

Научно-исследовательская работа

по английскому языку

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

БРИТАНСКИЙ И АМЕРИКАНСКИЙ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ

(СРАВНИТЕЛЬНАЯ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА)

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INTRODUCTION

There are a lot of dialects of spoken English, but American and British are the most commonly taught in schools and courses. There are more similarities between them than the differences, but those differences can sometimes really impact understanding. When you study English as another language, such small but important differences can be frustrating and confusing. That is why I decided to get a deeper knowledge of differences between these two languages and of historical premise of such differences. This theme sounds interesting to me and I believe you will be interested in it too. If you want to use your English all over the world, watch both British and American films (or "movies" in American English), make friends or pen-friends from both Great Britain and the USA, then you may want to spend some time on learning the main differences between the two types of English. It's evident that British and American English are standard English that are used all around the world. I think this paper will be also useful for the teachers of English. Teachers need to know the differences between British and American English to answer such a question like: theatre/theater, centre/center, which one is correct? This paper will guide teachers to explain such a question mentioned that may come from some students. It is necessary to know the differences between British and American English to avoid the confusion of students when they face such a problem like this. Students are confused which is the right word they have to write on their paper (centre/center, theatre/theater), students are confused to pronounce the word "dance" (da:ns/daens). It is teachers' responsibility to solve these students' questions.

The aim of this paper is to learn the process of formation of English, what influenced the differences between the two languages and to study the variations in vocabulary and grammar between British and American English.

The aim has ascertained the following tasks:

to state the causes of differences between the two types of English;

to state some specific features of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation;

to conduct a questioning among my schoolmates to learn whether they have any difficulties in understanding each other;

to analyze the same text describing the day's events in two varieties of English;

to find as many differences in vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling as possible.

The subject of the research work is the process of development of the two varieties of English.

The object of the research lexical units, pronunciation and grammar of American and British English.

The hypothesis of the work is that both American and British English are important for English learners and teachers and that it is important to know the differences between them.

In the given work the following methods of the research were used:

- analysis and observation of the theoretical material;
- questionnaire;
- survey;
- making charts, diagrams, tables;
- description;
- systematization.

This research is mainly based on the works of famous linguists. For writing this work a lot of books, information from the internet sites, questioning of native speakers on the internet are used.

The research work consists of introduction, theoretical and practical parts, conclusion, bibliography and appendices. They show the actuality of the work, setting the aim, tasks, methods of the research.

In the first part, there are theoretical bases and reasons for appearance of two main families of standart English, the American and the British.

The second part involves the description of the results of the research.

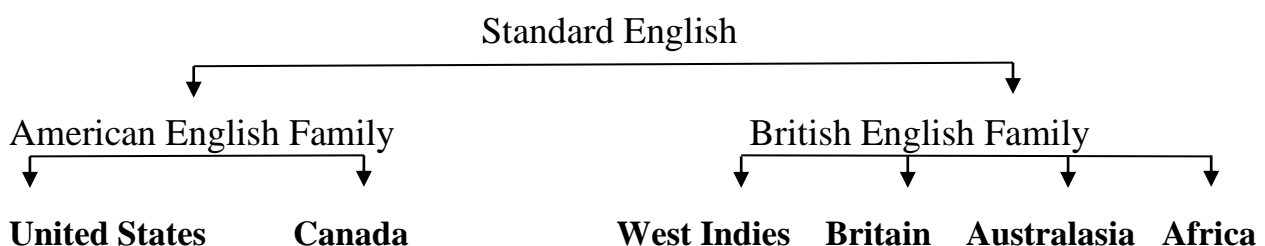
Conclusion contains summarizing of the results of the studied theme.

1.HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IN NORTH AMERICA

From the language of a small country on the edge of Europe English has grown into a world language. About 400 million people speak English as their first language; of them more than 321 million live in the U.S. and some 60 million in the U.K. In over 70 countries English is used as a second language. Estimates for the number of English speakers range from 400 million to 2 billion. There are also millions of learners of English as a foreign language.[1,c.]

Where did English come from? The obvious answer is England. However, in the past two thousand years very many people came to England and changed the language. Perhaps most of the language comes from the Anglo-Saxons who came to England in the fifth to the seventh centuries. But there are also Roman Words from the time when England was a part of the Roman Empire: the ending - 'chester' in the name of an English town such as Colchester comes from the Latin word 'castra' and shows that there was a Roman town there. The Vikings brought many words with them, such as 'they' and 'their'; the Normans governed England for many years and brought French words with them. Then the English brought many words from different countries-'kangaroo' from Australia, 'pyjamas' from India, and 'anorak' from Canada.

