

British vs American Vocabulary

Food, Cooking and Restaurant

Words which have different meanings in British and American English

*(*Sample: British word — American word)*

- chips – thick-cut hot fried potato, as in “fish and chips” (“French fries” or “fries” in American English) – thin, crispy snacks eaten cold from a bag, as in “potato chips” and “nacho chips” (“crisps” in British English)
- cider – an alcoholic drink that is similar to beer but made from apples (“hard cider” in American English) – a soft drink made from apples
- entrée – the first course/ starter – the main course
- bill – what you get at the end of your meal in a restaurant that says how much you should pay (“the check” in American English) – paper money, as in “a five dollar bill” (“banknote” or “note” in British English)
- sweets – small sugary snacks (“candy” in American English) – dessert/ sweet things generally, such as cakes
- grill – cook under heat (“broil” in American English) – cook on a hotplate/ barbecue
- pudding – dessert generally, or a hot, heavy dessert similar to Xmas pudding – a kind of custard dessert, similar to crème caramel
- jelly – a wobbly dessert, as in “jelly and ice cream” (“Jell-O” in American English) – a kind of jam without solid lumps of fruit in it (as in “peanut butter and jelly sandwich”)
- sherbet – a powdered sweet which fizzes a little on your tongue – a type of frozen dessert, like ice cream but with less or no milk (“sorbet” in British English)
- wash up – do the dishes – wash your hands (before dinner)
- biscuit – as in “chocolate biscuit” (“cookie” in American English) – a kind of savoury scone (as in “chicken and biscuits”)
- squash – a kind of cordial that needs to be watered down to be drunk – a kind of vegetable similar to a pumpkin (similar to a British “marrow”)
- cooker – stove/ range – cook
- corn(field) – wheat – maize (usually called “sweetcorn” in British English)
- sprouts – Brussels sprouts – alfalfa sprouts
- faggot – a kind of meatball – a non-PC insult for homosexuals
- flapjack – a sweet snack mainly made of oats (“granola bar” in American English) – pancake
- hamper – a large basket for food, as in “picnic hamper” – a laundry basket

Different words for food and drinks in British and American English

- crisps – chips
- chips – (French) fries
- maize/ sweetcorn – corn
- green peppers/ red peppers/ yellow peppers – bell peppers
- sweets – candy
- the bill – the check
- take away – take out
- waiter/ waitress – server
- pudding/ sweet/ dessert – dessert
- grill – broil
- fizzy drink – soda/ pop
- wash up/ do the dishes – do the dishes
- wash your hands – wash up
- washing up liquid – dishwashing liquid
- saucepan – pot
- frying pan – fry pan/ skillet
- tin/ can – can
- starter – appetizer
- cooker/ stove – range/ stove
- cook – cooker
- aubergine – eggplant
- courgette – zucchini
- mashed potato – mash potato
- skimmed milk – skim milk
- coriander – cilantro
- mince – chopped beef
- barbecue – grill
- tomato sauce/ tomato ketchup – tomato ketchup
- rocket – arugula
- off license – liquor store
- cutlery – silverware/ flatware
- ice lolly – popsicle/ ice pop
- jelly – Jell-O
- cling film – Saran wrap
- porridge – oatmeal
- jug – pitcher

- crockery - tableware
- spring onion – scallion/ green onion
- kettle – tea kettle
- sorbet – sherbet
- neat (drink) – straight
- single cream – half and half
- French bean – string bean
- (greasy) caff – diner
- (doner) kebab – gyro
- jacket potato – baked potato
- fairy cake – cupcake
- lay the table – set the table
- buffet car – dining car
- banger/ sausage – link/ sausage
- hob – cooktop/ burner
- beetroot – beet
- broad bean – fava bean
- candyfloss – cotton candy
- double cream – heavy cream
- potato peeler – vegetable peeler
- joint – pot roast
- mange tout – snow peas
- swede/ neep – rutabaga
- Swiss roll – jelly roll
- fish fingers – fish sticks
- scone – biscuit
- food processor – Cuisinart
- chewy sweets – taffy
- kipper – smoked herring
- tea towel – dish towel
- ready salted crisps – salted crisps
- corn flour – corn starch
- (peach) stone – (peach) pit
- salt cellar – salt shaker
- liquorice – licorice
- sultana – yellow raisin
- icing sugar – powdered sugar/ confectioner's sugar
- treacle – molasses

- (baby's) beaker – sippy cup
- tea cosy – tea cozy
- fig rolls – Fig Newtons
- icing – frosting
- self-raising flour – self-rising flour
- greaseproof paper – wax paper
- boiled sweet – hard candy
- caster sugar – superfine sugar
- liquidiser – blender
- profiterole – cream puff
- glace fruits – candied fruits
- hundreds and thousands – sprinkles

