

List of words having different meanings in British and American English: M–Z

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This is the **list of words having different meanings in British and American English: M–Z**. For the first portion of the list, see *List of words having different meanings in British and American English: A–L*.

- *Asterisked* (*) meanings, though found chiefly in the specified region, also have some currency in the other dialect; other definitions may be recognised by the other as *Briticisms* or *Americanisms* respectively. Additional usage notes are provided when useful.

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M

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
mac	abbr. of raincoat (Mackintosh)	a brand of Apple Inc. computers; abbreviation of Macintosh.	(Slang; proper n.) A term of informal address used with male strangers; generally implies more unfriendliness or disapproval than the more neutral 'pal' or 'buddy': "Get your car out of my way, Mac!" UK generally 'mate'. Cf. 'Jack.'
Mackintosh, Macintosh, or McIntosh	raincoat (Mackintosh, often shortened to <i>mac</i>)	Macintosh, a brand of Apple Inc. computers (often shortened to <i>Mac</i>) (wrongly) McIntosh Red, a type of apple	
mad	eccentric *	insane	enraged * very, or a large amount of something (slang, as in "he has mad skills")
mail	(used in Royal Mail, the name of the British postal system; cf. <i>postal</i>) (Scot.) a payment (tax, rent, etc.) (Scot.) a travelling bag or pack	(n.) the postal system of a nation letters, packages, etc. sent by post; as delivered to individual, orig. US, UK often <i>post</i> (n. & v.) e-mail, (n.) armour, as in "chainmail"	(v.) send a letter (UK: <i>post</i> or <i>send</i>); noun originated <i>mail carrier & mailman</i> (UK: <i>postman</i>), <i>mailbox</i> (UK: <i>postbox</i> ; <i>letter box</i>), <i>mail slot</i> , <i>mail drop</i> , etc.
mailbox	mail box	a file for storing electronic mail (or related computing or voicemail usage)	an item of street furniture serving as a receptacle for outgoing mail (UK: <i>post box</i> ; <i>letter box</i> ; <i>pillar box</i>); a receptacle for incoming paper mail (UK: <i>letter box</i>)

main line	a major railway line (as the West Coast Main Line); compare <i>trunk</i>	a major vein (as for drug injection purposes) (orig. 1930s US slang); also used as a v.	a railroad's primary track, or a primary artery, route, road, or connection Pennsylvania Main Line mainline Protestant churches
major	(in the past, in English public schools) used to denote the eldest of two or more pupils with the same surname ("Bloggs major")	important or significant (n.) rank between captain and Lieutenant Colonel in the army and marines.	(n.) a college/university student's main field of specialization ("his major is physics"); the student himself ("he is a physics major"); (v.) to pursue a major ("he majored in physics") (compare <i>minor</i> ; UK: compare <i>read</i>) (n.) rank between captain and Lieutenant Colonel in the air force (UK squadron leader) and in some police agencies (UK approx. superintendent).
majority (politics)	the greatest number of votes difference of votes between first and second place (US: <i>plurality</i>)		more than half of all votes (UK: <i>absolute majority</i>)
make out	to snog	to draw up, to seek to make it appear, to fabricate a story to see with difficulty; to understand the meaning of	to kiss (see Making out) to succeed or profit ("She made out well on that deal.") *
manual		(adj.) performed by hand, e.g. "manual labour"; (n.) instruction book (n.) a car with a manual transmission ("I drive a manual.") (US: <i>stick shift</i> , <i>stick</i>)	
marinara sauce	a sauce containing seafood, usu. in a tomato base		a sauce containing tomatoes and herbs, with no seafood or meat (UK: <i>napolitana sauce</i>)
marquee	large, open-sided tent installed outdoors for temporary functions *		signage placed over the entrance to a hotel, theatre, or cinema (attrib.) the ability (of a show) to draw audience, "box office" ("marquee value") a prominent celebrity or athlete ("marquee player")
mate	friend (US: <i>pal</i> or <i>friend</i>) informal term of address ("hello mate")	animal's sexual partner checkmate, the winning of a game of chess an officer on a merchant ship	spouse or partner
mean (adj.)	stingy, miserly, selfish *	of inferior quality, contemptible a statistical average (see mean)	unpleasant, unkind, vicious *
median		a statistical average (see median) geometric median median nerve	the portion of a divided highway used to separate opposing traffic (UK <i>central reservation</i>)
meet with		to face (as a situation), experience ("If you can meet with triumph and disaster, and treat those two impostors just the same" - Kipling)	to have a meeting with (as people) ("Vice president meets with Iraqi officials", CNN (http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/03/17/ch Cheney.iraq/index.html)) *(UK generally <i>meet</i> (transitive) or <i>meet up with</i>) [1] (http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1535_questionanswer/page69.shtml)
mezzanine		intermediate floor between main floors of a building	lowest balcony in a theatre, or the first few rows of seats thereof (UK usu. <i>dress circle</i>)
mid-Atlantic	in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, half-way between UK & US		middle of the Atlantic coast of the USA (exact definition of Mid-Atlantic States may vary)
middle class	better off		ordinary; not rich although not destitute, generally a positive term

	than 'working class', but not rich, i.e., a narrower term than in the U.S. and often negative		
military	relating specifically to the British Army (dated)	relating to armed forces in general	(adj.) relating to any of the individual branches of the armed forces (n.) armed forces
minor	(in the past, in English public schools) used to denote the youngest of two or more pupils with the same surname ("Blogs minor")	not very important see minor (law), major and minor (n.) a person under the age of 18 years, generally, and for legal reasons more specifically (as in "the name of the defendant is withheld because he is a minor"), or under an age legally required for certain behavior (such as purchasing alcohol), or under the age of consent.	(n.) secondary academic subject (compare <i>major</i>) ("has a major in biology and a minor in English"); (v.) to study as one's minor ("she minored in English") minor league;
miss out	to omit	to lose a chance; usu. used with <i>on</i>	
mobile (n.)	mobile phone	decorative structure suspended so as to turn freely in the air	(US: <i>cell phone</i>)
mobile home	a mobile, non-motorised piece of equipment with living facilities; a caravan (q.v.)		a type of manufactured dwelling transported to the home site using wheels attached to the structure
momentarily		for a moment	in a moment; very soon
mono		(adj.) monophonic (of reproduced sound, e.g. radio or CD player using a single speaker) monochrome	(n.) infectious mononucleosis, a disease caused by Epstein-Barr virus (UK: glandular fever)
moot		(adj.) debatable ("a moot point") (v.) to bring up for debate (these meanings are fading from use in US English) see also <i>moot court</i>	(adj.) irrelevant ("a moot point") (orig. legal, now in common use) (v.) to make irrelevant (incorrect/uneducated usage)
mortuary (n.)	building or room (as in a hospital) for the storage of human remains (US: <i>morgue</i>)		funeral home, funeral parlour
motorbike	a motorcycle		a lightweighted, small motorcycle
motor car, motorcar	(formal) a car (motor vehicle) (US: <i>automobile</i>)		a self-propelled railway vehicle
MP	Member of Parliament	Military police other expansions (http://www.acronymfinder.com/af-query.asp?Acronym=MP)	Northern Mariana Islands (ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 country code and U.S. postal abbreviation MP) Missouri Pacific Railroad (reporting mark MP)
muffin	a thick round baked yeast roll, usually toasted and served with butter (US: <i>English muffin</i>)		a confection similar to a cupcake but unfrosted and less sweet, sometimes even savory (e.g., <i>corn muffin</i>) *(UK: <i>American muffin</i>)
muffler		a scarf	device to silence an automobile (UK: <i>silencer</i>) or gramophone

