

## American English versus British English: The Main Differences

Although American English (AE) is different from British English (BE), speakers of AE and BE don't usually find it difficult to understand each other.

Note: As a proficient student it is important, especially in the Oberstufe, to decide on ONE variety to avoid mistakes and get all points in exams.



In general, there are differences in

1. accent and pronunciation
2. vocabulary and
3. spelling.



### 1. Pronunciation

Here are some examples:

American English	words	British English
æ	to ask; last	ɑ:
ɑ: or ɔ:	clock; hot; job	ɒ
The 't' sounds more like a 'd'.	pity, letter	
You can hear the 'r'.	here, more, skirt, harm	

### 2. Vocabulary

Here are words which are different in AE and BE – sometimes they exist in both versions of English but carry a different meaning.

#### American English

- subway
- elevator
- movie
- French fries
- chips
- eraser
- schedule
- cookie
- pants
- garbage
- first floor; second floor; third floor

#### British English

- underground
- lift
- film
- chips
- crisps
- rubber
- timetable
- biscuit
- trousers
- rubbish, waste
- ground floor; first floor; second floor

### 3. Spelling

#### American English

- color, harbor, neighbor, favorite
- theater, center, meter
- organization
- to travel – traveled;  
to fulfill – fulfills, fulfilled
- Mom
- catalog
- program

#### British English

- colour, harbour, neighbour, favourite
- theatre, centre, metre
- organisation
- to travel, travelled;  
to fulfil – fulfils, fulfilled
- Mum
- catalogue
- programme