Transport and Travel

Words with different meanings in British and American English

- gas – natural gas – gasoline
- hood – the top of a convertible car – the cover of the engine (“bonnet” in British English)
- trailer – something that goes behind car or bicycle, usually to carry extra luggage – similar, but also including small places where people can stay (“caravan” in British English)
- trolley – shopping trolley – a kind of train in the street (“tram” in British English)
- rider – a person riding a bicycle, motorbike, horse, etc – a person travelling on a train, bus, etc (“passenger” in British English)
- pavement – the part by the side of the road where people walk (“sidewalk” in American English) – the material that makes a road

Completely different transport words in British and American English

- the underground/ the Tube – subway
- return (ticket) – round trip
- single (ticket) – one-way (ticket)
- car park – parking lot
- platform 5 – track 5
- coach – highway bus/ Greyhound bus
- (train) timetable – schedule
- economy (class) – coach (class)
- crossroads – intersection

- motorway – highway/ freeway
- hand luggage – carry-on baggage
- lorry – truck
- aeroplane/ plane – airplane/ plane
- petrol station/ garage – gas station/ fuel filling station
- petrol – gas(oline)
- zebra crossing/ pedestrian crossing – crosswalk
- tram – streetcar/ trolley
- season ticket – commuter ticket
- accelerator (pedal) – gas pedal/ the gas
- ticket barrier – turnstile
- tailback/ traffic jam – gridlock/ backup/ traffic jam
- public transport – public transportation/ public transit
- passenger – rider
- bonnet – hood
- gearbox – transmission
- diversion – detour
- hand brake – parking brake
- to reverse – to back up
- indicator – blinker/ turn signal
- roundabout – traffic circle
- boot – trunk
- puncture/ flat tyre – a flat
- (train) carriage – (train) coach
- overtake – pass
- (overland) railway station/ train station – railroad station/ train station
- buffet (car) – dining car
- railway – railroad
- toll road - turnpike
- number plate – license plate
- bumper – fender
- ring road – beltway, freeway/highway loop
- pavement – sidewalk
- windscreen (wipers) – windshield (wipers)
- give someone a lift – give someone a ride
- level crossing –grade crossing
- car journey/ drive – road trip
- four-wheel drive – Jeep

- baby seat – car safety seat
- gear lever – gear shift
- tyre – tire
- motorbike/ motorcycle – motorcycle
- articulated lorry – trailer truck/ semi
- car/ motorcar – car/ automobile
- give way – yield
- Dormobile/ campervan – RV/ recreational vehicle
- demister – defroster
- wing – fender
- hood – convertible top
- slip-road – on-ramp/ off-ramp
- lay-by – truck stop/ rest area
- caravan – trailer
- (train) guards – conductors
- saloon – sedan
- exhaust pipe – tailpipe
- silencer – muffler
- goods train – freight train
- wagon – freight car
- fire engine – fire truck
- juggernaut – 18-wheeler
- flyover – overpass
- road surface – pavement, blacktop
- main line – trunk line
- estate (car) – (station) wagon
- stabilisers – training wheels
- dustcart – garbage truck
- (engine/ train) driver – engineer
- transport café – truck stop
- AA (Automobile Association) – AAA
- dip switch – dimmer switch
- lollipop man/lady – crossing guard
- sleeping policeman/ speed bump – speed bump
- central reservation – median
- points – switch
- sleeper – railroad tie

Around the House

Words with different meanings in British and American English

- first floor – the first floor above the ground (upstairs from the ground floor, “second floor” in American English) – the floor at ground level (“ground floor” in British English)
- wash up – do the dishes – wash your hands
- cot – a baby’s bed (“crib” in American English) – a foldable extra bed (like a camp bed)
- dormitory – a room for more many people, often with bunk beds, for example in a boarding school – a place where university students live (“halls” or “student halls” in British English)
- cooker – stove in the kitchen for cooking (“range” in American English) – a person who cooks (“cook” in British English)
- semi – semi-detached house (“duplex” in American English) – semi-trailer truck (“articulated lorry” in British English)
- hamper – picnic basket – laundry basket
- homely – cosy – ugly (person)

Completely different transport words in British and American English

- flat/ apartment – apartment/ condo/ condominium
- block of flats – apartment building
- wardrobe – closet
- bin – trashcan/ garbage can
- rubbish – garbage/ trash
- socket – (electrical) outlet
- garden – yard
- two storeys – two floors
- tap – faucet
- armchair – easy chair/ armchair
- student halls/ halls – dorm/ dormitory
- curtains – drapes
- washing machine – washer
- accommodation – accommodations
- mortgage – home loan
- cooker/ stove – stove/ range
- toilet/ loo/ the little boys’ room/ lavatory/ lav/ bog – bathroom/ restroom