mum	mother, as addressed or referred to by her child (US: <i>mom</i>)		
mummy	mother, as addressed or referred to by her child (US: <i>mommy</i>)	Ancient Egyptian mummy, a chemically preserved corpse any preserved corpse (Mexican <i>mumia</i>)	

N

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
napkin	nappy (q.v.), diaper (dated, not well known)	piece of material used to protect garments from spilled food or to remove food residues from around the mouth [formerly esp. US; alternative UK term <i>serviette</i> is obsolescent]	piece of paper used to protect garments, (oftenest, <i>sanitary napkin</i>) absorbent piece of material worn by a woman while menstruating *(UK usu. <i>sanitary towel</i>)
nappy	folded cloth or other absorbent material drawn up between the legs and fastened around the waist, usu. worn by infants to counter incontinence (US: <i>diaper</i>)		twisted or kinked, considered insulting when applied to hair, esp. that of persons of African descent (also called <i>napped</i>)
nasty		unsightly, disgusting	(<i>do the nasty</i>) (slang) have sex
natter	Idle, pleasant chatter (US: <i>small talk, chitchat</i>)		(<i>natter on</i>) Constant, annoying chatter
nervy	nervous, fidgety *		bold, presumptuous
NHS	The National Health Service, a government-run health care plan funded by British taxpayers and available to all citizens.		The National Honor Society, an American scholastic organization open to high schoolers (in grades 10 - 12, see grade) who excel in academics, leadership skills, citizenship, and character.
nick	prison or police station (slang) to steal (slang) to arrest (slang)	small cut (computer jarg.) nickname	
nickel		the metallic element (Ni)	5 cent coin (also 'nickle') five dollars (slang)
nonplussed		bewildered, unsure how to respond	unfazed (<i>incorrect usage</i>)
nonce	a sex offender; in particular, a child molestor (slang)	the present moment a word used only once a single-use token in a cryptographic protocol	
nor	neither ("She didn't come.' 'Nor did he.") (Scotland & Ireland) than ("someone better nor me")	and not, or (not) ("neither sad nor happy"; "he never eats, nor does he ever feel hungry")	
notion		concept, conception, inclination	(pl.) small items and accessories, esp. for sewing (UK: <i>haberdashery</i> , q.v.); hence <i>notion store</i> , <i>notion counter</i> , etc.

O

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
office	(cap.) a government department ("Colonial Office", "Foreign and Commonwealth Office") (pl.) the outbuildings and dependencies of a dwelling (as an estate)	a place of business; a position or function a particular division of an administrative unit ("Patent Office")	the place where a physician or dentist practises (UK: <i>surgery</i>)

optician	<i>(dispensing optician)</i> professional who dispenses lenses and spectacles <i>(ophthalmic optician)</i> professional who tests eyes and prescribes lenses (US: <i>optometrist</i>)		professional who dispenses lenses and spectacles
optometrist		ophthalmic optician	in the U.S., optometrist and ophthalmologist are separate, opticians are the same as UK dispensing opticians
Oriental	a person from East/SouthEast Asia. Contrast 'Asian', meaning a person from South Asia.	a thing from Asia e.g. "Oriental Carpet".	a person from anywhere in Asia, other than Western Asia or Russia. Considered pejorative. Polite US speakers use <i>Asian</i> instead, even for people from China and Korea.
ouster	a person who ousts		the act of forcing the removal of someone from a position of influence or power
outside lane	the part of the road nearest the vehicles going in the opposite direction, used especially by faster vehicles (US: <i>inside lane</i>)	(in both cases the term applies to the rightmost lane in the direction concerned)	the part of the road nearest the edge, used especially by slower-moving vehicles (UK: <i>inside lane</i>)
overall (n.)	loose-fitting protective outer garment (US: <i>coverall</i>)		(in pl.) sturdy protective bib trousers; dungarees, bib overalls

P

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
pacifier		something or somebody that brings peace	rubber teat for babies (UK: <i>dummy</i>)
panda	police car (slang) (US: zebra, black-and-white)	Type of animal (black and white), e.g. Giant Panda, Red Panda	
pantomime	traditional Christmas time holiday theatre		silent acting, usu. without props, by mime artist (UK: <i>mime</i>)
pants	underpants (also briefs or boxers) of poor quality (slang) (of a situation) bad, unfortunate (slang). Although refers to trousers in parts of Northern England.		usually, any trousers, exc. in "to get into her pants", etc., in which it denotes women's underclothing* <i>(wear the pants in the family)</i> be masculine, be the breadwinner, perform the husband's role (derog.) (spoken esp. of a wife, usage becoming obsolete)
paraffin	kerosene		a waxy fraction of petroleum commonly used to make candles (UK: <i>paraffin wax</i>)
paralytic	extremely drunk (slang)	relating to or affected by paralysis	
park	a tract of ground kept in its natural state, about or adjacent to a residence, as for the preservation of game, for walking, riding, or the like (esp. Scotland) a pasture or field area for the parking of motor vehicles ("a car park") (sports) a soccer or rugby field see also country park	outdoor area for recreational uses ("Central Park", "Hyde Park") national park (orig. US)	any of various areas designated for certain purposes *, such as <i>amusement park</i> , <i>theme park</i> , <i>industrial park</i> , <i>trailer park</i> , <i>memorial park</i> (a cemetery) (sports) enclosed ground for ball games, oftenest the baseball park a level valley among the mountains (as the Rocky Mountains); also, an area of open grassland, or one for cultivation, esp. if among the woods
parking		the act of parking (a vehicle)	To engage in romantic intimacy in a parked vehicle. (regional) turf strip between sidewalk and street (many regional synonyms exist; there is no standard name).
parkway	a railway station with parking areas intended for commuters		generally, an open landscaped limited-access <i>highway</i> (q.v.) (see article) regional term for <i>parking</i> (q.v.)
pass out	to graduate from a training centre of a disciplined service (military, police etc.)	to become unconscious	to die (esp. a car or other machine) * to distribute *

