

AMERICAN - ENGLISH USAGE

PURPOSE: I. To help Americans to be more effective Ambassadors of Christ in this country, by providing, in the asterisked (*) entries, a list of words and expressions which, if used in England, will either:

(a) NOT BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD (e.g. "rest-room", "aluminum", "pavement", "phase", "Wrecker", etc.).

or (b) will OFFEND many people (e.g. "bum", "pants", "piddle around", "slash", etc.).

II. To help British students to be more effective as Ambassadors of Christ in England by providing a list of American words and expressions which they should eliminate from their vocabulary since:

(a) Many of these words and phrases when used by British people are regarded as American slang (e.g. "I guess so", "Hi!", "gas", etc.).

(b) Many will not be understood or will not convey their full meaning (e.g. "visit with", "freeway", etc.).

(c) All will tend to convey the impression that the speaker is American.

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS: Americans - AVOID USING ASTERISKED ENTRIES.

British students - AVOID USING ALL ENTRIES IN LEFT-HAND COLUMN.

(Note: American words and expressions that have been adopted by some British students and which they should particularly concentrate on eliminating have been underlined.)

AMERICAN

ENGLISH

A

About face	About turn
After (Seven minutes <u>after</u> two)	Seven minutes <u>past</u> two
Aim (We <u>aim</u> to leave tonight)	Intend (We <u>intend</u> to leave tonight)
Airline-stewardess	Air-hostess
Airplane	Aeroplane
All ("Who all's going?")	All ("Who's going?")
*Aluminum	Aluminium
Antenna	Aerial
Any (Did you sleep <u>any</u> ? That won't help <u>any</u> .)	At all (Did you sleep <u>at all</u> ? That won't help <u>at all</u> .)
Anymore (It's hard to find anymore.)	Nowadays (It's hard to find nowadays.) Anymore may be used when "not" is included in the sentence. They're not easy to find anymore.
Apartment	Flat
Ash-can	Dust-bin
Attorney	Barrister or solicitor
Automobile	Car
Avery	Aviary

B

*Baby-buggy	Pram
Back and forth	To and fro
Back of (Back, or in back, of this policy)	Behind, or at the back of, this policy
Baggage	Luggage

Baggage-car	Luggage-van
Baggage-tag	Luggage label
Bakery	Baker's
Ball (Have a ball)	Have a good time
Bank (To bank on someone)	To count on or rely on someone
Bank account	Banking account
Barber shop	Barber's shop
Baron (A steel baron)	Magnate (A steel magnate)
Bartender or barkeeper	Barman
Bathrobe	Dressing gown
Bathtub	Bath
Bawl out	Blow up, dress down, tell off
Bedfast	Bed-ridden
Beet	Beetroot
*Bell boy	Page
*Big Dipper (constellation)	Plough, Great Bear, Frying Pan
Bill	Invoice
*Billfold	Wallet
Billion	One thousand million (a billion in England is 1,000,000,000,000)
Bindery	Bookbinder's
Biscuit	Type of cake, scone
Bi-weekly (i.e. every 2 weeks)	Fortnightly
Blank (Fill out a blank)	Form (Fill in a form)
*Bleachers	Stands
Block	Designate by using street
*Bloody	Very strong swear-word. May only be used when describing something literally covered with blood.

Blue	Depressed
*Boner	Howler
Bookstore	Book-shop
*Box-car	(Goods)-wagon
Boy (Oh! Boy)	Used mainly by young school-boys
Brand-name	Trade-name or trade-mark
Break	Holidays, or at college level "vac."
Broadcloth	Poplin
Broad jump	Long jump
Brush up on	Brush up
Bulletin-board	Notice-board
*Bum	Beggar, tramp (In England "bum" refers to one's posterior.)
Busy (The line is busy.)	The number is engaged.

