

Vocabulary Differences

Note: The following abbreviations are used throughout the text:

BrE = **British English** (in bold type)

AmE = American English

A slash (/) indicates that two or more expressions for the same idea are widely used within either British or American English.



BrE



AmE

Time and Seasons

autumn

fall

AmE also uses 'autumn', but 'fall' is more likely in conversation.

a fortnight

two weeks

in future / in the future

in the future

in three hours' time / in three hours

in three hours

In BrE, 'in three hours' time' is more common.

Monday to Friday

Monday through Friday

AmE also uses 'to'. 'Through' emphasises that Monday and Friday are included in the period.

ten to three (or five to eight, etc.)

ten of three / ten to three

Letters and Numbers

full stop

period

inverted commas

quotation marks

nought / zero

zero

zed

zee

Schools and Education

class / form

grade

public school / private school

private school

In BrE, a public school is a certain kind of traditional, privately operated residential school.

state school

public school

secondary school

high school / secondary school

BrE also uses 'high school', but only as part of the name of the school (e.g. 'Porton High School'), not for generic reference. (A speaker of BrE would not say 'I'm a high school student'.)



BrE



AmE

staff

faculty

*Meaning 'the group of teachers at a school'. In AmE, the staff are non-teaching employees.***pupil**

student

*Meaning 'someone studying in secondary school'.***undergraduates**

undergraduates

first year

freshman

third year

junior

second year

sophomore

fourth year

senior

study history, etc

study history / major in history, e

*In BrE 'read history' is also used, but it sounds old-fashioned to many people.***revise**

review

*Meaning 'to re-read or study a second, third (etc.) time'.***timetable**

schedule

notice board

bulletin board

rubber

eraser

Business, Office Administration, Money

do a deal

make a deal / do a deal

dollar note

dollar bill

fill in a form

fill out / in a form

wallet

wallet / billfold

Communications

engaged

busy

*In reference to a telephone line on which someone is speaking.***phone / ring / call someone**

call someone

reverse charges

make a collect call

trunk call

long-distance call

post

mail

*But AmE has 'post office' and BrE has 'Royal Mail' and 'mail train'.***post box**

mailbox

*Meaning 'a box where you put letters that you want the postal service to deliver'.***postcode**

zip code

telegraph pole

telephone pole / utility pole



BrE



AmE

City Life, Shops and Jobs

in town

downtown

bookshop

bookstore / bookshop

In BrE, 'bookstore' may appear as part of a shop's name (e.g. 'Carter's Bookstore').

chemist's

pharmacy

'Pharmacy' used to be common in BrE too. Now it appears only in the names of shops, e.g. 'Uptown Pharmacy'.

cinema

movie theater

court / courts

courthouse

Meaning 'the building in which trials are held'. BrE may use 'court house' as part of the official name of the building, but not as the common term for it.

fire station

fire station / firehouse

ironmonger's / hardware shop

hardware store

till / checkout

checkout counter

Meaning 'the place in a store where you pay for things'. BrE uses 'checkout' only if the counter has a moving belt to move goods along.

cashier / clerk

teller

Meaning 'the person who performs most transactions for customers at a bank'.

estate agent

realtor / real estate agent

Transport: Roads

car park

parking lot

motorway

freeway / superhighway

flyover

overpass

junction

intersection

traffic lights

stop lights / traffic lights / traffic signal

turning

turn

As in 'Take the first turning / turn on the left'.

give way

yield

overtake (a vehicle)

pass (a vehicle)

pavement

sidewalk

In AmE, 'pavement' is the surface of a road.



BrE



AmE

petrol

gas / gasoline

zebra crossing / pedestrian crossing

crosswalk

Transport: Cars and Car Parts

accelerator

gas pedal / accelerator

bonnet (1)

hood (1)

boot (2)

trunk (2)

indicators (3)

turn signals (3)

mileometer

odometer

number plate (4)

license plate (4)

reversing lights (5)

back-up lights (5)

saloon (car)

sedan

silencer (6)

muffler (6)

tyre (7)

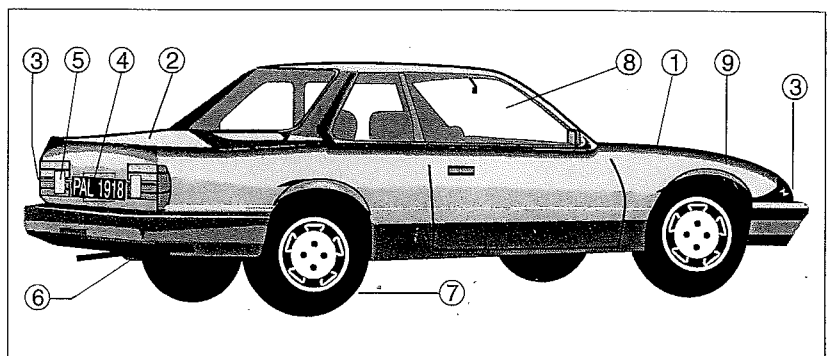
tire (7)

windscreen (8)

windshield (8)

wing (9)

fender (9)



Transport: Other Road Vehicles

bike stand / bike rack

bike rack

caravan

trailer / RV / camper

coach

bus

lorry

truck

removal van

moving van

taxi

cab / taxi

BrE uses 'cab' only rarely.



BrE



AmE

Transport: by Rail or Air

aeroplane	airplane
air hostess / flight attendant	flight attendant
	<i>AmE sometimes also uses 'stewardess', but this is becoming less common.</i>
gangway / aisle	aisle
goods train	freight train
incline	grade
line / track	track
	<i>Meaning 'the arrangement of rails and ties over which a train rolls'. Both BrE and AmE use 'line' to mean 'the route a train travels'.</i>
railway	railroad
(train) guard	conductor
(train) driver	engineer
booking	reservation
return ticket	round-trip ticket
single ticket	one-way ticket
timetable	schedule

Homes, Gardens and Buildings

semi-detached	duplex
flat	apartment
lounge / living room	living room
toilet	bathroom / toilet
wardrobe	closet
	<i>Meaning 'a clothes-storage place built into the wall of a room'. BrE and AmE both use 'wardrobe' for a clothes container that is a free-standing piece of furniture, not built into the wall.</i>
curtains	drapes / curtains
cooker	stove
sideboard	buffet / sideboard
bedside table	nightstand
lift	elevator
way out / exit	exit



BrE



AmE

garden

yard

In AmE, a garden is a small outdoor area where vegetables or flowers are grown. In BrE, a yard is an outdoor area, probably enclosed, without grass.

compost heap

compost pile

green fingers

a green thumb

let (a house, etc.)

rent / lease

Clothes

braces

suspenders

dressing gown

bathrobe

jumper / sweater

sweater

pants

underpants

trousers

pants

trainers

sneakers / tennis shoes

vest

undershirt

zip

zipper

Around the House

cot

crib

In AmE, a cot is a fold-up bed, but without any protective sides.

dummy

pacifier

clothes-peg

clothespin

dustbin

garbage can

rubbish

garbage / trash

tap

faucet

wash up

do the dishes

jug

pitcher

Meaning 'a vessel—with a handle—used for serving drinks'.

napkin / serviette

napkin

To some speakers of BrE, 'serviette' sounds pretentious.

nappy

diaper

oven cloth

potholder