patience	any of a family of one-player card games (US: <i>solitaire</i> , q.v.)	the quality of being patient	
pavement	a paved strip at the side of a road, reserved for pedestrians (US: <i>sidewalk</i>)		the road surface *
PC	police constable	politically correct personal computer other expansions (http://www.acronymfinder.com/af-query.asp?Acronym=PC)	
pecker	courage, pluck (slang, used in the phrase "keep your pecker up", remain cheerful)		penis (slang)
peckish	slightly hungry, snackish *		irritable or angry (rare)
peg	(n.) (often <i>clothes peg</i>) a wooden or plastic device for fastening laundry on a clothesline (US: <i>clothespin</i>) (v.) to fasten (laundry) on a clothesline	(n.) a cylindrical wooden, metal etc. object used to fasten or as a bearing between objects (v.) to fix or pin down (v.) to hit with a projectile	(n.) a throw (as in baseball) (v.) to identify or classify (as someone) *
penny	(pl. <i>pence</i> , or, when referring to coins, <i>pennies</i>) 1/100 (formerly, 1/240) of the Pound Sterling [listed here to reflect ordinary usage]	a small amount usu. in contrast to a larger one ("Penny wise, Pound foolish", common phrase in both British and American usage)	(pl. <i>pennies</i>) a cent (esp. the coin) (<i>penny-ante</i>) trivial, small-time.
period		section of time menstruation row of the periodic table	punctuation mark used at the end of a sentence (interj.) used at the end of a statement to emphasise its finality *("You are not going to that concert, period!") (UK: <i>full stop</i> for both senses)
pint	about 6/5 of US measure, 20 Imperial fluid ounces (19.2 US fl. oz.), 568 ml pint of beer, lager or cider ("Pour us a pint")		about 5/6 of British (Imperial) measure, 16 US fluid ounces (16.65 Imperial fl. oz.), 473 ml
piss	(<i>on the piss</i>) drinking heavily, going out for the purpose of drinking heavily (to <i>take the piss</i>) to mock (to <i>piss off</i>) to go away	urine (usu. vulgar) urinate (usu. vulgar) low-quality beer (vulgar) (to <i>piss off</i>) to incite to anger, to enrage	
pissed	intoxicated, drunk*(often <i>pissed as a newt</i> ; sometimes <i>pissed up</i>)	urinated (usu. vulgar) (<i>pissed off</i>) angry, irritated	
pitch	outdoor site for a stall or some other business site for a tent (US: <i>campsite</i> , q.v.) playing field for a particular sport (<i>football pitch</i> , <i>rugby pitch</i> , <i>cricket pitch</i> , etc.) (US: <i>field</i>)	an attempt to persuade somebody to do something, usu. to accept a business proposal a sticky black substance obtained from tar the slope of a roof rotation on a lateral axis (as an aircraft or spacecraft) the frequency of a sound to erect a tent to discard (in various card games, e.g., bridge)	in baseball, the delivery of a baseball by a pitcher to a batter "pitching a tent" (slang): to have an erection (describes the shape of the fabric covering one) (slang) to dispose a brief summary of a broader work or idea meant to be attractive to a third party e.g. "What's the pitch?"
pitcher	a large container (often earthenware), usually round with a narrow neck, used for holding water or another liquid [2] (http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=60269&dict=CALD) (US: <i>jug</i>)		any container with a handle and lip or spout for liquids*[3] (http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=43040&dict=CALD) (UK: <i>jug</i>) baseball player who pitches (throws) baseball towards the batter (UK: <i>bowler</i>) (LGBT slang, from baseball) a top or dominant partner
pitman	a miner working in a pit	the man that stands in a pit when sawing timber (with another man standing above)	a connecting rod (as in a sawmill) a master barbecuer, the person responsible for managing a barbecue pit.
plant	machinery, industrial equipment	a vegetable organism, a factory	
plaster	an adhesive bandage placed on a minor cut or scrape (UK also: <i>sticking/sticky plaster</i> , <i>Elastoplast</i> ; US: <i>Band-Aid</i>); a cast of plaster of Paris ("a leg in plaster")	a pastelike mixture that hardens when applied to walls and ceilings; plastered - drunk	
plimsoll, plimsol, plimsole.	noun: a rubber-soled cloth shoe; a sneaker.	waterline to show the level the water should reach when the ship is properly loaded [syn: load line], named after Samuel Plimsoll	
point	(pl.) railway turnout *(US: <i>switch</i>)	(see article)	piece of land jutting into any body of

	(<i>power point</i>) electrical socket (US: <i>outlet</i>) cape or promontory jutting into sea (<i>full point</i>) syn. with <i>full stop</i> (q.v.)		water, esp. a river ("points and bends"); a prominence or peak (of mountains, hills, rocks), also an extremity of woods or timber
pontoon	blackjack, twenty-one	a buoyant device	
pop	to place or put ("I popped the book on the table")	a sharp explosive sound pop music carbonated soft drink (US usage is regional; also: <i>soda</i> , <i>soda pop</i>) (<i>pop in</i>) to arrive unexpectedly	father (colloquial) (v.) to kill (n.) a sudden increase (as in price) (orig. Stock exchange) *
porter	doorman, gatekeeper, or building maintenance worker *	bearer of burdens a style of beer	railway sleeping car attendant
post (v.)	to send a letter *(US: <i>mail</i>)	to display on a noticeboard or bulletin board, Internet forum, etc.	to announce ("the company posted a first-quarter profit of \$100 million") to inform ("keep me posted") *
postal		related to the paper mail system	(used in the name of the United States Postal Service; see <i>mail</i>) (<i>going postal</i>) to commit a sudden, irrational burst of rage (slang)
pound sign		symbol of the Pound Sterling (£) (GBP)	number sign, octothorpe (#) (UK: <i>hash sign</i>)
precinct	a pedestrian zone in a city or town ("a shopping precinct")	a space enclosed (as by walls)	subdivision of a county, town, etc. for the purpose of conducting elections section of a city patrolled by a police unit; the police station in such a section
prep(aratory) school	(in England) fee-paying private junior school (which prepares pupils for public school)		fee-paying private senior school (which prepares pupils for university) (UK: <i>public school</i> or <i>independent school</i>)
pressman, presswoman	a journalist employed by a newspaper (US: <i>newspaperman/newspaperwoman</i> (rare), or by specific job)		one who operates a printing press
pressurise (UK), pressurize (US & UK)	insistently influence, or attempt to influence, someone else ("The manager pressurised his assistant to work late") (US & UK also: <i>pressure</i>)	subject a volume of gas or liquid to physical pressure, as the atmospheric pressure within an aircraft ("To protect the Aircraft's structure, the plane was pressurized to 8000 ft.")	
proctor	variant of the word procurator, is a person who takes charge or acts for another.		an examination supervisor (UK: <i>invigilator</i>)
professor	holder of a chair in a university, the highest academic rank (the usual order being Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader, Professor)		academic faculty of all ranks: Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and (Full) Professor (the latter being largely equivalent to the UK meaning)
project		a plan; a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product or service	publicly subsidised usu. low-income housing development – see public housing (UK: cf. s.v. <i>estate</i>)
prom	shortening of 'promenade concert', originally one of a series of concerts (The Proms) held as part of a classical music festival that takes place in the late summer based around the Royal Albert Hall in London, but now also used elsewhere shortening of 'promenade', a raised walk next to the beach in seaside resorts		dance/party held for pupils to celebrate the end of a school year/graduation, a shortening of 'promenade', a formal parade *
protest (v.t.)		to forcefully express an opinion, to advocate: "The prisoner protested his innocence."	to campaign or demonstrate against: "The prisoner's friends protested the judge's decision." (UK: <i>protest against</i>)
public school	long-established and prestigious fee-paying independent school in England or Wales (note that not all private schools are classed as public schools) (US: <i>prep school</i>)		tax-supported school controlled by a local governmental authority (UK: <i>state school</i>) *(also in Scotland & Northern Ireland)
pud	short for pudding, especially in "Christmas pud" (pronounced /'pʊd/)		slang term for penis (pronounced /'pʌd/) (from 'pudendum')
pudding	dessert course of a meal a heavy dessert or main course (e.g. steak and kidney pudding), often suet-based used in the name of some other savoury dishes (e.g. black pudding, pease pudding)		a creamy dessert term of affection
pull	to persuade someone to be one's date or sex partner (slang)	to move something towards oneself an injury to a muscle, tendon, or	to carry out a task (esp. milit.) ("to pull guard duty")