C

Cab	Taxi (More common)
*Caboose	Guard's van
Call-box	Telephone-Kiosk
Calling-card	Visiting-card
Call up (on phone)	Ring up, phone
Can	tin
<u>Candy</u>	Sweets
<u>Candy-bar</u>	Bar of chocolate (otherwise use the trade-name)
Candy-store	Sweet-shop
Canning	Bottling
Can-opener	Tin-opener

Car (railroad)	Carriage
Carry (Do you carry these articles?)	Have you got these articles (in stock)?
*Casket	Coffin (In England a casket is a small case for holding jewels.)
Catalogue	Prospectus
Certified Public Accountant	Chartered Accountant
Check (in restaurant)	Bill
Checkers	Draughts
Cheese-cloth	Butter-muslin
Cigar store	Tobacconist's
Chorale	Choir, choral group
Chuck it	Pack it up
<u>Classes</u>	Lectures ("Classes" is used only in pre-college level education in England.)
Clerk	Shop-assistant ("Clerk" pronounced klark is an account-keeper in an office.)
* <u>Clipping</u>	Cutting
<u>Closet</u>	Cupboard
Clothes-pin	Clothes-peg
Coffee-cup (size)	Tea-cup (size) In England, a coffee-cup is very small.
*Collect (call collect)	Reverse the charges
*Comforter	Eiderdown
*Commencement exercises	Graduation ceremony
*Conductor	Ticket-inspector
Cookbook	Cookery-book
Cookie	Biscuit
Cop	Bobby
Cord	Flex

Corn	Sweet corn (In England "corn" is American "grain" or "wheat".)
Cotton	Cotton wool
*Crap (shooting crap)	Gambling with dice. Avoid the word "crap" altogether.
*Crud (avoid)	
Cuff (pants)	Turn-up (trousers)

D

Davenport	Couch, sofa
Deal (What's the deal?)	Not used in England. Find equivalent phrase according to context.
Deck (of cards)	Pack
Denatured alcohol	Methylated spirit
*Derby	Bowler
*Diapers	Nappies
Dinner-jacket	White-jacket
Divided highway	Dual carriageway
<u>Drapes</u>	Curtains
Drive shaft	Transmission rod
*Drouth	Drought
Drug-store	Chemist's shop
*Duck-bumps	Goose-pimples

E

*Eat crow	Eat humble pie, eat your own words
Egg (Idiom - lay an egg)	Drop a brick
Elevator	Lift

Eraser	Rubber (more commonly used than "eraser")
Eyes (keep your eyes peeled)	Keep your eyes skinned
Face-cloth	Flannel
<u>Fall</u> (season)	Autumn
Faucet	Tap
Fender	Mud-guard, wing
Filling station	Petrol station
Fill out	Fill in
Finance (verb)	Arrange Hire Purchase
Finance company	Hire Purchase company
First floor	Ground floor
Fix	Arrange, repair, prepare*
Flashlight	Torch (more commonly used than flash-light)
Flat	Puncture
<u>Flunk</u>	Fail (an exam)
Folks (my folks)	My people, family or parents
Freeway	Motorway
French fries	Chips
Fresh	Cheeky, forward
From off of	From, or off
Fry pan	Frying pan
Funnies	Comics
*Furlough	Leave
<u>G</u>	
Garbage-can	Dust-bin
<u>Gas</u>	Petrol

Generator	Dynamo
Get ("I get to go...")	"I shall be able to go."
Given name	Christian name
Gob (gob of paper)	Wad or ball of paper
Goof off	Fool around
Gotten	Got
<u>Grab bag</u>	Lucky dip
<u>Grade</u>	Marks, result
*Grade crossing	Level crossing
Grade school	Primary
Gripe	Grumble
*Ground hog	Hedgehog
Ground wire	Earth wire
Guess	Suppose, think

H

Hard-shelled	Dyed-in-the-wool
<u>Have</u> (Do you have?)	Have you got?
Healthful	Healthy
Hi!	Hello!
Hick	Country yokel
High spots (hit the high spots)	Cover the main points
High school	Secondary school
Highway	Main road
Hock (in hock)	Pawn (in pawn)
Hog	Pig
Hog-pen	Pig-sty
*Home Economics	Domestic Science

Homely	Ugly (Homely in England means pertaining to home, in fact what the Americans call "homey".)
Hood	Bonnet
*Hooky (to play hooky)	Truant (to play truant)
Hope chest	Bottom drawer
Horse around	Fool around
Hospital (in the hospital)	In hospital