But what is English now? It is no longer spoken just in England and there are many different kinds of English in different parts of the world. In a book, Peter Strevens gives the following diagram[3,c.227]:



He says that there are two main families of Standard English, the American and the British. American English is spoken in the USA and in Canada. British English is spoken in the West Indies, Britain, Australasia, and Africa. However, many other parts of the world also use English. In many sciences English is the language of communication. There are about 300 million people who speak English as a first language, and there are another 300 million who use it as a second language. So English is now an international language and is useful to people who never go to England.

Of all the people in the world who speak English as their mother tongue, more than 200 million people live in North America. The majority of the population of North American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries spoke English. American English reflects numerous non-English cultures which colonists met in their conquest of the continent. The American variety of English has borrowed many words from the vocabulary of the French, Dutch, Spanish and German-speaking settlers.

The US has never had an official language, but English has always been chief language spoken in the country. Immigrants from the British Isles spoke English. Many immigrants from other lands who spoke little or no English also came to the United States. They learned at least enough English to be able to communicate with other Americans. The history of AE counts more than four centuries. The first (early) period (beginning of the 17th-end of the 18th centuries) is characterized by the formation of American dialects of the English language. The second period (19th-20th centuries) is characterized by the creation of American variant of the English language.

Historically, the roots of the differences that separate AE from BE lie in the disparity of the environment and traditions of the American and British people starting with the 17th century. .”[3,180]

Everything that differed English spoken in America from the British language used to be called and is called now Americanism. The term Americanism was first used by John Witherspoon, President of Princeton University, in 1781. It denotes (a) any word or combination of words which, taken into the English language

in the US, has not gained acceptance in England, or, if accepted, has retained its sense of foreignness; and (b) any word or combination of words which, becoming archaic in England, has continued to be in good usage in the US.[230,3]

The neologisms of 17th-18th centuries reflect different aspects of the new life of American colonists in America: "moccasin" – мокасина, "anorak" – куртка с капюшоном, "squaw" – индианка, "totem" – тотем, "medicine-man" – шаман индейского племени, "warpath" – поход североамериканских индейцев; "gap" – горный проход, "backwoods" – лесная глушь, lot – участок земли, "caucus" – (старейшина) закрытое собрание членов политической партии или фракции. These words come from Indian languages.

The Spanish colonial occupation of North American territory is reflected in American Spanish through the words "ranch", "rodeo", "cafeteria", "lasso", Among the widely used words of Dutch origin are "Yankee", "boss", "cookie", "Santa Claus". The words of German origin also found their way into the American form of the language: "frankfurter", "semester", "seminar" among them.

Another source of new words has been the Indian languages and the language of Negro slaves brought to America from Africa. Recent research shows that "jazz", "hippie" are probably African in origin.[2,c.229] The names of many native animals and plants are of Indian origin. As newcomers, the Europeans were at a loss to explain the new plant and animal life of the New World, or to give names to their new tools, so they used Indian words "raccoon", "opossum", "skunk", "moose", "caribou" etcetera.

The archaisms showed themselves more slowly. They had to go out of use in England before their survival in America was noticeable. But by the beginning of the 18th century there had been a considerable body of them, and all through that century the number increased. BE was changing rapidly, but in America the language was holding to its old forms. Some words became out-dated in Britain, while they were still used in American English. There was very little fresh emigration to the colonies, and their own people seldom visited England. Thus, by the end of the 18th century the word, say, "guess" already became an Americanism, though it had been in almost

universal use in England in Shakespeare's days. One more example is "fall" – autumn. The word was used by Shakespeare, but since his time practically all speakers of British English have used the word "autumn"

During the two decades before the Civil War of 1861-65, everyday AE became almost unintelligible to an Englishman. It was bold and lawless in its vocabulary, careless of grammatical niceties, and further disfigured by a drawling manner of speech. The visiting Englishman found AE very difficult. The slang puzzled him even more than did American peculiarities of pronunciation.[9]

Of late, the increase of travel and other intercommunications between England and America tended to halt the differentiation of the two variants.

So I can conclude that American English reflects numerous non-English cultures which colonists met in their conquest of the continent. The American variety of English has borrowed many words from the vocabulary of the French, Dutch, Spanish and German-speaking settlers. British English was changing rapidly in the 18th -19th centuries, but in America the language was holding to its old forms.