	(<i>on the pull</i>) seeking a date or sex partner (slang)	ligament, e.g. "I've pulled my hamstring."	authority, influence ("He's got pull in that office.") (<i>pull rank</i>) the act of a supervisor exercising authority over a subordinate.
pull off	(of a vehicle) to start moving	to succeed in a task	
pump (shoe)	(regional) a plimsoll (US: <i>sneaker</i>)	the word (of unknown origin) has variously denoted a pantofle, a low thin sole shoe, a formal men's shoe (<i>Reebok Pump</i>) a brand of athletic shoe with an internal inflation mechanism	usu. women's high(ish) heeled shoe (UK similar: <i>court shoe</i> , q.v.)
punk		follower of Punk rock	worthless person; from conventional societal perspective any young outlaw or tough; from perspective of outlaws and others valuing physical fighting, a coward to play a prank or practical joke on someone
purse	feminine money container or wallet (US: <i>coin purse</i>)	in boxing etc., the money to be awarded in a prize fight	handbag
pussy		a cat (becoming less common in the US, due to the other meanings) Slang term for vagina	a weakling
pylon	electricity pylon, part of an electric power transmission network *(US: <i>mast</i> or <i>transmission tower</i>)	A large architectural feature, usually found as one of a pair at the entrance to ancient Egyptian temples - see Pylon (architecture)	traffic cone; temporary traffic lane separator. support structure for suspension bridge or highway

Q

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
quart	1/4 (UK) gallon or 2 (UK) pints. Liquid measure approximately 1.136 litres (6/5 of an American quart).		1/4 (US) gallon or 2 (US) pints. Liquid measure equal to 0.946 litres (5/6 of a British quart).
quarter		one of four equal parts into which something is divided, as a quarter hour or, especially for financial purposes, a quarter of a year; in generic usage (as in fractions), US usu. <i>fourth</i>	25 cents (a fourth of a dollar)
queue	a group of persons, usually waiting for something, arranged in order of arrival *(US: <i>line</i>)	an ordered sequence of objects, from which the first one in is also the first one out (cf. Queue (data structure))	
quid	colloquial term for pound sterling (plural is <i>quid</i> also; in Ireland it can refer to the punt or Euro) (related US: buck)	a measure (mouthful) of chewing tobacco	
quite	to some extent or degree, e.g. in the phrase "quite good" meaning "mediocre, acceptable" or "good, well done" (a meiotic usage, depending on voice intonation) agreeing with a given statement, often expressing reluctant agreement or disbelief ("I'm innocent, and this document proves it!" "Quite.") according to intonation)	to the fullest extent or degree ("All art is quite useless" – Oscar Wilde) to a great extent or degree	

R

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
rabbit	(v.) (slang) to talk at length, usually about trivial things; usually to 'rabbit on'	(n.) the animal rabbit, a lagomorph	(<i>rabbit ears</i>) (slang) TV antenna (usage becoming obsolete)
railroad	tramway (obsolete)	(v.) to coerce to convict with undue haste or with insufficient evidence	the general term for the system of mass transit using trains running on rails: see usage of the terms railroad and railway (v.) to work on the railroad to transport by railroad see also at <i>underground</i>
railway	the general term for the system of mass transit using trains running on rails: see usage of the terms railroad and railway		tramway
raisin	(UK usage excludes currants and sultanas)	a large dark grape, dried	any dried grape
rambler	one that rambles (as a hiker), see Ramblers	a type of rose one who talks excessively, often without making cohesive points (to ramble on)	a style of house, usu. a ranch-style house (see also Rambler (automobile), Nash Rambler)
randy	a slang term meaning sexually aroused (American <i>horny</i>)		a male or female given name or nickname deriving from the names Randall, Randolph, or Miranda
range	a line, collection, etc. of products or merchandise, as in <i>top of the range</i> (US: <i>top of the line</i>) a type of kitchen stove like that featured on the TV programme <i>The 1900 House</i>	a series of things in a line (as mountains) a sequence or scale between limits a place where shooting is practised an area over which a species of animal or plant is found	a cooking stove with an oven and burners on the top surface an open area for the grazing of livestock a series of townships (q.v.), a Public Land Survey System unit of land east or west from a Principal meridian
raunchy		Lewd, vulgar, sexually explicit	foul-smelling, dirty <i>raunch</i> (n.): stench, miasma
read	to study a subject at university* ("he is reading physics". US: "He is studying law") (roughly approximate US: <i>major (in)</i>)	to peruse written material	
reader	the second highest academic rank at a university, below professor (US equivalent: <i>associate professor</i>)	one who reads	a teaching assistant who reads and grades examination papers.
receptionist	hotel reservation desk worker (US: <i>clerk</i>) see also <i>conciierge</i>	front desk employee in business establishments, organisations, or hospitals	
recess (time)		remission or suspension of business or procedure	pause between classes at school (UK: <i>break, playtime, Lunchtime</i>)
redcap	a military police officer		a baggage porter (as at a train station)
redundant	laid off from employment, usu. because no longer needed ("The company made 100 workers redundant") (US: laid off)	unnecessary; repetitive	
regular		normal, customary following a uniform pattern in space or time (of a geometric shape) having equal sides and angles frequent one who frequents a place a full-time professional member of a military	of an ordinary kind; also, nice or agreeable ("a regular guy") of an ordinary or medium size * unmodified, especially non-dietary/sugar-free/fat-free * non-decaffeinated coffee lowest grade of gasoline

