

Differences between American and British English (...)

Gedruckt mit StudyProf Lernkartei (www.sebastian-felling.com/studyprof)

#1 Rechtsanwalt

AE: attorney

BE: lawyer

#2 analysieren

AE: to analy~~ze~~, [analysis]

BE: to analy~~se~~, [analysis]

Mind:

When a British words ends with "-se", the American equivalent usually has a "-ze" ending. Also see the examples in the subcards!

#2.1 (sich/jemanden mit etwas) vertraut machen

AE: to familiarize oneself/sb. with something

BE: to familiarise ~

#2.2 industrialisieren

AE: to industrialize

BE: to industrialise

#2.3 organisieren

AE: to organize (also: organization)

BE: to organise (also: organisation)

#3 Kinderwagen

AE: baby carriage

BE: pram

#4 "Barkeeper"

AE: bartender

BE: barkeeper

Note:

"barkeeper" is actually the British variant of "bartender"!

#5 baden

AE: to **take** a bath [more common]

BE: to **have** a bath

Note:

Both verbs are equivalent but "to take a bath" is more common in AE.

#6 Artefakt

AE: art**i**fact

BE: arte**e**fact

#7 Verhalten

AE: behavior

BE: behaviour

Note:

Where a British word ends with "-our", the American equivalent ends with "-or". See also more examples in the subcards.

#7.1 Farbe

AE: color

BE: colour

#7.2 Aroma

AE: flav**or**

BE: flav**our**

#7.3 Ehre, ehren

AE: honor, to honor

BE: honour, to honour

#7.4 Befürwortung, Gunst

AE: favor

BE: favour

Examples:

to do someone a favor - jem. einen Gefallen tun
in sb's favor - zu jemandes Gunsten

#7.5 Arbeit

AE: labor

BE: labour

#8 Geldschein, Banknote

AE: bill, (e.g. one-dollar bill)

BE: note (e.g. one pound note)

Note:

A "bill" in British English is the piece of paper that shows how much you have to pay for what you have eaten in a restaurant. The American equivalent here is "check".

#8.1 (die) Rechnung [Restaurant]

AE: check

BE: bill

Merke:

#8.2 Scheck [Zahlungsmittel]

AE: check

BE: cheque

Merke:

#9 besetzt [Telefonleitung]

AE: busy

BE: engaged

Note:

"busy" is more common in AE.

#10 Dose, Konservendose

AE: can (also: canned = "konserviert", "Konserven-")

BE: tin (also: tinned)

Note:

You get "canned food" in America, but "tinned food" in Britain.

#11 Einkaufswagen

AE: (shopping) cart

BE: (shopping) trolley

#12 Mobiltelefon

AE: cellular phone (in colloquial language just "cell" or "cell phone")

BE: mobile phone (in colloquial language just "mobile")

Note:

The German "Handy" does not refer to a phone in English. Instead, it means something like "convenient"!

#13 Zentrum (z.B. Einkaufszentrum)

AE: center

BE: centre

Note:

I. Where an American word ends with "-er", the British equivalent usually ends with "-re". See also subcards.

II. Do not change the spelling of proper names. Even in a British newspaper the famous New York twin towers are called the "World Trade Center"!

#13.1 Liter

AE: liter

BE: litre

Note:

The common unit for measuring liquid in America is "fluid ounce" (fl oz), in Britain it is "litre".

#14 Kartoffelchips

AE: potato chips

BE: potato crisps

Note:

In Britain, "chips" (as in "fish and chips") are what Americans would call "French fries".

#14.1 Pommes, Pommes Frites

AE: French fries

BE: chips (more common than "French fries")

#15 Süßigkeit(en)

AE: candy (candies)

BE: sweet (sweets)

#16 Zuckerwatte

AE: cotton candy

BE: candy floss (variant: candyfloss)

#17 Verteidigung

AE: defens**e**

BE: defenc**e**

Note:

Where a British word ends with "-ence", the American equivalent usually ends with "-ense". Also see subcards!

#17.1 Führerschein

AE: driver's license

BE: driving licence

Note:

Also: license vs. licence

AE: to practise

BE: to practice

Note:

As a noun, the word "practice" is common in both AE and BE (cf. "malpractice").

#18 Windel

AE: diaper (mind the pronunciation: [↗ Ω Ω ↻ 🖐️ ◻ ★ ◻])

BE: napkin

Note:

The German "pampers" is the name of a popular diaper product, also sold in the U.S. However, stick to "diaper" as not everyone might know what you mean by "pampers". By the way: "to pamper" means "verwöhnen".

#19 allgemein: Geschäft

AE: store

BE: shop

Note:

See the examples given in the subcards!

#19.1 Drogerie

AE: drugstore

BE: chemist's (shop)

#19.2 Buchhandlung, Buchladen

AE: bookstore

BE: bookshop

AE: encyclopedia

BE: encyclopaedia

Note:

Also see the examples given in the subcards!

#20.1 Archäologie

AE: archeology

BE: archaeology

AE: **first** floor

BE: **ground** floor

Note:

This is tricky: In Britain, if you live at ground level, you live on the ground floor. In America, you'd live on the first floor, which again in Britain would be one floor above ground floor. And this is even funnier: In some American hotels you won't find a 13th floor as it is supposed to be an unlucky number.

#22 Fischstäbchen

AE: fish stick

BE: fish finger

#23 Autobahn

AE: freeway, highway (in souther states: turnpike = "Mautstraße")

BE: motorway

Note:

In America, an "expressway" is what the Germans refer to as "Schnellstraße".

