Shorts
Nappy	Diaper	Until	Through
Nowhere	No place	Van/lorry	Truck
Nursing home	Private hospital	Vest	Undershirt
Oculist/optician	Optometrist	Waist coat	Vest
Paraffin	Kerosene	Wardrobe	Closet
Pavement	Sidewalk		
Peep	Peek		
Petrol station	Filling station		
Term	Semester		
Timetable	Schedule		
Tin	Can		

Differences in spelling:

British English	American English	British English	American English
Clamor	Clamor	Labor	labor
color	color	Neighbour	Neighbor
Flavor	flavor	Odour	Odor
Harbor	Harbor	Rumour	Rumor
Honor	Honor	Tumor	Tumor
Mould	Mold	Valour	Valor
Aesthetic	Esthetic	Vapor	Vapor
Etiology	Etiology	Centre	Center
Amoeba	Ameba	Fibre	Fiber

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Anaemia	Anemia	Litre	Liter
Anaesthesia	Anesthesia	Metre	Meter
Encyclopaedia	Encyclopedia	Theatre	Theater
Foetus	Fetus	Analogue	Analog
Gynecology	Gynecology	Catalog	Catalog
Hemorrhage	Hemorrhage	Dialogue	Dialog
Mediaeval	Medieval	Monologue	Monolog
Centralise	Centralize	Prologue	Prolog
Civilise	Civilize	Abridgment	Abridgment
Dramatise	Dramatize	Canceled	Canceled
Economise	Economize	Traveled	Traveled
Organise	Organize	Jewellery	Jewelry
Penalise	Penalize	Although	Altho/although
Rationalise	Rationalize	Annexe	Annex/Annexe
Realize	Realize	Defen	Defense
Sermonise	Sermonize	Offen	Offense
Utilise	Utilize	Grey	Gray/grey
Visualize	Visualize	Pretense	Pretense
Vulgarise	Vulgarize	Gaol/Jail	Jail
Westernise/westernize	Westernize	Plough	Plow
Program	Program	Skillful	Skillful
Marvellous	Marvelous	Aluminum	Aluminum
Dependence	Dependence	Disc	Disk
Sceptic	Skeptic		

Differences in punctuation

- a. We enjoyed the movie 'Air Force One (British English)
 We enjoyed the movie "Air Force One" (American English)
 Americans use single quotation marks instead of double quotation marks in British English.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

- b. The full stop (.) is a period in American English, and the exclamation mark (!) is an exclamation point.
- c. While writing a letter after a salutation, a comma (,) is used in British English, but a colon (;) is used in American English.
- d. A change in mention of time is also different as follows;
6.30 pm (British English) full stop (.) is used after hours
6:30 pm (American English) colon (:) is used after Hours.

Though these differences are seen clearly, the language is intelligible and well-understood by the natives of both countries.

References

- Flower, Henry: Winchester, Simon (introduction) (2003 reprint) A Dictionary of Modern English Usage (Oxford language classics series).Oxford Press. ISBN 0-19-860506-4.
- Mencken. H.L (1921). "Chapter 8 American Spelling The American language: An inquiry into the Development of English in the United States. (2nd Ed., rev. and enl.ed). New York: A.A. Knopf.ISBN 1-58734-087-9.