1.1 DIFFERENCES IN VOCABULARY

The replenishment of the vocabulary of AE went in two ways: 1) by appearance of new words or by change of a word meaning; 2) by borrowing from other languages.

The noun *frontier*, for instance, has acquired in America an additional meaning – *a newly settled, scarcely populated territory bordering on deserted and uninhabited zones*. You will not find it on the map. It is in the hearts and minds of Americans. It is not a fixed place but a moving zone, as well as a state of mind: the border between settlements and wilderness known as *the frontier*. As a result many new set expressions became widely used: *frontier man, frontier country, frontier town*. [3,c.270]

Probably the most “*difficult*” category of differences between AE and BE includes the words which are found in both variants, but which have different meaning in each. Some familiar examples are *store, rock, lumber* and *corn*. What Englishmen call a *shop* was called a *store* by Americans as early as 1770, and long before that time *corn* in AE had come to signify not grains in general, but only *maize*. The use of *rock* to designate any *stone*, however small, goes back still further, and so does the use of *lumber* for *timber*. Many of these differences were produced by changes in English usage. Thus *cracker*, in England, once meant precisely what it now means in the U.S. When the English abandoned it for *biscuit*, the Americans stuck to *cracker*, and used *biscuit* to designate a soft puffy cookie. Also, *shoe* came to be substituted in America for the English *boot*. To designate the English *shoe* American used the word *slipper*. *Pavement* in AE means *any paved road* whereas in BE it means the same as *sidewalk* in AE.

Differences in **clothing vocabulary** can be quite tricky, too: what are called *pants* in AE are called *trousers* in BE; *pants* in BE mean the same as *underwear* in AE; *shorts* in AE mean the same as *men’s underwear* in BE, a certain type of a shirt that in AE is called *turtle neck* is in BE *polo neck*; etc.

Most easily BE accepted the word groups indicating: 1) notions not having any strict definition in BE, e.g., *commuter* - житель пригородного района, который

работает в городе, *trailer* - прицеп, *know-how* - производственный опыт, технологии; *baby-sit* - присматривать за ребенком за плату; 2) cultural borrowings, e.g., *milkshake* - молочный коктейль, *sundae* - мороженое с фруктовым сиропом; 3) names of American realia, e.g., *rodeo* - соревнования ковбоев, *sheriff* - шериф, *Secretary of State* - государственный секретарь, министр иностранных дел, *congressman* - член конгресса /в особенности член палаты представителей/, *administration* - управление, правительство, министерство; 4) emotionally colored equivalents of stylistically neutral words in BE, e.g., *graft* = corruption, *gimmick* = trick, *brainwashing* = indoctrination.[9]

Miscellaneous differences from other fields include: AE *duplex* – BE semi-detached, AE *apartment building* – BE block of flats, AE *row houses* – BE terraced houses, AE *baggage* – BE luggage, AE *elevator* – BE lift, AE *to mail* a letter – BE *to post* a letter, AE *cellular phone* – BE mobile phone, AE a *polka-dot* shirt – BE a spotted/dotted shirt.

When speaking about lexico-semantic differences one should pay attention to structural variants of words in BE and AE. They differ in affixes while lexical meaning remains the same: e.g.

BE	AE	Word meaning
acclimatize	acclimate	акклиматизировать
centre	center	центр
metre	meter	метр
up to the time	on time	вовремя
anticlockwise	counterclockwise	против часовой стрелки

Certain words and set expressions do not have equivalents both in British and American variants [3,c.174]:

BE	AE	Word meaning
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-	junior high school	неполная средняя школа, включающая 7-й или 8-й и 9-й классы
chemist's	drugstore or pharmacy	аптека, магазин, где наряду с патентованными медицинскими средствами продаются бутерброды, прохладительные напитки

2.SOME SPECIFIC FEATURES OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH ENGLISH

The pronunciation of American English and the pronunciation of British English are similar. The general impression of American English pronunciation is as follows[9]:

- American English intonation does not rise or fall as much as that of British - English, it sounds more monotonous.
- American voices usually have a higher pitch.

That is why American English often seems too emphatic and American voices seem louder than those of British speakers.

- American pronunciation is more nasalized.

There are certain differences in the pronunciation of vowels and consonants:

AE [æ] - BE [a:] in class, last, bath;

the omission of [j] in AE — produce [prɔ'du:s], stupid ['stu:pid];

[r] is sounded in all words where this letter appears: farmer, bird, hurt, tear.