- electric razor – electric shaver
- aerial – antenna
- chest of drawers – bureau/ dresser
- hoover/ Hoover/ vacuum cleaner – vacuum cleaner
- washing up liquid – dishwashing liquid
- clothes peg – clothes pin
- property – real estate
- terraced house – row house/ townhouse
- semi/ semi-detached house – duplex
- hob – burner/ cooktop
- lay the table – set the table
- duvet – comforter
- kettle – tea kettle
- bleach – Clorox
- tumble dryer – dryer
- bathroom scales – scale
- food processor – Cuisinart
- Brillo Pad – scouring pad
- skip – Dumpster
- cuddly toy – stuffed animal
- kitchen roll – paper towel
- scatter cushion/ throw cushion – scatter pillow/ throw pillow
- reclining chair – La-Z-Boy
- flannel – facecloth/ washcloth
- furnace – boiler
- washing up bowl – dishpan
- bin liner – trash bag
- paraffin – kerosene
- cot – crib
- camp bed – cot
- dummy – pacifier
- pram – baby carriage
- tea towel – dish towel
- garden path – front walk
- earth – ground
- throw cushion – throw pillow
- pushchair – stroller
- laundry basket – hamper

- garage sale – yard sale
- fittings – fixtures
- greaseproof paper – wax paper
- scrubbing brush – scrub brush
- changing mat – changing pad
- homely – homey
- secateurs – pruners/ clippers
- skirting board – baseboard
- underlay – carpet pad

Describing Places

Vocabulary for describing places with different meanings in British and American English

- surgery – a doctor's office, like a clinic – an operating theatre
- first floor – the first floor above the ground ("second floor" in American English) – the lowest floor ("ground floor" in British English)
- subway – a pedestrian underpass – underground railway
- bathroom – the place with a bath or shower – the place with a toilet
- underpass – a street underground, often under another street – a tunnel for pedestrians under a street ("subway" in British English)
- campsite – an area for people to camp in ("campground" in American English) – a place for a single tent ("pitch" in British English)
- outside lane – the lane nearest the opposite side of the road, often used by faster cars ("inside lane" in American English) – the lane near the edge of the street, often used by slower vehicles ("inside lane" in British English)
- pylon – electricity pylon ("transmission tower/ mast" in American English) – traffic cone
- rail depot – a place where trains are parked – a rail terminal
- mortuary – a place where dead bodies are stored ("morgue" in American English) – a funeral home
- semi – semi-detached house – a kind of truck
- saloon – part of a pub – a Western-style bar
- Different describing places vocabulary in British and American English
- toilet/ loo/ lavatory/ lav – bathroom/ restroom
- first floor – second floor
- ground floor – first floor
- shop – store
- cinema – (movie) theater

- subway – underpass
- underground (railway)/ the Tube – subway
- (hotel) reception – front desk
- primary school – elementary school
- secondary school – (junior) high school
- lift – elevator
- block of flats – apartment building
- city centre/ town centre – downtown
- chemist’s – pharmacy/ drugstore
- (student) halls/ halls of residence – dorm
- junction – intersection
- platform..., as in “platform two” – track..., as in “track two”
- garden – yard
- petrol station/ garage – gas station
- car park – parking lot
- surgery – doctor’s office
- motorway – highway/ freeway
- high street – main street
- pedestrian crossing/ zebra crossing – crosswalk
- estate agent – realtor
- queue – line
- roundabout – traffic circle/ rotary
- off license – liquor store
- pavement – sidewalk
- ticket barrier – turnstile
- postcode – zip code
- traffic lights – traffic signals/ stoplights
- railway – railroad
- the countryside – the country
- council estate – project
- council house – public housing
- accommodation – accommodations
- town hall – city hall
- till – cash register
- (tele)phone box – phone booth
- newsagent(‘s) – newsstand
- cloakroom – checkroom/ coatroom
- barber’s – barbershop

