

Галятина А.С.

Научный руководитель: Жиленко Н.В.

Муромский институт (филиал) федерального государственного образовательного учреждения высшего образования «Владимирский государственный университет имени Александра Григорьевича и Николая Григорьевича Столетовых»  
602264, г. Муром, Владимирская обл., ул. Орловская, 23  
E-mail: ania.vay@gmail.com

### What are the differences between British and American English?

Where did English come from? The obvious answer is England. However, in the past two thousand years 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 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. 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. So, what are the differences between American and British English? [3, стр. 42].

Main differences are:

1. Pronunciation;
2. Vocabulary;
3. Grammar;
4. Spelling;

Pronunciation:

Besides American simplification, spelling differences between American English and British English are reflected on the aspect that a single alphabet or more alphabets are changed in a word. Different spelling may cause different connotation. For example, the words “matt” and “matte”, in the UK, “matt” refers to a non-glossy surface, and “matte” to the motion-picture technique. But in America, both of them have the same meaning. The word “ensure” is apt to the virtual guarantee, for example, the government has ensured the safety of the refugees. Whereas the word “insure” is the commercial sense of providing financial compensation in the event of damage to property. Variations in slang and colloquial expressions naturally exist in the two nations, but even everyday words can be different – pants and trousers, elevator and lift, autumn and fall – which can lead to misunderstandings [4, стр. 624].

Vocabulary:

Here are some key vocabulary differences.

American English [6]	British English [7, Index p.271-295]
On weekends	At weekends
Gray	Grey
Vacation	Holiday
Check	Cheque (bank)
Toward	Towards
Cookies	Biscuits
Sincerely yours	Yours sincerely (letter)

Grammar:

One of the most obvious differences between British English and American English is the pronunciation, but there are also variations in grammar, spelling and vocabulary. American English often uses the past simple while British English uses the present perfect (I already did it – I’ve already done it); have got is usually used to talk about possession in British English while have is used in American English; prepositions are often used differently, e.g. Write me soon in American English versus Write to me soon in British English [2].

### Spelling:

There are a few major spelling differences between British and American English. This is because British English has generally kept the spelling of words that it has taken from other languages [3, стр. 3]. American, in general, moves toward simplified forms of spelling more rapidly than English, and has got much further along the road [5, chapter VIII].

#### Examples:

a) Words that end in “-re” in British English, often end in “-er” in American English (AmE. VS BrE.: center – centre, theater – theatre and etc.);

b) While some of the British speakers find it correct to use the ending “-ize” in British English like American speakers do, other British consider it wrong and use the ending “-ise”.

c) (BrE. VS AmE.: Apologise – Apologize, Organise – Organize, Recognise – Recognize);

d) In British English, the preferred ending is -our, while in American English is -or. It is also the most obvious spelling difference between these two English dialects (AmE. VS BrE.: behavior – behaviour, flavor – flavour, neighbor – neighbour, color – colour, glamor – glamour and etc.);

e) In British English, the letter ‘l’ is generally still used double. In American English, on another hand, this is, of course, simplified, so they use the letter ‘l’ once (AmE. VS BrE.: traveling - travelling, jewelry – jewellery, program – programm and etc.).

With regards to spelling, American English often has a single consonant while British English has a double consonant (traveling – travelling) and it uses the spelling -ize, -or and -er whereas British English traditionally prefers -ise, -our and -re (organize – organise, color – colour, center – centre). Variations in slang and colloquial expressions naturally exist in the two nations, but even everyday words can be different – pants and trousers, elevator and lift, autumn and fall – which can lead to misunderstandings [2].

In conclusion, I would like to say that American English and British English originated from the same language. But, nevertheless, there are many differences between American English and British English. In spite of the fact that many American and British people can understand each other, the most important thing to remember is try to be consistent (especially when you are writing English) – decide which type of English you are going to use and stick with it.

### References

1. Bloomsbury International (UK) Ltd. The article British English And American English, accessible online at: <https://www.bloomsbury-international.com/images/ezone/ebook/british-english-and-american-english.pdf>;
2. Best Commercial Practice © ELI. Dossier 3 | WORKSHEET 4 | SOCIETY AND IDENTITY. BRITISH ENGLISH VS AMERICAN ENGLISH, accessible online at: [https://www.elionline.com/res/ftpe/eli/resources/bestcommercialpractice/int/d3\\_w4\\_int.pdf](https://www.elionline.com/res/ftpe/eli/resources/bestcommercialpractice/int/d3_w4_int.pdf);
3. Английский язык для студентов-филологов: учебное пособие / Е. В. Медведева, И. В. Савельева; Кемеровский государственный университет. – Кемерово, 2012. – 132 с.
4. Z. Ling. Differences Between American English and British English in Lexicology, Changchun University, Changchun, China.
5. Mencken, H.L. The American language: An inquiry into the development of English in the United States, 2nd ed. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1921; Bartleby.com, 2000.
6. Mark Davies, Dee Gardner. Word Frequency List of American English, 2010.
7. M. McCarthy, F. O’Dell. English Vocabulary in Use. © Cambridge University Press, 1994.