Though British and American spelling is the same in most cases, it differs in a few details, which sometimes leads an unexperienced student to failures in his attempts to find some unknown words in the dictionary.

If a student looks for the word "reflexion" in a small dictionary, he may be unable to identify the word, unless he recollects that there may be some difference in spelling, and that the American "exion" looks "ection" in the British usage. A few other examples of different spelling are as follows:

BE	AE
honour	honor
colour	color
theatre	theater
catalogue	catalog
programme	program

The changes introduced into the American variety of English are to be found in grammar and structure as well, but they are especially evident in the vocabulary. Some English words have developed new meanings, and many of these are traceable to the development of American institutions and American ways of life.

The American vocabulary during the 19th century began to be exported abroad, and by the 20th century, with its economic, political and technological prominence in the world, America and its language became one of the greatest forces for change and the expansion of English.

In recent years many Americanisms have been introduced into British usage: "cafeteria, cocktail, egghead, electrocute, fan" American "radio" has replaced British "wireless". The ubiquitous OK seems to occur more frequently nowadays in England than in the land of its birth and may be found in quite formal situations, such as on legal documents to indicate the correctness of details. These and other Americanisms have slipped into British English in the most unobtrusive way, so that their American origin is hardly regarded at all; since they are used by the English, they are "English", and that is all there is to it.

We can cite as firmly established in Standard British English "disk jockey", "natural" (something very suitable), "show business", "star" (popular performer) — all originally from the usage of the world of entertainment, enormously important in Modern America. Most words and usages are frequently borrowed from American English quite unconsciously. Even when they are consciously borrowed, the fact that they are of transatlantic origin is soon forgotten. To recognize American coinages sometimes means to get a taste of American history and character: abolitionist, automobile, baby-sit, basketball, chewing gum, credit card, electric chair, home-made, know-how and so on and on.

Many of the new American words added to the English vocabulary are based on old processes, such as compounding existing words, as in "boyfriend, bookstore, brainstorm". American English also tends to coin and use more freely nouns compounded from a verb and a preposition, such as "blowout, checkup, fallout, feedback", etc. New words are frequently created by shifting the function of an

existing word. Nouns are used as verbs: to park, to package, to program, to vacation; adjectives can become nouns: briefs, comics, reds.

I came to conclusion that American English differs from British in pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling, intonation.

3. PRACTICAL PART. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

During the research I was interested in the following aspects: Is it important to know the differences between British and American English? What is the difference between them?

Before starting writing my work I decided to conduct a sociological research among our peers. The respondents were the students of the 10th and 11th form of our gymnasium.

First I wanted to know if they knew the differences between the two variants of English. 85% of the respondents could hardly say the difference. They only said that the accent is different. They hardly knew other differences. 15% of the students knew some words and expressions in American English. But my sociological research showed that 33% of the respondents use American variant of English in their daily life (watch films on the internet, blogs on youtube). 5% of the students use both variants and 52 % of the respondents use British variant (see appendix A).

All respondents agreed that knowing the differences will help students to communicate more effectively, to avoid the confusion in kind of varieties in pronunciation, spelling and grammar (see appendix B).

My research showed that it is important for my classmates to know the variations in vocabulary and grammar between British and American English. I searched a lot of books, articles and websides and found a lot of differences in vocabulary, grammar, spelling, pronunciation(see appendix B). I also searched the Internet and asked native speakers about the differences in vocabulary, spelling and grammar. My research showed that it is important for my classmates to know the variations in vocabulary and grammar between British and American English.

I am sure that my research will be useful for many people, because our world becomes more and more multicultural and we can use our English all over the world travelling or communicating with people in social network.

I have analysed the same text in two variants of English and I can state now that there is an increasing number of differences between the two varieties of English. For example, Trudi Burns and Eileen Unwin recently spent a very similar day. Here, they describe the day's events. [2,c.239]

Trudi (USA):

I got up at seven thirty. I put on my bath robe, went into the bathroom and turned on the bath-tub faucets. After my bath I ate breakfast with my parents on the deck. Our apartment's on the fifteenth floor, so the view's terrific. At eight o'clock my mom and I took the elevator to the parking lot underneath our apartment block. First we stopped for gas, then she drove me to school. The freeway was really busy automobiles everywhere. When I got to school it was raining. Luckily I'd brought my goloshes and an umbrella, so I didn't get wet. School was OK except that we had a math test before recess. I think I flunked it. Anyway, after school I took a bus downtown to meet my sister, Susan. She became a grade school teacher after she left college last year. We ate out at a Chinese restaurant. Personally I don't like rice, so I ordered french-fries instead. Susan disapproved. After dessert and coffee we paid the check and left. It had stopped raining, but the sidewalks were still wet. Susan gave me a ride home, then I did a history assignment for the next day, watched a movie on TV and went to bed around 11.30. I was pooped!