- laundrette – laundromat
- football pitch – soccer field
- letter box – mail box
- path – trail
- billboard – hoarding
- ring road – beltway/ freeway/ highway loop
- lost property (office) – lost and found
- Tannoy – PA/ public address system
- semi/ semi-detached house – duplex
- terraced house – townhouse
- crèche – day care/ nursery
- toll road – turnpike
- A&E/ accident and emergency/ casualty – ER/ emergency room
- wooden floor – wood floor
- Portakabin – portable building
- charity shop/ secondhand shop – thrift store
- sweet shop – candy store
- DIY shop – home improvement store
- ironmongers – hardware shop
- campsite – campground
- (greasy) caff – diner
- inside lane – outside lane
- outside lane – inside lane
- flyover – overpass
- funfair – carnival
- merry-go-round/ roundabout – carousel
- multi-storey car park – parking garage
- scrapyard – junkyard
- skip – Dumpster
- traffic cone – pylon
- diagonally opposite – cater cornered
- electricity pylon – mast/ transmission tower
- mortuary – morgue
- bumper car – dodgem
- pigsty – pigpen
- (hunting) hide – (duck/ hunting/ deer) blind

Clothes and Accessories

Appearance vocabulary with different meanings in British and American English

- pants – underpants – long pants (“trousers” in British English)
- purse – a small and/ or woman’s wallet – a handbag or shoulder bag
- vest – underwear worn under your shirt (“undershirt” in American English) – part of a three-piece suit, worn under your jacket (“waistcoat” in British English)
- jumper – sweater/ pullover – a kind of knitted dress
- tights – nylons (“pantyhose” in American English) – skin-tight trousers (“leggings” in British English) or one-piece trousers and top (“unitard” in British English)
- suspenders – straps to hold up stockings (“garters” in American English) – straps to hold up trousers (“braces” in British English)
- tank top – sweater without sleeves – sleeveless T shirt
- fancy dress – dressing up in a costume, e.g. for Halloween – formal wear such as a ball gown
- nappy – kind of underpants for babies (“diaper” in British English) – an insulting word about Afro hair
- boob tube – a strapless top (“tube top” in American English) – the television

Completely different words in British and American English

- trousers – pants
- pants – underpants
- tie – necktie
- jeans – Levi’s
- handbag - purse
- trainers – sneakers
- (sports) kit – uniform
- swimming costume – bathing suit
- vest – undershirt
- tights – pantyhose
- tracksuit – sweats
- zip – zipper
- wallet – billfold/ wallet
- shoelace – shoestring
- mac/ macintosh – raincoat
- Y-fronts/ briefs/ (under)pants – jockey shorts/ jockey briefs/ pants
- blazer – sports jacket/ sports coat

- waistcoat – vest
- wellington boots/ wellingtons/ wellies – galoshes/ rain boots/ rubber boots/ billy boots/ gum boots
- woolly hat – ski hat
- knickers – panties
- bum bag – fanny pack
- plimsolls – gym shoes
- dressing gown/ bathrobe – (bath)robe
- nappy – diaper
- polo neck – turtle neck
- cardigan – cardigan sweater
- trouser suit – pant suit
- suspenders – garters
- braces – suspenders
- brooch – pin
- hair pin – bobby pin
- rubber gloves – latex gloves
- sleeveless top – sleeveless shirt
- baby grow – blanket sleeper/ onesie
- dungarees – overalls
- ladder in your tights – run in your pantyhose
- cagoule/ kagoul – Windbreaker
- bowler hat – derby
- long johns – long underwear
- boob tube – tube top
- turn-ups – cuffs

Describing people

Words with different meanings in British and American English

- mean – miserly/ the opposite of generous – unkind/ nasty
- mad – crazy – angry
- roommate – someone sharing the same bedroom – someone sharing the same house/ apartment (“housemate” or “flatmate” in British English)
- athlete – someone who does track and field events – a sportsman
- cooker – stove in the kitchen, used for cooking – someone who cooks (“cook” in British English)

- nervy – nervous/ jumpy – cheeky
- pissed – drunk – annoyed (“pissed off” in British English)
- Yankee – someone from the United States (usually shortened to “Yank”) – someone from New England or the North-eastern United States more generally
- fag – cigarette – a very non-PC insult for a homosexual
- faggot – a kind of meatball – bad insult for a homosexual
- bum – bottom/ rear end/ buttocks – homeless person/ tramp
- (British) Asian/ Asian (American) – someone whose family comes from South Asia – someone whose family comes from East Asia
- fanny – vagina/ vulva – buttocks (as in “fanny pack”)
- hooker – a position in rugby – slang for a prostitute
- tosser – idiot/ wanker – someone who likes to throw things away, the opposite of “hoarder”
- jock – slang for a Scotsman – slang for an athlete
- cracker – Xmas cracker – yokel
- DC – detective constable – District of Columbia
- trooper – private in the army – state police officer
- go potty – go crazy – go to toilet (for a baby)
- homely – cosy (place) – plain or ugly