I

Incorporated (Inc.)	Limited (Ltd.)
Instructors	Tutors, lecturers
Intermission	Interval
Intersection	Crossroads

J

*Jack hammer	Road drill
*Janitor	Cleaner
* <u>Janitor crew</u>	Cleaning staff
Jello, gelatine	Jelly
Jumper	Pinafore
Junior	Third Year

K

Keep tabs on	Check on, keep track of
Kerosene	Parrafin

L

Ladybug	Ladybird
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Landscape architect	Landscape gardener
Lick	Beat
Limb	Branch
*Limey	Impolite term for Englishman
Line (line up)	Queue (queue up)
Liquor store	Off licence
Long distance call	Trunk call
*Longshoreman	Docker
*Lousy (avoid)	

M

Mad	Angry, annoyed
Mail (verb)	Post (verb)
Math	Maths
Mean (real mean)	Really nasty
Mechanical pencil	Propelling pencil
Mighty good	Very good
Monkey wrench	Spanner
Mortician	Undertaker
Movie	Film
Movie-theater	Cinema
Muffler	Silencer
Muslin	Calico

N

Napkin	Serviette
Notch (take down a notch or two)	Peg (take down a peg or two)

Number (The next number will be

The next piece (or piece of music) will be

O

On the spot (put someone on the spot)

Put someone to the test

One-way ticket

Single ticket

Out the window

Out of the window

Outlet

Wall-plug, power-point

P

Pack (of cigarettes)

Packet

Package

Parcel, packet

Paddle (noun)

Table-tennis bat

Paddle (verb)

Spank

Pantomime

Mime (Pantomime is spoken in England.)

*Pants

Trousers ("Pants" in England are underpants.)

Parking-lot

Car-park

Part (hair)

Parting

Pavement

Tarmac (Pavement in England means "sidewalk".)

Payroll

Wages

Pen-point

Nib

Period

Full-stop

*Phase

Bother, worry

*Piddle around

Mess about ("Piddle" in England means to urinate.)

Pitcher

Jug

Plant

Factory

Pocket-book	Wallet
Pool	Billiards
Porch	Veranda
Post no bills	Stick no bills
Potato chips	Potato crisps (Chips in England are French fries in America.)
Preview	Trailer
Pry open a can	Prise open a tin
Public school	State school (Public in England means private secondary school.)
Push-cart	Wheelbarrow

Q

Quarter note	Crotchet (eighth note is called quaver)
Quit	Give up or stop
Quiz	Test

R

Radio	Wireless
Railroad	Railway
Railway depot	(Railway) station
Raincheck	No equivalent. Perhaps "another time"
Raise (in wages)	Rise
Raise (cattle)	Rear (cattle)
Real estate	Property
Real estate agent	Estate agent
Real good	Really good or very well
Real mean	Really nasty
Real nice	Very nice

Recess (five minutes recess)	Five minutes break
Red-cap	Porter (Red-cap in England means military police.)
Regular	Standard or normal (standard size)
*Rest-room	Toilet
Review	Revise
Roomer	Lodger
Round trip (ticket)	Return (ticket)
*Rube Goldberg (contraption)	Heath Robinson (contraption)
Rummage sale	Jumble sale
Run (in stocking)	Ladder
Rutabaga	Swede

S

School	College (In England "school" refers to a pre-university institute of education. Certainly not college level.)
Scrub-brush	Scrubbing Brush
Scrubwoman	Charlady
Selective service	National service
Semester	Term
Senior	Fourth year
Sharp ("You look sharp.")	Smart ("You look smart.")
Shoestring	Shoelace, bootstrap
Shook up ("I'm all shook up.")	That really shook me.
Shot	Tired out
Sick	Ill
Sidewalk	Pavement
Silverware	Cutlery

Slash (/)	Slant or oblique (Slash is vulg term meaning "urination".)
Sled	Sledge
Slick	Slippery
Slingshot	Catapult
Smoked herring	Kipper
*Sneakers	Bumpers
So long	Cheerio
Sophomore	Second year student
Spark-plug	Sparking-plug
Spoiled (food)	Gone off
*Spunk	Spirit, drive
Squash	Vegetable marrow
Standard shift	Ordinary gear-change
Stash away	Put away
Station wagon	Shooting break, estate car
Step on the gas	Step on it
Sticker	Label
Stop sign	Halt-sign
Stop-light	Traffic-lights
<u>Store</u>	Shop
Straight (drink something straight)	Take something neat
Stub	Counterfoil
Subway	Tube, underground (In England "subway" means "underground pedestrian crossing".)
Sugar bowl	Sugar basin
<u>Sure</u>	Of course, certainly
Sure (it sure does)	It certainly does.