#24 Benzin

AE: gas, gasoline

BE: petrol

Note:

Also: gas station vs. petrol station - Tankstelle

#25 grau

AE: gray

BE: grey

#26 Nachname

AE: last name

BE: surname

Note:

"First name" is the same in America and Britain.

#27 Mathe

AE: math

BE: math^s

Note:

Both stand for "mathematics"

#28 Mutti, Mama (Mutter)

AE: mom

BE: mum

Note:

Both informal for mother.

#29 Hose

AE: pants

BE: trousers

Watch out: If you go out in pants in New York, everything will be just alright. But if you try to do the same thing in London, be prepared for the police to arrest you. In Britain, "pants" are "Unterhosen", in America they refer to "Hosen" in general. "Unterhosen" in America is "underpants" or "underwear", the latter one especially used for men.

AE: pacifier (sometimes: sucker)

BE: dummy

Note:

A dummy can also be a mannequin (in both AE and BE). In American, you call stupid people dummies.

#31 Parkplatz

AE: parking lot

BE: car park

#32 Telefonzelle

AE: pay phone

BE: phone box (also: call box)

Note:

In America, a "call box" is a free phone close by a freeway or expressway and allows you to call for help in case of emergency.

#33 Punkt [Satzabschlusszeichen]

AE: period

BE: full stop

Note:

Both can also be used as interjections to clearly state that you have made a decision:

AE: I'm not going to see my aunt, period!

BE: No, I just don't want to, full stop!

#34 Schulleiter

AE: principal

BE: headmaster (also: head teacher)

#35 Öffentliche Verkehrsmittel

AE: public transportation

BE: public transport

#36 Wohnwagen [Campinganhänger]

AE: trailer

BE: caravan

Note:

A "mobile home" is the common word in BE and AE for trailers that come with an own engine.

#37 LKW

AE: truck

BE: lorry

Note:

A "truck" in BE is the part of a train that carries goods. The American equivalent is "car".

#38 Lebenslauf

AE: resume [↕ □ ℳ ⌘ + ↗ ○ ℳ 🖐]

BE: curriculum vitae (short: CV)

#39 Mitbewohner [WG]

AE: roommate (also: housemate)

BE: flatmate

Note:

In BE, a "roommate" is someone you share a room with (e.g. at college).

#40 Bürgersteig

AE: sidewalk

BE: pavement

Note:

to pave = pflastern

to pave the way for sb./sth. = den Weg für etw./jem. ebnen

#41 Etage

AE: story

BE: storey

#42 entgegen, gegen, in Richtung auf

AE: toward

BE: towards

#43 Reisende(r)

AE: travel|er (travel|ed, travel|ing)
also: cancel|ed, cancel|ing

BE: travel|ler (travel|led, travel|ling)
also: cancel|led, cancel|ling

Note:

The American derivation of a noun usually goes without the doubling of its final consonant.

#44 Kofferraum

AE: trunk

BE: boot

Note:

"Boots" are also shoes that cowboys traditionally wear.

#45 Reifen

AE: tire

BE: tyre

#46 Staubsauger, staubsaugen

AE: vacuum cleaner, to vacuum

BE: Hoover™, to Hoover

Note:

"Vacuum cleaner" is a generic term that refers to the class of those things the Americans call "vacuum cleaners".

"Hoover™" is Britain's most famous vacuum cleaner (a trademark) and that's why it has come to term the whole class of them.

#47 Whisk(e)y

AE: whiskey

BE: whisky

Note:

"Whiskey" is also used in Scotland.

#48 Postleitzahl, PLZ

AE: zip code (short: zip)

BE: postcode

#49 Reißverschluss

AE: zipper

BE: zip

#50 Pronunciation rule #1: "flat a" (dance, last)

as in: dance, last

General American: dance = [dæns]

British: dance = [dɑːns]

Note:

The GA uses a "flat a". The same rule applies to most words. Some more examples: answer, can't etc.

#51 Pronunciation rule #2: "postvocalic -r" (arm, fur, clerk)

arm (noun)

General American: [ɑːrm]

British: [ɑːm]

Also applies to: car̄, park̄, arch̄, apart̄,
storm̄, torn̄,
fur̄,
stir̄,
clerk̄, etc.

Note:

One of the more significant differences between American and British pronunciation is the American "r" after a vowel ("postvocalic -r"). Americans pronounce the "r" sound where the British usually drop it. For non-native speakers, it takes a long time to train the American "r".

#52 Pronunciation rule #3: "tapped t" (waiter, pottery)

as in: later, water, trator, automobile, etc.

General American: later = ['leɪt̬ər]

British: later = ['leɪtə]

Note:

The GA uses a "tapped t" where the British pronunciation goes with a normal "t". To illustrate this, we can imagine a German [d] as in later ['leɪtə] => la[d]er ['leɪt̬ər].

#53 Pronunciation rule #4: "pure u" (tune, stupid)

as in: tune, Tuesday, stupid

General American: tune = [tu:n]

British: tune = [tju:n]

Note:

The GA does without the [j] sound in front of a long [u:].

#54 Pronunciation rule #5: "unrounded vowel" (stop, clock, pot)

as in: stop, clock,

General American: stop = [stɑ:p]

British: stop = [stɒp]

Note:

The American pronunciation sounds almost like "stap", "clack". The vowel is longer and while pronouncing the lips are opener and less round than in the British pronunciation.

#55 Luftzug

AE: draft [dræft]

BE: draught [dra:ft]