Completely different words in British and American English

- cook – cooker
- shop assistant – (sales) clerk
- fresher/ first year student – freshman
- waiter/ waitress – server
- receptionist – desk clerk
- mum – mom
- housemate/ flatmate – roommate
- solicitor/ barrister – attorney
- chemist/ pharmacist – druggist/ pharmacist
- estate agent – real estate agent/ realtor
- sportsman – athlete
- police constable/ PC/ bobby – patrolman
- postman – mailman
- shopkeeper – storekeeper
- lorry driver – teamster/ truckdriver

- OAP/ pensioner/ senior citizen – senior
- landlord/ landlady/ barman – bar tender
- newsreader – news anchor
- mate – buddy
- parting – part
- fringe – bangs
- caretaker – janitor
- bloke/ chap – guy
- arse – ass
- lodger – roomer
- hard man – tough guy
- bum – butt
- Father Christmas – Santa/ Santa Claus
- girl guide – girl scout
- docker/ dockworker – longshoreman
- undertaker – mortician
- whingeing – whining
- pet hate – pet peeve
- bird – chick/ broad
- dustbin man – garbage collector
- supply teacher – substitute teacher
- gooseberry – third wheel
- prison governor – prison warden
- green fingers – green thumbs
- chav – white trash
- mason/ stonemason – stoneworker
- dogsbody – gofer
- bogey – booger
- anorak/ trainspotter – geek/ nerd/ dweeb
- knackered – beat
- yob – hood
- Joe Bloggs – John Blow
- tout – scalper

Education

Education vocabulary with different meanings in British and American English

- public school – an old and usually high status private school (historically, the first schools which were open to the paying public) – a school funded by the (local and/ or national) government (“state school” in British English)
- state school – a school funded by the government (“public school” in American English) – a school funded by the state (rather than the national government or a more local area)
- professor – the very top members of the academic staff of a university – all lecturers at a university
- tuition – teaching, especially by a (private) tutor – money paid to study (“tuition fees” in British English)
- semester – half an academic year – between a quarter and a half of an academic year, depending on how the academic year is split (“term” in British English)
- to graduate – successfully finish a university first degree/ bachelor’s degree – successfully finish any academic level, e.g. “graduate from high school” (“finish” in British English)
- faculty – the largest organisation of a university, often consisting of several departments – professors and similar staff (“academic staff” in British English)
- prep school – a private school that prepares students to secondary school – a private school that prepares students for university

Completely different words in British and American English

- homework – assignment
- revise/ revision – review
- primary school – elementary school
- secondary school – (junior) high school
- sixth form (college) – (senior) high school
- (student) halls – dorms
- tick – check
- state school – public school
- postgraduate studies – grad school
- postgrad/ postgraduate student – grad student
- humanities – liberal arts
- tutor – homeroom teacher
- uni – school/ college
- A levels – high school leaving certificate
- class/ form – grade
- fresher/ first year student – freshman
- second year student – sophomore
- third year student – junior

- final year student – senior
- head teacher – principal
- take an exam/ sit an exam
- marking – grading
- marks – grades
- blackboard – chalkboard
- maths – math
- academic staff – faculty
- tuition fees – tuition
- enrol on a course – enroll in a course
- sports day – field day
- supply teacher – sub/ substitute teacher
- reader – associate professor
- crèche – day care/ day nursery
- staff room – teacher’s lounge
- mark a test – check a test
- caretaker – janitor
- break time/ playtime – recess
- Oxbridge – Ivy League
- open day/ open evening – open house
- school dinner – hot lunch
- skive – play hooky

Legal English

Note that because the legal systems are different, many of the synonyms below are only approximate.

Legal expressions with different meanings in British and American English

- casualty – someone who has been injured (as in “casualty department”) – someone who has been killed (as in “casualty figures”)
- solicitor – lawyer (who traditionally gives advice to clients, with a “barrister” representing them in court) – chief law officer in a town or government department
- (legal) brief – documents given to a barrister about what to do in court – documents given to a court to show the arguments of one side
- DC – Detective Constable (as in “DC Smith”) – District of Columbia (as in “Washington DC”)
- first degree – first degree burn – first degree murder
- constable – police officer – official who serves summonses (“bailiff” or “sheriff’s officer” in

British English)

- mortuary – place where dead bodies are stored (“morgue” in American English) – funeral home/ funeral parlour
- (police) commissioner – professional head of the police (“chief of police” in American English) – person in charge of supervising the police force
- appropriation – misappropriating money – dispensing money