Sure am	I certainly am.
Suspenders	Braces ("Suspender" in England is a feminine undergarment or a device for keeping up men's socks.)
Sweat-suit	Track-suit
Sweater	Jumper, cardigan
Switch (railroad)	Points

T

Take five	Take a break
Take off (I'm going to take off from college.)	Leave
Tear down	Demolish
Tennis shoes	Plimsolls
Test	Exam
Three-fourths	Three-quarters
Thread	Cotton (Thread in England is much thicker and stronger.)
Through (verse one through three)	Verses one to three inclusive
Through ("I'm through.")	Finished ("I've finished.")
Throw up	Vomit, be sick
*Thumbtack	Drawing-pin
Ticket (He gave me a ticket.)	He fined me.
Ticket office	Booking office
Till (five minutes <u>till</u> seven)	Five minutes to seven
Time (purchase on time)	Buy on hire-purchase
Topcoat	Overcoat
Traffic-circle	Roundabout
Trailer	Caravan
Transmission	Gearbox

Transportation

Transport ("Transportation" in England means "removal of offender beyond the seas".)

Trillion

Billion (1,000,000,000,000)

Truck

Lorry

Trunk (car)

Boot

T-shirt

Running-vest

Tube (radio tube)

Wireless valve

Tuxedo

Dinner-jacket

Two weeks

Fortnight

U

Undershirt

Vest

Unemployment compensation

Dole

Used (used bookstore)

Second-hand (second-hand bookshop)

V

Vacation

Holidays (However, "vacation" or "vac" may be used to refer to university holidays.)

*Vest

Waistcoat

*Visit with

Have a chat with

W

Wash-day

Washing day

Wash up

Wash oneself ("Wash-up" is used when referring to eating utensils.)

Waste-basket

Waste-paper basket

Water-heater

Geyser

Windshield

Windscreen

*Wrecker

Break-down lorry

Wrench

Spanner

Write me

Write to me

Y

*Yard

Garden

You all (Good evening you all)
(pronounced Yawl)

Good evening everybody

Z

Zero

Nought

Zipper

Zip

Common expressions used by Englishmen, and their meanings:

To pull someone's leg	To tease
To pinch	To nip or steal
To knock up	To wake up

PRONUNCIATION

Both American and British students should note the standard English pronunciation of the following words:

Amen	ä-men'
Anthony	an'ton-i
Asia	āsh'ər
Basil	baz'il
Been	bēn
Bernard	bər'nərd
Decadence	dek'ə-dəns
Depot	dep'ō
Docile	dō'sīl
Dynasty	din'əs-ti
Evolution	ēv-ə-lōō'shən
Frontier	frunt'yər
Geyser	gē'zər
Glacier	glas'i-ər
Herb	hərb
Himalayas	himəla'yəz
Iodine	īə'-dēn
Isaiah	ī-zī'a
Khaki	kā'ki
Laboratory	lə-bor'ətri
Leisure	lezh'ər
Lever	lē'vər
Lieutenant	lef-ten'ənt
Medicine	med'sn
Midwifery	mid'wif-ri
Missile	mi'sīl
Moscow	mos'ko
Process	prō'ses
Progress	prō'gres
Quinine	kwin-ēn
Reveille	ri-val'i
Sahara	sə-hä'rə
Schedule	shed'ul
Semi-	sem'i
Student	stū'dənt
Tomato	təmə'tō
Z	zed

Key: fate, fār, me, hər, (as in "her"), min, mot, mut, el'əmənt, in'fənt, ran'dəm.

A full key to pronunciation can be found in "CHAMBER'S Twentieth Century Dictionary".