Eileen (Great Britain):

I got up at half past seven. I put on my dressing gown, went into the bathroom and turned on the bath taps. After my bath I had breakfast with my parents on the terrace. Our flat's on the fifteenth floor, so the view's terrific. At eight o'clock my mum and I took the lift to the car park under our block of flats. First we stopped for petrol, then she drove me to school. The motorway was really busy — cars everywhere. When I got to school it was raining. Luckily I'd brought my wellington boots and an umbrella, so I didn't get wet. School was OK, except that we had a maths exam before break. I think I failed it. Anyway, after school I took a bus to the

city centre to meet my sister, Susan. She became a primary school teacher after she left university last year. We went out for dinner to a Chinese restaurant. Personally I don't like rice, so I ordered chips instead. Susan disapproved. After sweet and coffee we paid the bill and left. It had stopped raining but the pavements were still wet. Susan gave me a lift home, then I did some history homework for the next day, watched a film on the TV and went to bed at about half past eleven. I was really tired!

In this example we also can see how essential the difference between the two variants is.

CONCLUSION

There is an augmentative number of differences between the two varieties of English. It is very important to know the difference between the two languages, If you want to use your English all over the world. Knowing the differences between British and American English is not difficult. There are a lot of books, articles and websides that provide the information of the differences between British and American English. It is necessary to know the differences to avoid misunderstanding and students embarrassment. The advantages of knowing this difference are to help students to associate more effectively, to avoid the confusion in kind of varieties in vocabulary,pronunciation, spelling and grammar.

I can state that my hypothesis has been proved. Both American and British English are important for English learners and teachers and that it is important to know the differences between them. My work has demonstrated that both types of English have been influencing each other. There is a wide range of distinctions between the two variants of English. There are a lot of differences in vocabulary,pronunciation, spelling and grammar.

I can also conclude, that it is worth learning first the British variant of English because:

- it is classical universally recognized variant of English;
- British variant is richer and more various.

I also believe that it is important to know the differences between British and American English in teaching and learning English to minimize the confusion of students in studying English.

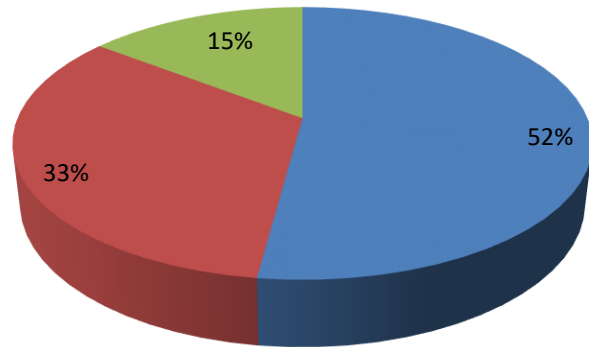
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APPENDIX A

Which variant of English do you use in daily life?

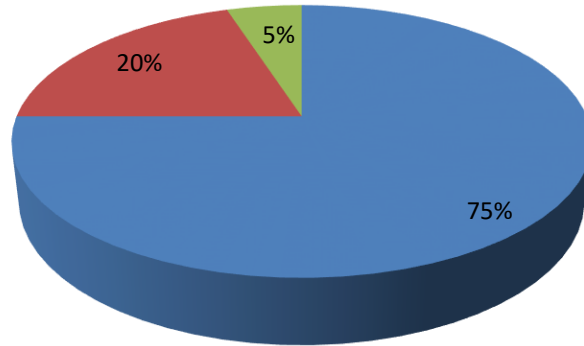
■ British English ■ American English ■ both of them



APPENDIX B

Is it important to know the difference between the 2 types of English?