Completely different words in British and American English

- murder – homicide
- theft – larceny
- PC/ bobby – patrolman
- manslaughter/ culpable homicide – second degree murder
- solicitor – (corporate/ transactional) attorney
- barrister – attorney/ litigator
- driving license – driver’s license
- police car/ panda car – patrol car/ police cruiser
- serious crime – felony
- magistrates’ courts/ county courts – district court/ circuit court/ state courts
- court of appeal – court of appeal/ appellate court
- public prosecutor – DA/ district attorney
- CPS/ Crown Prosecution Service – DA’s office
- minor crime – misdemeanor
- claimant/ pursuer – plaintiff
- company law – corporate law
- employment law – labor law
- competition law – antitrust law
- crown court – district court
- defence – defense
- traffic warden – parking enforcement officer
- traffic cop – highway patrolman
- drink driving – drunk driving
- prison warden – prison governor
- truncheon – nightstick/ billy club
- the Crown – the State (versus...)
- gaol/ the nick/ the slammer/ jail – the can/ the cooler/ the joint/ the pen/ penitentiary/ pokey/ jail

- mortuary – morgue
- witness box – witness stand
- GBH/ grievous bodily harm – aggravated battery/ felony assault
- tribunal – arbitration
- grass – stool pigeon/ snitch
- allow a lower court’s decision – affirm a lower court’s decision
- dismiss a lower court’s decision – reverse a lower court’s decision
- police commissioner – chief of police
- paddy wagon – Black Maria
- tout – scalp
- right of access – visiting rights
- called to the bar – admitted to the bar
- articles of association – bylaws
- flick knife – switchblade
- clerk to the court – clerk of the court/ clerk of court

Medical

Different meanings of medical words in British and American English

- surgery – doctor’s office – operating theatre
- casualty – someone who has been injured (as in “casualty department”) – someone who has been killed (as in “casualty figures”)
- mortuary – place for dead bodies (“morgue” in the US) – funeral home/ funeral parlour
- medic – doctor/ internist – EMT/ paramedic/ military corpsman

Completely different words in British and American English

- surgery – doctor’s office
- chemist’s – pharmacy
- (sticky) plaster/ Elastoplast – Band Aid
- paracetamol – acetaminophen/ Tylenol
- jab – shot
- tablets – pills
- A&E/ accident and emergency/ casualty (department) – ER/ emergency room
- GP/ general practitioner – primary care practitioner
- operation – surgery
- cotton buds – Q tips

- cotton wool – cotton balls
- mouth to mouth (resuscitation) – rescue breathing
- operating theatre – operating room/ OR
- in theatre – in the OR
- plaster cast – cast
- nappy – diaper
- speciality – specialty
- antenatal – prenatal
- Mr... for surgeons – Dr... for surgeons
- sister – charge nurse
- mortuary – morgue
- anaesthetist – anesthesiologist
- anaesthetics – anesthesiology.
- (ophthalmic) optician – optometrist
- emergency trolley – crash cart
- foundation year – internship
- appendectomy – appendicectomy
- oesophagus – esophagus
- CTG – fetal non-stress test
- observations – vitals
- ECG/ EEG – EKG/ EEG
- BM test – blood sugar test
- Zimmer frame – walker
- hb – hbg
- anaemia – anemia
- caesarean – cesarean
- diarrhoea – diarrhea
- gynaecology – gynecology
- haemoglobin – hemoglobin
- haemorrhage – hemorrhage
- leukaemia – leukemia
- orthopaedic – orthopedic
- oestrogen – estrogen
- paediatric – pediatric
- intervertebral disc – intervertebral disk
- oedema – edema
- oesophagus – esophagus

Engineering

Engineering words with different meanings in British and American English

- gas – natural gas – gasoline (“petrol” in British English)
- pavement – the part you walk on next to the road (“sidewalk” in US) – the road surface
- white spirit – a kind of alcohol used for cleaning, as a paint thinner, etc (“turpentine” in American English) – a kind of illegally distilled alcohol for drinking

Completely different words in British and American English

- (electrical) socket – (electrical) outlet
- spanner – wrench
- petrol – gas/ gasoline
- aerial – antenna
- bin – trashcan/ garbage can
- (safety) goggles – safety glasses
- hard hat – bump cap
- rubbish – garbage/ trash
- lift – elevator
- (service) engineer – (service) technician
- anti-clockwise – counter-clockwise
- earth – ground
- maths – math
- nought/ oh (as in “nought point oh five”) – zero (as in “zero point zero five”)
- aluminium – aluminum
- rubber gloves – latex gloves
- tap – faucet
- (electric) torch – flashlight
- paraffin – kerosene
- ironmonger – hardware store
- dustcart – garbage truck
- set square – triangle
- JCB – excavator
- Hoover – vacuum cleaner
- skip – Dumpster
- fire engine – fire truck

