

DO YOUR STUDENTS SPEAK BRITISH ENGLISH OR AMERICAN ENGLISH?

The English language has many varieties of dialects. The most significant are American and British ones. They have a lot of differences in the level of grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling, and so on.

Grammatical differences are grouped under three levels: the differences with a verb, noun, pronoun and preposition.

The differences in verb show that American English and British English have different usage of verb. In both British and American English the verbs *to have* and *to get* are among the most frequent ones, especially in speech. The American usage over *gotten* is changing, so is the British usage over *have got*.

In American English the pronoun *I* occurs when *me* is usual for British English. For example, “*Between you and I*” (AmE) / “*Between you and me*” (BrE); “*Won’t he permit you and I to swim*” (AmE) / “*Won’t he permit you and me to swim*” (BrE).

The British English and American English have some differences with prepositions. For example, *to call (to ring) someone at his telephone number* (AmE) / *to call (to ring) someone on his telephone number* (BrE); *opposite of* (AmE) / *opposite to* (BrE); *on the weekend* (AmE) / *at the weekend* (BrE); *on a team* (AmE) / *in a team* (BrE); *please, write me soon* (AmE) / *please, write to me soon* (BrE); *The new air service begins January 1* (AmE) / *The new air service begins on January 1* (BrE); *I start my vacation Friday 1* (AmE) / *I start my vacation on Friday* (BrE).

In addition, there is also a difference in the article. For example: *He’s in the hospital* (AmE) / *He’s in hospital* (BrE).

The major differences between American English and British English lie in the choice of vocabulary. For example: *mean - angry, bad humored* (AmE) / *not generous* (BrE); *an elevator in America, but a lift in England*; *gas in America and five gallons of petrol in England*; *biscuit - dinner roll* (AmE) / *cookie* (BrE); *brew - beer* (AmE) / *tea* (BrE); *first floor - ground floor* (AmE) / *second floor* (BrE); *to hire - to employ* (AmE) / *to rent* (BrE).

American and British English have differences in spelling. American English has more economical and phonetic spelling. Unnecessary and words letters are left out and words are spelled how they sound. The obvious example is the omission of the letter *u* in American English in such words as *color, neighbor, honor* (AmE). Comparing American English words *traveling, jewelry, program* to *travelling, jewellery, programme* to British English we observe the long and short variation of the same word.

The deletion of the second constant letter in many words with double consonant. For example, “*traveler - traveler, waggon - wagon*”, also the replacement of *re-* by *-er* in words of French origin: For example, *theatre - theater, centre - center*. When a British word ends with *-se* in the American equivalent usually has a *-ze* ending: *analyze, criticize, memorize* (AmE) / *analyse, criticise, memorise* (BrE); *-og: analog, catalog, dialog* (AmE) / *-ogue: analogue, catalogue, dialogue* (BrE); *-e: encyclopedia, maneuver, medieval* (AmE) / *-ae or -oe: encyclopaedia, manoeuvre, mediaeval* (BrE).

Here are the major differences in pronunciation:

- 1) Before a voiceless fricative and occasionally [n], British [a], American [ae]: *aunt, calf, patch, pass*.
- 2) The British [r] is actually pronounced with a flat tongue and hence we have the *r-* less dialect. The American *r-* is usually a retroflex.
- 3) The British [o] is often American [a]: *cot, dog, hot*.
- 4) The intervocalic British [t] is usually American [d]: *letter, water*.

There are several words that are pronounced differently in American and British English: *dance - [da:ns]* (AmE) / *dance - [da:ns]* (BrE); *arm - [a:rm]* (AmE) / *arm - [a:m]* (BrE).

In spite of the differences between American and British English, they do not cause big problems.

Students should learn such differences so that they realize which dialect they speak and be aware that they do not make any mistakes using either American English or British English.

No matter which dialect your students speak, let them speak which one they like and let them enjoy the process and the level of its increasing.

LITERATURE:

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_American_and_British_English
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_words_having_different_meaning_in_American_and_British_English
3. <https://esl.fis.edu/grammar/easy/aebe.htm>

<https://ru.scribd.com/doc/16096386/Differences-between-American-and-British-Dialects>.