■ Yes ■ No ■ It doesn't matter



APPENDIX C

Spelling

British English

American English

honour	honor
colour	color
theatre	theater
catalogue	catalog
programme	program
Behaviour	Behavior
Metre	Meter
Organize	Organize
Traveled	Traveled
Theatre	theater
Fulfil	fulfill
Ageing	aging
Dialogue	dialog
Centre	center
Humour	humor
Flavour	flavor

APPENDIX D

Vocabulary

British English	American English
car	automobile
secondary school	high school
biscuits	cookies
flat	apartment
form (school)	grade
lift	elevator
post	mail
pavement	sidewalk
lorry	truck
tram	street-car
petrol	gasoline (gas)
wash up	do the dishes
wash your hands	wash up
university	college
holiday	vacation
crisps	chips
the cinema	the movies
soft drink/fizzy drink	soda/pop/cole/soft drink
trainers	sneakers/tennis shoes
jumper	sweater
postbox	mailbox
plaster	band-aid
chemist's	drugstore
Aerial	antenna
Angry	mad
Anywhere	anyplace

Autumn	fall
banknote	bill
football	soccer
bonnet	hood
boot	trunk
braces (подтяжки)	suspenders
caretaker	janitor
constable	patrolman
cooker	stove
cot	crib
cotton	thread
crash	wreck
crossroads	intersection
curtains	drapes
draughts (шашки)	checkers
drawing-pin (канцелярская кнопка)	thumbtack
dual carriageway (проезжая часть, с разделительной полосой)	divided highway
dummy(детская соска)	pacifier
dust-bin, rubbish-bin	trashcan, garbage can
dustman	garbage collector
dynamo	generator
engine	motor
garden	yard
gear-lever (коробка передач)	gear-shift
graduate	alumnus
grill	boiler
ground floor	first floor

gumshoes, wellington boots	rubbers
handbag	purse
hoarding	billboard
hoover	vacuum cleaner
interval	intermission
jug	pitcher
lift	elevator
luggage	baggage
mad	crazy
main road	highway
maize	corn
maths	math
mean (жадный)	stingy
motorway	freeway
nappy	diaper
nasty	vicious, mean
nowhere	noplace
nursing home	private hospital
ocultist, optician	optometrist
off-license	liquor store
paraffin	kerosene
pavement	sidewalk
peer (быстрый взгляд)	peek
petrol	gasoline
post	mail
pram	baby carriage
pub	bar
public toilet	restroom
puncture	blow-out

push-chair	stroller
queue	line
railway	railroad
railway carriage	railway car
reel of cotton (катушка ниток)	spool of thread
return(ticket)	round trip
reverse charges	call collect
(телефонный звонок с оплатой вызываемым абонентом)	
rise (in salary)	raise
road surface	pavement
roundabout	traffic circle
rubber	eraser
rubbish	garbage, trash
saloon (car)	sedan
sellotape	Scotch tape
shop	Store
silencer (глушитель)	Muffler
single (ticket)	One-way
somewhere	Someplace
spanner (гаечный ключ)	Wrench
staff (of a university)	Faculty
sump (маслосборник)	Oil-pan
sweets	Candy
tap	Faucet
tap (outdoors)	Spigot
taxi	Cab
tea-towel	Dish-towel
term	Semester

tights	Panti-hose
timetable	Schedule
tin	Can
toll motorway	Turnpike
torch	Flashlight
tramp	Hobo
trousers	Pants
turn-ups	Cuffs
underground railway	Subway
underpants	Shorts
verge (of road) (обочина)	Shoulder (of road)
waistcoat	Vest
wardrobe	Closet
wash your hands	Wash up
windscreen	Windshield
wing	Fender
zip	Zipper
courgette	zucchini
aubergine	eggplant
jacket potato	baked potato
block of flats	apartment building
flat	apartment
phone box	phone booth
takeaway	takeout
loo	restroom (bathroom)
ice lolly	popsicle
mobile phone	cell phone
the Plough (Большая Медведица)	the Big Dipper

APPENDIX E

Grammar

British English	American English
I'm going to a party at the weekend.	I'm going to a party on the weekend.
What are you doing at Christmas?	What are you doing on Christmas?
Monday to Friday	Monday through Friday
It's different from / to the others.	It's different from / than the others.
Play in a team	Play on a team

Past Simple versus Present Perfect

Americans tend to use the Past Simple when describing something that has recently occurred, while people in the UK are more likely to use the Present Perfect,

British English	American English
I have eaten too much.	I ate too much.
I have been to the shop.	I went to the store.
Have you got the newspaper?	Did you get the newspaper?

Regular or irregular verbs?

Many verbs that are irregular in the second form in Great Britain have been made regular in America.

British English	American English
leapt	leaped
dreamt	dreamed
burnt	burned
learnt	learned