- fire brigade – fire department
- loudhailer – bullhorn
- Stanley knife – utility knife
- polythene – polyethylene
- sulphur – sulfur
- Perspex – plexiglass
- (electricity) pylon – transmission tower/ mast
- tarmac – asphalt/ blacktop
- Portakabin – portable building
- white spirit – paint thinner/ turpentine
- trapezium – trapezoid
- trapezoid – trapezium
- snowplough – snowplow
- Heath Robinson contraption – Rube Goldberg machine

Business, Finance and Money

Business vocabulary with different meanings in British and American English

- penny – a hundredth of a pound – a cent

Completely different words in British and American English

- CV/ curriculum vitae – résumé
- shareholder – stockholder
- Ltd/ PLC – Inc./ Corp.
- company – corporation
- cash machine/ cashpoint – ATM
- mortgage – home loan
- AGM/ annual general meeting – shareholders meeting
- (trade) union – (labor) union
- diary – appointment book
- fill in a form – fill out a form
- (pound) note – (dollar) bill
- discount – concession
- bank holiday – national holiday/ public holiday
- summer holiday – summer vacation

- from Monday to Friday – Monday through Friday
- turnover – revenue/ gross sales
- building society – savings and loan (association)
- current account – checking account
- property – real estate
- expiry date – expiration date
- national insurance number/ NI number – social security number
- estate agent – real estate agent
- travellers' cheque – traveler's check
- (five) quid – (five) bucks
- base rate – prime rate
- cheque book – check book
- The City – Wall Street
- to table – to put something forward for discussion – to leave to discuss until later
- hire purchase – installment plan
- the till – cash register
- third-party insurance – liability insurance
- repossession – foreclosure
- rates – municipal property taxes
- rota – roster
- ordinary share/ equity share – common stock
- articles of association – bylaws
- memorandum of association – certificate of incorporation/ articles of incorporation
- bridging loan – bridge loan
- barometer stock – bellwether stock
- flog – hock

Sports and games vocabulary with different meanings in British and American English

- football – footie/ soccer – American football
- athletics – running, jumping and throwing sports such as sprinting (“track and field” in American English) – sports generally
- athlete – someone doing track and field sports – sportsmen generally
- hockey – field hockey, played on grass – ice hockey
- strike – hit the ball – miss (in baseball)
- gym – gymnasium, the place where sports are done, including in school – gym class (“PE class” in British English)
- silverware – trophies won by sports teams – things you eat with (“cutlery” in British English)

Completely different words in British and American English

- football/ footie/ soccer – soccer
- American football – football
- (sports) kit – (sports) uniform
- (football) pitch – (soccer) field
- trainers – sneakers
- plimsolls – gym shoes
- tracksuit – sweats
- swimming costume – bathing suit
- PE/ physical education – physical ed/ physical education
- athletics – track and field
- sportsman – athlete
- ice hockey – hockey
- hockey – field hockey
- nil – zero
- pack of cards – deck of cards
- horse riding – horseback riding
- draughts – checkers
- abseil/ abseiling – rappel
- touchline – sideline
- noughts and crosses – tick-tac-toe
- anti-clockwise – counter-clockwise
- tout – scalper
- potholing – caving/ spelunking
- patience – solitaire
- Scalextric – slot cars
- box – protective cup
- catapult – slingshot
- snakes and ladders – chutes and ladders
- duck (meaning zero, especially in cricket) – goose egg

Phrasal verbs and Idioms

Phrasal verbs and idioms with different meanings in British and American English

- tick someone off – tell someone off – irritate someone

- knock up – get pregnant – wake someone up by knocking on their door
- blow off – fart – blow someone off (similar to “stand someone up” in British English)

Completely different phrasal verbs in British and American English

- take away – take out (food)
- put someone through – connect someone/ transfer someone’s call
- wash up/ do the dishes – do the dishes
- queue up – line up/ wait in line
- get on (well) with someone – get along with someone
- fill in a form – fill out a form
- pass away (meaning die) – pass
- clear your desk/ put your books away – clear off your desk
- pissed off – pissed (meaning annoyed)
- give over – give me a break
- come round – come over
- cock up – screw up
- knocked up – pregnant – woken up by banging on the door
- pull – pick up
- get off with – make out
- take the piss – screw around
- clued up – clued in
- rained off – rained out

Completely different idioms in British and American English

- take something with a pinch of salt – take something with a grain of salt
- a new lease of life – a new lease on life
- blow your own trumpet – blow your own horn
- sweep something under the carpet – sweep something under the rug
- touch wood – knock on wood
- flogging a dead horse – beating a dead horse
- you can’t see the wood for the trees – you can’t see the forest for the trees
- a drop in the ocean – a drop in the bucket
- I wouldn’t touch it with a bargepole – I wouldn’t touch it with a ten-foot pole

