

American English

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En este artículo voy a describir brevemente los rasgos del inglés americano, y también los pondré en comparación con algunos aspectos del inglés británico. Es muy interesante para mí como maestra de inglés, pues nos damos cuenta de que dentro de una misma lengua, existen diversas maneras de llevarlas a la práctica en situaciones de la vida diaria, y un ejemplo de ello, es las diferencias existentes entre el inglés británico y el americano, procediendo las dos de un inglés estándar.

FEATURES OF AMERICAN ENGLISH

American English is the form of English used by people in the United States and, as lingua franca or second language by people in many parts of the world.

American English does not include Canadian English; although Canadian pronunciation and vocabulary is very similar to that of the United States, and Canadian spelling often takes the Commonwealth form (form used by British English).

Regions and countries tend to use American English in teaching and publishing (East Asia and the Organization of American States, among other organizations, also use American English).

Lexis

There are three distinctions which have to be made: some words are found only in American English, some only found in British English, and some have become established through-out the world as part of Standard English.

Some words reflect cultural differences but are not part of WSE

AmE: Ivy League, revenue sharing.

Br E: A –levels, giro

There are no synonyms in the other variety.

Some words are straightforward: they have a single sense, and a synonym in the other variety. BrE current account = AmE checking account; BrE estate car = AmE station wagon.

We have to allow for words which have at least one WSE meaning and one or more additional meanings that are specific to either BrE or AmE: caravan, (group of travellers in a desert) is common to both varieties, but in the sense of “vehicle towed by a car” in BrE, In AmE trailer.

Some words have one meaning in WSE and a synonym in one or other of the two varieties.

Both AmE and BrE have undertaker, but only AmE has mortician; both have pharmacy, but AmE has drugstore and BrE has chemist's.

Some words have no WSE meaning, but different meaning in AmE and BrE.

AmE flyover= BrE flypast; however, BrE flyover =AmE overpass.

Some words are used in both varieties, but are much more common in one of them.

Flat and apartment are both used in both, but the former is frequent in BrE and the latter in AmE. Other examples are: shop vs. store, and post vs. mail.

Grammatical differences

In the verb phrase AmE prefers: have to have got for possession.

AmE prefers such forms as burned to burnt and there are some special past tense forms (snuck out, dove).

AmE also sometimes uses a simple past tense where BrE has a present perfect (I just ate vs. I've just eaten).

Will/won't is generally found for shall /shan't.

There are also differences in the use of Tag- questions.

In the noun phrase there are some differences of word order (Hudson River vs. River Thames)

The use of the article (in the future vs. in future).

AmE prefers collective nouns in the singular (the government is,) whereas BrE allows also the government are).

Clausal patterns sometimes differ (Come take a look vs. Come and take).

AmE also makes more use of the subjunctive (I asked that he go vs. I asked him to go).

AmE prefers were to was in such sentence as I wish she here; different than/from is more common than different to /from.

There are several differences in prepositions and adverbs, such as AmE I'll go momentarily vs. in a moment, real good (vs. really good), and back-ward (vs. backwards).

The gotten/got distinction

Gotten is probably the most distinctive of all the AmE/BrE grammatical differences.

Gotten is used in such contexts as: They've gotten a new boa (obtain). But it is not used for possession.

Punctuation

In AmE is used for "number" . the raised dot is used for an ordinary period. A colon plus dash (: -) is very unusual in AmE.

Spelling

The spelling differences between British and American English were noted as one the chief sources of variation in the world press.

Several of them are productive applying to large numbers of words such as:

-or vs. -our	
American	British
<i>color</i>	<i>colour</i>
<i>favorite</i>	<i>favourite</i>
<i>honor</i>	<i>honour</i>

-ze vs. -se	
American	British
<i>analyze</i>	<i>analyse</i>
<i>criticize</i>	<i>criticise</i>
<i>memorize</i>	<i>memorise</i>

-ll vs. -l	
American	British
<i>enrollment</i>	<i>enrolment</i>
<i>fulfill</i>	<i>fulfil</i>
<i>skillful</i>	<i>skilful</i>

-er vs. -re	
American	British
<i>center</i>	<i>centre</i>
<i>meter</i>	<i>metre</i>
<i>theater</i>	<i>theatre</i>

-og vs. -ogue

-e vs. -oe or -ae

American	British
<i>analog</i>	<i>analogue</i>
<i>catalog</i>	<i>catalogue</i>
<i>dialog</i>	<i>dialogue</i>