		organisation (see Structure of the British Army and Regular army) (US: <i>active duty</i>)	(historically: leaded gasoline)
remit	(n.) set of responsibilities ("within my remit"; "to have a remit") (pronounced /ˈrɪːmɪt/)	(v.) to defer; in law, to transfer a case to a lower court; to send money; to cancel. (pronounced /rɪˈmɪt/)	
rent (v.)		to pay money in exchange for the right to use a house, land or other real property (BrE "let")	to pay money in exchange for the right to use moveable property such as a car (BrE "hire")
restroom	a room for staff to take their breaks in; a staffroom (US: <i>breakroom</i>)		a room in a public place, containing a toilet
retainer		amount of money paid in order to retain the services of another, a person who part of a retinue	a device for straightening teeth (UK: <i>brace</i>)
retreat		(v.) to go backwards, especially (military) to move away from the enemy; to withdraw (n.) a period of withdrawal from society for prayer or meditation	a period of group withdrawal for study or instruction under a group leader
review		to reassess, inspect, perform a subsequent reading to write a review	to study again (as in preparing for an examination) (UK: <i>revise</i>), hence <i>review</i> (n.)
revise	to study again (as in preparing for an examination) (US: <i>review</i>), hence <i>revision</i>	to inspect, amend, correct, improve, esp. written material	
ring (v.)	to call (someone) by telephone	to sound a bell	(<i>ring up</i>) *to total up a customer's purchases on a cash register
rise (increase)	an increase in wages (US: <i>raise</i>)	an increase in amount, value, price, etc.	
roast	(colloquial) to reprimand severely.	(v.) to cook in an oven; (n.) meat so cooked	(n.) an event where an individual is ridiculed for the sake of comedy; (v.) to host or perform such an event
roommate		a person with whom one shares a bedroom	(also <i>roomie</i>) a person with whom one shares a house or apartment (UK: <i>housemate</i> or <i>flatmate</i>)
root (v.)	to have sex with (vulgar slang) (orig. Australian) *	to fix; to rummage; to take root or grow roots	to cheer ("I will be rooting for you"); to dig or look for (root around) *
rotary		a machine acting by rotation (cap.) organisation whose members comprise Rotary Clubs	a circular road intersection (US also <i>traffic circle</i> , UK usu. <i>roundabout</i> ; see articles)
roundabout	a merry-go-round	a detour or circuitous path a circular road intersection	a type of men's jacket used in the past (see e.g. Mark Twain)
row (n.)	(Pronounced /ˈraʊ/, to rhyme with "cow") a noisy quarrel *; a continual loud noise ("Who's making that row?")	(Pronounced /ˈroʊ/, to rhyme with "toe") a line of objects, often regularly spaced (as seats in a theatre, vegetable plants in a garden etc.) a line of entries in a table, etc. (as opposed to a column) an instance of rowing (as in a boat)	a series of prison cells ("death row") a particular street or area of a town (as in <i>skid row</i> , dilapidated neighbourhood haunted by vagrants, misfits, etc.) a series of row houses (<i>row house</i>) town house, q.v.
rubber (countable noun)	pencil eraser	the duration of a match in certain games (e.g., bridge)	condom waterproof rain boot (but only in the plural: "rubbers") (UK: <i>wellington</i>)
rug	a (usually thick) piece of fabric used for warmth	a small covering for a floor (slang) a wig; hairpiece	

	(especially on a bed); blanket		
run	(n.) a leisure drive or ride ("a run in the car")	(v.) senses orig. US and now common are: to be a candidate in an election (UK also <i>stand</i>); to manage or provide for (a business, a family, etc.); the idioms <i>run scared</i> , <i>run into</i> . More s.v. <i>home run</i> ; see wiktionary for additional meanings, a type of cage which is made so that animals (e.g. Hamsters, rabbits, Guinea pigs, etc.) can run around in it.	(v.) to propose (someone) as a candidate to drive past ("to run a red light") to hunt (as the buffalo or the deer) (n.) an instance of running for office a <i>creek</i> (q.v.)
run-in	the final part of a race; approach to something, also <i>run-up</i> (q.v.)		an argument or altercation *
rundown (n.)	a reduction (as of an establishment)	a detailed summary (orig. US slang)	a type of play in baseball tired, depressed.
run-up	the period preceding an event (as an election) *	the act of running up	a sudden increase (as in price) (orig. Stock exchange) *

S

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
saloon	closed car having two or (usu.) four doors, a front and rear seat and a separate boot/trunk (US: <i>sedan</i>) (<i>saloon bar</i>) posh bar within a pub or hotel passengers' lounge on a liner or luxury train (US approx.: <i>parlor car</i>)	officers' dining room on a merchant ship	bar, especially in the American Old West bar that serves only spirits and no food a room in a house used for receiving guests; a salon
scalp (v.)		to cut the scalp off; to take something away (n.) trophy, spoils of victory (informal)	to resell (as tickets) at higher prices (UK: <i>tout</i>) to trade (as stocks) for quick profits
scheme	official systematic plan (as of the government) ("a pension scheme") (Scotland) Low-cost public housing (US: <i>project</i>)	a plan, often secret or devious; a plot ("criminal scheme")	
school	place of primary or secondary education	grouping of departments or large department within a university faculty (among other meanings, e.g., a group of experts sharing perspective or methods, or a group of fish)	any educational institution; <i>in school</i> : state of being a pupil in any school normally serving minor children of any age, or in a college or university at any level; <i>at school</i> : usually, physically present on campus. (UK: <i>at school</i> for both)
scrappy	not neatly organised or poor a scrappy player is one who sometimes plays well, but often plays badly.	fragmentary	bellicose or fightingly determined a scrappy player is one who compensates for a lack of size or speed with grit and determination.
second (v.)	to transfer temporarily to alternative employment (pronounced /sɪˈkɒnd/, to rhyme with "beyond")	to endorse, support, or bring reinforcements	
section (v.t.)	to detain under the Mental Health Act 1983 <i>On section</i> , detained in a mental hospital.	to cut or slice into sections	
sedan		a chair or windowed cabin, carried by at least two porters in front and behind	a common car body style (UK: <i>saloon</i> , q.v.)