Brand names

Ones without capital letters are not brand names, and so are often used in both British and American English

- Sellotape – Scotch Tape
- Biro – ballpoint pen
- jeans – Levi's
- to photocopy – to Xerox
- tissue – Kleenex
- (sticky) plaster/ Elastoplast – Band Aid
- Hoover/ vacuum cleaner – vacuum cleaner
- coach – Greyhound bus/ highway bus
- ice lolly – Popsicle
- four wheel drive – Jeep
- permanent marker – Sharpie/ Magic Marker
- clingfilm – Saran Wrap
- Tippex – White Out/ Liquid Paper
- cotton buds – Q Tips
- laundrette – Laundromat
- jelly – Jell-O
- estate agent – real estate agent/ Realtor
- briefs – Jockey Shorts
- paracetamol – Tylenol
- bleach – Clorox
- food processor – Cuisinart
- Tannoy – PA/ public address system
- Dormobile/ campervan – RV/ recreational vehicle
- JCB – excavator
- Perspex – plexiglass
- Portakabin – portable building
- Brillo Pad – scouring pad
- skip – Dumpster
- cagoule/ kagoul – Windbreaker
- Stanley knife – utility knife
- Scalextric – slot cars
- Zimmer frame – walker
- fig rolls – Fig Newtons
- reclining chair – La-Z-Boy

- Airfix – (plastic) scale models

Telephoning

Ones near the bottom are for dictating on the phone rather than actual telephone vocabulary.

- mobile (phone) (number) – cell(phone) (number)
- text – SMS
- engaged (tone) – busy (signal)
- put someone through – connect someone/ transfer someone's call
- give someone a ring/ give someone a call – give someone a call
- reverse the charges – a collect call
- phone box – phone booth (= public phone)
- hash (key) – pound (key)
- freephone (number) – toll-free (number)
- directory enquiries – directory assistance
- oh – zero
- nine nine nine – nine one one (= emergency phone number)
- oh eight nine eight number – nine hundred number or one-nine hundred number (= premium rate phone number)
- zed – zee (= Z)
- postcode – zip code
- full stop – period
- brackets/ round brackets – parentheses
- square brackets – brackets

Office and Stationery

Office and stationery vocabulary with different meanings in British and American English

- a rubber – an eraser – a condom

Completely different words in British and American English

- Sellotape – Scotch tape
- rubber/ eraser – eraser
- photocopier – copy machine

- to photocopy – to Xerox
- Biro – ballpoint pen
- noticeboard – bulletin board
- Tippex – Whiteout/ Liquid Paper
- diary – appointment book/ datebook
- automatic pencil – mechanical pencil
- whiteboard pen – dry erase marker
- permanent marker – Sharpie/ Magic Marker
- drawing pin – thumbtack
- set square – triangle

British and American arts and media vocabulary with different meanings

- pantomime – a kind of play/ musical, that is often based on fairy tales and played at Xmas (often shortened to “panto”) – a performance without speech (“mime” in British English)
- The Times – The Times (often called “The London Times” or “The Times of London” in the US) – The New York Times
- prom – music performance, as in “The Proms” – dance/ ball, especially at schools

Completely different words in British and American English

- film – movie
- (television) series – serial
- series two – season two
- indie (music) – alternative
- chat show – talk show
- 18 (certificate) – R (rated)
- news cuttings – news clippings
- telly/ TV – boob tube/ TV
- discount – concession
- interval – intermission
- music hall – vaudeville

Nature

Nature words with different meanings in British and American English

- robin – a small bird with a red breast – a medium-sized bird with a red breast
- buzzard – a medium-sized hawk – a kind of vulture

Different nature words in British and American English

- guide dog – seeing eye dog
- Alsatian – German shepherd
- ladybird – ladybug
- cock – rooster
- zebra (with an “e” sound, as in “pet”) – zebra (with a “ee” sound, as in “bee”)
- garden – yard
- tit – chickadee/ titmouse
- pigsty – pigpen

British and American political vocabulary list

- by-law – ordinance
- The Commonwealth – an association of mainly ex-British colonies/ the period after between the death of King Charles I in 1649 to the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 – a way of referring to American states and territories such as Puerto Rico

Other different words in British and American English

- tissue – Kleenex
- carrier bag/ plastic bag – shopping bag
- to post something – to mail something
- jump the queue – cut the line
- pushchair/ buggy – buggy/ stroller
- dummy – pacifier
- jumble sale – rummage sale
- pram – baby carriage
- tall story – tall tale
- swear word – curse (word)
- sanitary towel – sanitary napkin
- snigger – snicker
- snog – neck
- raspberry – Bronx cheer
- shag – screw
- lucky dip – grab bag