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Episode #094

American vs. British

Vocabulary Differences (part 2)

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Hello, everybody! I am Georgiana your English teacher and founder of SpeakEnglishPodcast.com. My mission is to help you to speak English fluently.

We all know that **American and British English** sound different most of the time. But did you know there is also a difference in vocabulary? That's right. There are spelling, **vocabulary**, and even specific grammar differences between the two.

Last week we started with a series of **vocabulary differences between American and British English**. Today we will continue this series; if you didn't listen to last week's episode, you might want to do so right now.

And with a point of view story, you're gonna compare the different grammar points. It's **the perfect way to learn grammar and new vocabulary without memorizing**.

Ok! Let's start!

I'm going to tell you a word in American English, and I'll ask you to guess what would be the equivalent word in British English.

1) **Truck**

In American English, we use the word **truck** when we refer to a large, heavy road vehicle used for carrying goods, materials, or troops.

Can you guess the equivalent in British?

Yes! In the United Kingdom, people use the word **lorry**.

American-**truck**
British- **lorry**

2) After washing the dishes, we use a **dish towel** to dry the dishes.

Can you guess which word is used in British English?

That's right. People call it "**tea towel**" or "**tea cloth**" in the UK.

American-**dish towel**
British- **tea towel or tea cloth**

3) In the States, people live in an **apartment**.

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Do you know the word in British English?

Yes. That's right. In British, they use the word **flat**.

American-**apartment**

British- **flat**

4) I live on the **first floor** and my neighbor on the **second floor**.

Simple. Right?

Not really. Let me explain why.

The equivalent in British for the "**first floor**" would be the "**ground floor**."

The **second floor** in British is called the **first floor**.

Confusing!! Right?

So let me repeat the example in American.

American:

" I live on the **first floor**, and my neighbor on the **second floor**."

British:

" I live on the **ground floor**, and my neighbor on the **first floor**."

5) In American, we use the word **zee** to refer to the last letter of the alphabet.

What's the word in British English?

That's right. In British, they use the word **zed**.

American-**zee**

British- **zed**

6) At the end of each sentence, we usually use the word **period**. "**Period**" is also used to indicate that a decision is irrevocable.

For example: "I forbid you to go to that concert, **period**."

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What's the word used in British English?

Exactly. In British English, they use the word **full-stop**.

American-**period**

British- **full-stop**

7) Did you know that your geographic area is identified by **zip code**?

Do you know how to say this in British English?

That's right. In the United Kingdom, they call it **postal code**.

American-**zip code**

British- **postal code**

8) "What's your **timetable** for tomorrow? When will you get some time to listen to the podcast?"

We use the word timetable to ask about someone's plans or their availability.

Although in British English they use the word....

Schedule. In the UK, it's more common to use the word **schedule** instead of **timetable**.

American-**timetable**

British- **schedule**

9) "I have made an error. Can I borrow your **eraser**?"

In American English, we use the word **eraser** when we want to erase something that we have written.

In British, they use a different word.

Can you guess?

Yep. In British English, they call it **rubber**.

American-**eraser**

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British- **rubber**

10) "I'm tired. I can't climb the stairs!! Let's take the **elevator**!"

What's the equivalent of the word **elevator** in British English?

That's right. In British English, it's called a **lift**.

American-**elevator**

British- lift

Point of View

(practice your grammar)

This kind of story **will help you to improve your English grammar**. It's very simple. I tell you the same story more than once. Every time I change a grammatical aspect. So, you can see how grammar changes, and you can compare. You just have to listen.

You'll listen to the story in the first person in the past tense:

I'm Tom, and I'm an American. Last year I visited my best friend in London. When I arrived at my destination, it was raining cats and dogs, so I immediately sought refuge. I entered a store, hoping to buy a raincoat or even new clothes. I was completely soaked, so I wasn't surprised to see everyone staring at me. Since I felt uncomfortable, I tried to get some sympathy, so I told the salesman that my pants were very wet.

Surprisingly, I didn't get the answer I expected. Instead of showing compassion, the shop assistant started laughing out loud. I was very disappointed and felt humiliated. I expected Londoners to be much more polite. Later, however, when I told my friend what had happened, I felt even more ashamed. It turns out that in British English, the word "pants" means underwear. I should have used the word trousers instead of pants.

Let's listen to the same story in the third person in the past tense:

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Last year, an American named Tom visited his best friend in London. When he arrived at his destination, it was raining cats and dogs, so he immediately sought refuge. He entered a store hoping to buy a raincoat or even new clothes. Tom was completely soaked, so he wasn't surprised to see everyone staring at him. Since he felt uncomfortable, he tried to get some sympathy, so he told the salesman that his pants were very wet. Surprisingly, Tom didn't get the answer he expected. Instead of showing compassion, the shop assistant started laughing out loud. Tom was very disappointed and felt humiliated. He expected Londoners to be much more polite. Later, however, when he told his friend what had happened, he felt even more ashamed. It turns out that in British English, the word "pants" means underwear. Poor Tom! He should have used the word trousers instead of pants.

All right! It's the end of this point of view story.

I use this successful method in my courses. Imagine a whole story told this way. Instead of having to memorize boring grammar rules, you can use this method to learn grammar. It's more enjoyable but also more effective.

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Well, that's it for today!

Please help me spread the word about the podcast. Tell your friends about the show and leave a comment on iTunes when you have a minute. That would make me very happy!

I'll be back next week!

Take care! Bye! Bye!

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