seeded (grapes, etc.)	with the seeds left in		having had the seeds removed (uncommon usage) (also <i>seedless</i> , used in UK)
semi	semi-detached house (US: <i>duplex</i>), semi-erection (vulgar)		semi-trailer truck (UK: <i>articulated lorry</i>)
series (television)	a single batch of episodes of a television programme (US: <i>season</i>)		all of the episodes of a particular television program
set square	a triangular object used in technical drawing (US: <i>triangle</i>)		a T-square (also used in technical drawing)
shade		penumbra, partial obscurity; nuance (pl.) sunglasses (orig. US); reminder of the past	window blind
shag	to copulate, or copulate with [understood in some (but certainly not all) demographics in the US also, see Austin Powers]	a seabird (various members of the cormorant family) a kind of a dance, associated with "beach music," esp. from the Carolinas (orig. US) a kind of fabric with a thick, long strands; often used in carpets long, matted hair (cf. Shaggy from the Scooby-Doo cartoon) a type of shredded coarse tobacco	(v.) to chase after; to chase and fetch (as a fly ball in baseball) a style of long hair with numerous layers (not matted or untidy)
shattered	exhausted	broken into many small pieces. devastated emotionally	
sherbet	a fizzy powdered confectionery		a type of frozen dessert (also spelled <i>sherbert</i>)
sheriff	chief royal peace officer of a county, now (as <i>high sheriff</i>) largely only a ceremonial role (England and Wales) local judge, in full <i>sheriff-depute</i> or <i>sheriff-substitute</i> (Scotland)		elected chief legal officer of a county, usu. also in charge of the county's law enforcement service; elsewhere any member of a county (vs. state or local) police
shingle	pebbles, particularly those on the seashore *	to cut a woman's hair in an overlapping style (<i>shingles</i>) a painful disease of the skin, caused by the chickenpox virus wooden roof tile to cover a roof with wooden tiles	sign proclaiming one's name and calling ("hang a shingle out") to cover something like a shingled roof
ship (verb), shipping		To transport goods by sea, movement of goods by sea Relationship (fandom)	To transport goods, movement of goods <i>Shipping & handling</i> , standard form of charge for delivery of goods (UK: <i>Postage & packing</i>)
shop	consumer retail establishment of any size (US: <i>store</i>); hence <i>shopfront</i> (US: <i>storefront</i>), <i>shop-soiled</i> (US: <i>shopworn</i>), <i>shop assistant</i> (US: <i>sales clerk</i>) workshop, only in combination ("machine shop")		small or specialized consumer retail establishment (e.g. <i>coffee shop</i> , <i>dress shop</i>) workshop; practical class at school taught in a workshop; US <i>auto shop</i> = Br. <i>garage</i> , <i>car mechanic</i> .
shorts	strong alcoholic drinks served in multiples of 25 ml, sometimes with mixers (US & UK also: <i>shots</i>)	short trousers (US: short pants)	underpants, boxers (<i>take it in one's shorts</i>) endure a painful situation ("He really took it in the shorts that time.")
shower		spray of water used to wash oneself	a celebratory party where gifts are given to an individual e.g. a baby shower

		a short period of rain	to celebrate an imminent birth
sic		Latin for "Thus", "just so" — states that the preceding quoted material appears exactly that way in the source, usu. despite errors of spelling, grammar, usage, or fact.	pronunciation spelling of "seek" used as a dog command, and by extension as a verb meaning to set (as a dog, etc.) to attack someone ("I'll sic my attorney on you")
sick	(<i>off sick</i>) not at work because of illness (n.) vomit ("a puddle of sick")	(to <i>be sick</i>) to vomit (slang) disgusting (corruption of <i>sickening</i>) (slang) cool, good, interesting	unwell (<i>out sick</i>) not at work because of illness
sideboard	(pl.) sideburns, side-whiskers	an item of furniture also known as <i>buffet</i>	
siding		a dead-end railway track leading off the main line and used to store rolling-stock	a short section of railroad track connected by switches with a main track, enabling trains on the same line to pass (UK: <i>loop</i>) external wall covering, cladding, weatherboarding
silencer	device to silence a car/automobile (US: <i>muffler</i>)	device to silence a firearm	
silk	a Queen's Counsel	material made from unwound silkworm cocoons (<i>silky</i>) smooth, having the texture of silk (cf., <i>silky</i> words)	the silky, pistillate flower of corn (maize) a parachute (orig. slang of the United States Air Force)
silverware	things made from silver, including bowls, spoons, etc. Also trophies won by a sports team (i.e. FA Cup, Challenge Cup...)		eating implements (spoon, fork, knife) (UK: <i>cutlery</i> ; US also <i>flatware</i>)
skillet	(regional dialect) a frying pan a type of stir-fried food item		a frying pan, often cast iron a long-handled stewing pan or saucepan, often having short legs or feet
skip (n.)	large rubbish container (US approx: <i>Dumpster</i>)	an act of leaping or omitting; see skip (radio), skip (in audio playback)	one who disappears without paying their debts ("finding a good skip tracer is harder than finding your debtors") (UK: <i>Gone Away</i>)
skive (v.)	to avoid work or school (play truant)	v. to cut or pare leather/rubber; n. an indentation made from skiving	
skivvy	a scullery maid or lowest servant doing menial work, somebody at the bottom of the pecking order	[origin of both senses is unknown; they are likely unrelated] [note that skivvy has a third distinct meaning in Australian English]	(pl.) men's underwear (colloquial)
slag	(derogatory) promiscuous woman (US & UK also: <i>slut</i>) a general insult directed at someone of either sex	A product from the iron-smelting blast furnace; mainly used in tarmac production	
slash	(colloq.) an act of urinating ("to have a slash")	to cut drastically the symbol '/' (orig. US) (also <i>virgule</i> , <i>solidus</i> ; UK also: <i>oblique</i> , <i>stroke</i>)	an open tract in a forest strewn with debris, especially from logging a swampy area
slate	(v.) to disparage ("many critics have slated the film"), hence <i>slating</i>	(n.) a type of rock; a greyish colour (v.) to cover with slate	(v.) to schedule *("slated for demolition") to designate (a candidate, as for political office) (n.) a list of candidates
sleepers	A horizontal member which lies beneath, and binds together, the rails of a railway. (US: <i>railroad tie</i> , <i>crosstie</i>)	A railway vehicle providing sleeping accommodation (a sleeping car). Sleepers agent - A deep cover secret agent	Sleeper (automobile), an automobile modified for high performance but with a normal-looking exterior (UK: <i>Q-car</i>)