American	British
encyclopedia	encyclop <i>ae</i> dia
maneuver	man <i>oe</i> uvre
medieval	medi <i>ae</i> val

-ck or -k vs. -que	
American	British
bank	ban <i>que</i>
check	che <i>que</i>
checker	che <i>quer</i>

-dg vs. -dge (or -g vs. -gu)	
American	British
aging	age <i>ing</i>
argument	argu <i>ement</i>
judgment	judg <i>ement</i>

-ense vs. -enze	
American	British
def <i>ense</i>	def <i>ence</i>
lic <i>ense</i>	lic <i>ence</i>

Other	
American	British
jew <i>elry</i>	jew <i>ellery</i>
draft	drau <i>ght</i>
pa <i>ja</i> mas	py <i>ja</i> mas
plow	plou <i>gh</i>
progr <i>am</i>	progr <i>amme</i>
ti <i>re</i>	ty <i>re</i>

In British English, words that end in *-l* preceded by a vowel usually double the *-l* when a suffix is added, while in American English the letter is not doubled. The letter will double in the stress is on the second syllable.

Base Word	American	British
counsel	counseling	counselling
equal	equaling	equalling
model	modeling	modelling
quarrel	quarreling	quarrelling
signal	signaling	signalling
travel	traveling	travelling
excel	excelling	excelling
propel	propelling	propelling

There are three main categories of differences with verbs.

-ed vs. -t

The first category involves verbs that use -ed or -t for the simple past and past participle. Generally, the rule is that if there is a verb form with -ed, American English will use it, and if there is a form with -t, British English uses it. However, these forms do not exist for every verb and there is variation. For example, both American and British English would use the word 'worked' for the past form of 'to work', and in American English it is common to hear the word 'knelt' as the past tense of 'to kneel'.

Base form	American	British
to dream	dreamed	dreamt
to leap	leaped	leapt
to learn	learned	learnt

base form vs. -ed

The second category of difference includes verbs that use either the base form of the verb or the -ed ending for the simple past.

Base form	American	British
to fit	fit	<i>fitted</i>
to forecast	forecast	<i>forecasted</i>
to wed	wed	<i>wedded</i>

irregular vs. -ed

The third category of difference includes verbs that have either an irregular spelling or the -ed ending for the simple past.

Base form	American	British
to knit	knit	<i>knitted</i>
to light	lit	<i>lighted</i>
to strive	strove	<i>strived</i>

Pronunciation

There are several regular differences between Received Pronunciation and General American, such as the pronunciation of final /-r/ in the latter.

Received Pronunciation has many words using /a:/ which are pronounced with / / in GAM.

RP has a marked degree of contrast of length between “short” and “long” vowels. The long vowels being the diphthongs and [i:], [u:], [ɜ:], [ɔ:], [a:]. In GAM this contrast is much less evident, and IPA length symbol is often omitted. American phoneticians often prefer the characterizations “tense”/“lax” or “checked”/“free” rather than “short”/“long”.

The “long o” vowel is realised differently: Gam pure [o:] or diphthongized [ou]. RP central first element [u].

The distinction between unstressed /ɪ/ and / / is often lost in GAM. IN RP it is retained relevant vowels; similarly the pour – poor merger is common in RP but not in GAM.

RP has three open back vowels, where GAM has only two or even one. Most Gam speakers use the same vowel for RP “short o” [] as for RP “broad a” [a:].

For Americans without the cot-caught merger, the lot-cloth split results in [ɔ:] in some words which now have [ɒ] in RP.

Yod-dropping occurs in GAm after [t], [d], [ʔ], [s], [z], [n], [l]; ie. Historic [ju:] is pronounced [u:] in a stressed syllable. In contrast, RP speakers always retain [j] after [n], eg. new is in RP [nju:] ; GAm [un:]; retain or coalesce it after [b] , [d], eg. Due is in RP [dju:] or [d u:]; Gam [du:]; retain or drop it after [ʔ], [l], eg. Allude is in RP ['lju:d]; Gam ['lu:d]; retain , coalesce or drop it after [s], [z], eg. Assume is RP ['sju:m]; GAm ['su:m].

Where GAm has [i:] in an unstressed syllable at the end of a morpheme, conservative RP has [ɪ]

Several words have individually different pronunciations:

Stress differences

There are many words whose stress varies between the two accents. Some of them can be grouped into patterns such as those ending in –ary/ory. (eg.secretary, laboratory) or –et (eg.ballet,beret), which attract stress on the final syllable. Some of the words vary, depending on their sentence position, as in Princess Anne is a princess. ●

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