sleet	snow that has partially thawed on its fall to the ground		(partially) frozen raindrops, ice pellets; a mixture of rain and snow or hail; also, glaze (q.v.)
slough (wetland)	(usu. pronounced /ˈslaʊ/, to rhyme with "plough")	a marshy area, a swamp	a secondary channel; a small backwater; a pond (usu. pronounced /ˈsluː/ and often spelled <i>slew</i>)
Smarties	a sugar-coated chocolate confectionery manufactured by Nestlé (similar to US <i>M&M's</i>)		a fruit-flavored tablet candy produced by Ce De Candy, Inc
smashed		beaten, destroyed as in "it was smashed"	Exceedingly drunk
smokestack		a system (as a pipe) for venting hot gases and smoke: such a system on buildings, locomotives (UK primarily: <i>chimney</i> or <i>funnel</i>), and ships (UK & US also: <i>funnel</i>)	(attrib.) heavy industry, manufacturing industry *("smokestack industries", "smokestack stocks")
smudge		a blurry spot or streak	a smouldering mass placed on the windward side to protect from frost or keep insects away (as in smudge pot)
snout	police informant tobacco (slang)	pig's nose nose (slang)	
sod	unpleasant person, originally short for sodomite ("He's a sod, isn't he?") unfortunate person when prefixed by 'poor' ("The poor sod's had his wallet nicked.") or 'silly' ("The silly sod really got it knackered.")	layer of grass and earth (in UK in a formal/literary sense)	turf
soda	carbonated water, or any non-alcoholic drink made with it, but not usu. one sold ready-mixed	any of various chemical compounds containing sodium (as sodium bicarbonate or sodium carbonate), carbonated water	(regional) carbonated soft drink, usu. one sold ready-mixed (also 'pop,' 'soda pop') (UK: <i>fizzy drink</i> or colloquially (<i>fizzy</i>) <i>pop</i>)
solicitor	lawyer who advises clients, represents them in the lower courts, and prepares cases for barristers to try in higher courts *(considered overly formal in US)		one that solicits (e.g. contributions to charity), an advertiser, a salesperson, a promoter; often annoying chief law officer of a city, town, or government department
solitaire	peg-jumping puzzle game (see peg solitaire)		any of a family of one-player card games (see solitaire) (UK: <i>patience</i>)
sort (v.)	to deal with; hence <i>sorted</i> as expression of appreciation; (slang) to be adequately supplied with narcotics all used with <i>out</i> : to arrange or take care of (something) * to solve an esp. difficult situation (also reflexive) * (informal) to set (someone) straight, or to get even with (someone) <i>sorted</i> , to have or get fixed, have problems worked out, so things are working correctly ("He's really got it sorted now.")	to arrange or classify; often used with <i>out</i>	
spanner	general term for a tool used for turning nuts, bolts, etc. (US: <i>wrench</i> , q.v.) something interfering (US:		a wrench with holes or pins at its end for meshing with the object to be turned (UK: <i>C spanner</i>)

	(<i>monkey wrench</i>)		
spaz	(offensive) Incompetent, useless, disabled person (from spastic, person with cerebral palsy)		uncoordinated, hyperactive, messing something up. Can be used self-referentially. Has less offensive connotations in American usage.
spigot		a spile in a cask	a tap or faucet
spook		a ghost; a spy, government undercover agent (both orig. US)	a black person (insulting)
spotty	pimply ("a spotty teenager")		of inhomogeneous quality ("a spotty record")
sprouts (n.)	brussels sprouts		alfalfa sprouts
spunk	(vulgar) seminal fluid (US: <i>cum</i>)	courage, daring, or enthusiasm	
squash (n.)	fruit cordial drink (squash (drink))	sport (squash (sport))*	vegetable (squash (plant))* (UK also gourd)
squat		(n.) premises occupied by squatters (v.) to occupy (as premises) illegally to bend deeply at the knees while resting on one's feet (n.) the act of squatting an exercise in weightlifting	(n.) nothing (slang; short for <i>diddly-squat</i>) (more at <i>cop</i>)
stabiliser (UK), stabilizer (US & UK)	(pl.) additional wheels to help learner cyclists (US: <i>training wheels</i>)	something that stabilises, as stabilizer (aircraft) or stabilizer (chemistry)	
stall (enclosure)	(pl.) front seats in a theatre (US: <i>orchestra</i>)	compartment for an animal in a barn a booth or counter (as in a marketplace) seat in a church's choir	compartment containing a shower or toilet (UK: <i>cubicle</i>) a marked-off parking space enclosure for a locomotive in a roundhouse (<i>box stall</i>) compartment in a barn where an animal can move untethered (UK: <i>loose box</i>)
stand (v.)	to be a candidate in an election *(US: <i>run</i>)	to be vertical; to remain stationary; to buy (someone) (something)	
starter	first course of a meal *(US usu. <i>appetizer</i>); more s.v. <i>entree</i>	one that starts (as a device to start an engine)	transportation dispatcher or elevator (q.v.) dispatcher starting pitcher (baseball) the official who starts a track race.
stash	(v.) to quit, put an end to ("to stash it")	(v.) to store away [old criminals' slang revived in US]	(n.) a hiding place, or something (esp. drug or liquor) stored away*
stone	(pl. usu. <i>stone</i>) 14 pounds in weight (14 lb), normally used when specifying a person's weight ("My weight is twelve stone four", meaning 12 stone and 4 pounds; US "172 pounds")	a small rock	
stood	(colloquial, mainly Northern English) standing ("I've been stood here for an hour")	past tense and participle of <i>stand</i>	
stoop	A post or pillar, especially a gatepost. (Rare except in dialect).	forwards bend of the spine bringing the shoulders in front of the hips dive of a predatory bird towards its prey	raised porch or entrance veranda (orig. Dutch; esp. Northeast). Also refers to the external stairs leading up to a row house, "Sitting on the stoop."
store	place for storage of items not needed for immediate use*	large consumer retail establishment (as <i>department store</i> or <i>superstore</i>)	consumer retail establishment of any size (UK: <i>shop</i>), e.g. <i>grocery store</i> , <i>hardware store</i> , <i>convenience store</i> , <i>dime store</i> ; hence <i>storefront</i> (UK: <i>shopfront</i>), <i>storekeeper</i>

			(UK: <i>shopkeeper</i>)
stove	a hothouse or greenhouse for plants the grate of a fireplace	wood- or coal-burning room-heating appliance	(or <i>cookstove</i>) appliance for cooking food *– compare <i>range</i> (UK usu. <i>cooker</i>) see also <i>Franklin stove</i>
straight away, straightaway	(usu. spaced) immediately, right away *		(solid) a straight (in a road, racecourse, etc.)
strike	a good solid shot, as in scoring a goal in soccer (<i>Strike off</i>) to remove a professional's license (e.g., for attorneys: US <i>disbar</i>) ("What do you call a priest who's been stricken off?" – Dick Francis)	to temporarily stop working (often as part of a union) knock down all pins in bowling to ignite a match	to miss, as to miss the ball with the bat in baseball, (<i>strike three, three strikes</i>) (colloq., from baseball) gone, fired, ejected; said of someone especially after they've been given three chances to improve their (presumably) bad behavior ("Strike three, he's out!")
student		person studying at a post-secondary educational institution	person studying at any educational institution *
stuff (v)	to have sex - often used as a milder form of "fuck", e.g. "Get stuffed!" *(for "Fuck off!"), "Our team got stuffed in the match", etc.	to pack tightly with, especially with food: "I'm stuffed"="I've eaten too much".	
sub	to subsidise (pay for something in place of someone else - often used for any sort of informal loan) (in newspaper publishing) edit copy for length or house style (in full: <i>sub-edit</i>) subscription (UK: membership dues, as in an association or club) sub-lieutenant (Royal Navy rank) subaltern (British Army second lieutenant or lieutenant)	subscription: a purchase by prepayment for a certain number of issues, as of a periodical submarine (n. & v.) substitute (usu. in sport) (sexual) submissive	substitute teacher (UK: <i>supply teacher</i>) to teach in place of the normal teacher (regional) submarine sandwich*
subdivision		the process or an instance of subdividing	the division of a tract of land into lots (q.v.) for the purpose of sale, or the tract of land so divided. (UK: <i>estate, development</i>)
subway	pedestrian underpass Glasgow subterranean railway	(<i>Subway</i>) restaurant chain for submarine sandwiches	underground commuter railway (UK: <i>Underground</i>)
sucker		One who sucks (lit. and fig.): fool, dupe, gullible person Secondary shoot produced from the roots of a plant	A lollipop any person or thing (used either humorously or in annoyance)
suds		(n.) froth, lather; (v.) to lather	(v.) to form suds; hence <i>sudser</i> (a soap opera) and adj. <i>sudsy</i> (in both lit. & fig. senses) (n.) beer, less commonly root beer
superintendent	senior police rank (US approx.: <i>deputy inspector</i>)	senior official in various undertakings (railways, public works, etc.)	person in charge of a building (UK: <i>caretaker</i>) the head of a school district or a State Department of Education sometimes, the head of a police department (dated) a train conductor
surgery	the place where a physician or dentist practises (US: (<i>doctor's</i>) <i>office</i>)	act of performing a medical operation	
suspenders	elasticated support for stockings (US: <i>garter</i>)		elasticated support for trousers (UK: <i>braces</i> , q.v.)
swede	Swedish (yellow) turnip (US:	(<i>Swede</i>) a person from	

	<i>rutabaga</i>)	Sweden	
sweet	(n.) An after-meal dessert, more s.v. <i>candy</i>	(adj.) Sweet-tasting; (adj.) to describe someone who is kind, gentle, or giving	(n.) Short for sweetheart. Also, to be sweet on someone is to have a crush on them. (adj.) used to describe something as good ("That car is sweet!")
switch		(n.) see switch, telephone switch, network switch (v.) to operate a switch to exchange, swap, make a shift	(n.) mechanism that allows a railway vehicle to change tracks (UK: <i>points</i>); hence <i>switch engine</i> or <i>switcher</i> (UK: <i>shunter</i>), <i>switchyard</i> (UK: <i>marshalling yard</i>), <i>switch tower</i> (UK: <i>signal box</i>) (v.) to change tracks by means of a switch see also <i>bait and switch</i>
switchback	a road or railway that alternately ascends and descends a roller coaster		a zigzagging road or railway, usu. in the mountains; also, a hairpin turn in a road or trail

T

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
tab	a cigarette (Geordie) to run; often used in the military to refer to double-time or quick-time marching. From the abbreviation Tactical Advance to Battle.	a small projection, flap, etc. an informal credit account, usu. at a bar ("Put it on my tab") The tab key, 		a formal account for services at a restaurant or bar ("May I have the tab?", "Pick up the tab") (UK always <i>bill</i> in this context) A brand of soft drink (<i>keep tabs on</i>) monitor the activity of a person or thing
table (verb) (as a parliamentary procedure or in the context of a meeting)	(also <i>lay on the table</i>) to raise for consideration		(also <i>lay on the table</i>) to suspend from consideration, to shelve; (colloquial) to postpone
tailback	queue of vehicles, traffic jam (US: <i>gridlock</i> , <i>backup</i>)		offensive backfield position in American football
tank top	jumper (US: <i>sweater</i>) without sleeves		sleeveless t-shirt (UK: <i>vest</i> , q.v.) (also see <i>wifebeater</i>) *
tanner	slang for a pre-decimalisation sixpence coin or sixpence value	one who tans	
tap	valve through which liquid is drawn and dispensed *(US usu.: <i>faucet</i> , <i>spigot</i>)	a spile or spigot in a cask; a device for dispensing beer from a keg (<i>phone tap</i>) a device for listening to other people's telephone	to select, designate; esp. to publicly select for a special honour from one's peers as in the (possibly apocryphal) American Indian

		calls (<i>tap up</i>) to covertly enter negotiations ("The manager accused the other team of tapping up his player") (<i>tap dance</i>) A type of dance e.g. "I go to tap every Saturday"	ceremony ("She was tapped for the position of CEO") and as in being designated a college fraternity pledge. vulgar slang for "have sex with"
tart	female prostitute (In US, generally understood but not generally used except in <i>pop tart</i> [overly sexualised female singer])	(adj) sour-flavoured, sarcastic (n) any of several forms of sweet dessert or snack consisting of filling (usually fruit) in a pastry shell saucy, promiscuous woman (<i>derog.</i>)	
tea	afternoon snack (US: <i>late lunch</i>) evening meal (sometimes called <i>high tea</i>)	a hot beverage made by infusing <i>Camellia sinensis</i> leaves (<i>hot tea</i>); <i>Herb tea</i> a tea-like beverage made from herbs (UK <i>infusion</i> (archaic))	<i>Iced tea</i> sometimes taken with lemon or sugar
on the telephone	having a working telephone (now rare, since most people do)	talking on the telephone	
teller		one that tells (as stories) a person who counts the votes in an election	a bank clerk or cashier who receives and pays out money*; hence automated teller machine
terrace	row of identical or mirror-image houses sharing side walls *(US: <i>row house, townhouse</i>)	a type of veranda or walkway or area close to a building see also terrace (agriculture), terrace garden, fluvial terrace	(regional) parking (q.v.)
terrier	member of the Territorial Army (slang). Also, record of land ownership (e.g. by local authority).	one of various smallish breeds of dog	
theatre (UK	(or <i>operating theatre</i>) hospital room for surgical operations	a place where	cinema

& US), theater (US)	(US: <i>operating room</i>)	stage plays are performed a principle region of conflict in a war	("movie/motion picture theater")
through (time)	For a period of time, during. For example <i>it is open through the night</i> means it is open during the night time. More usual in British English is to say "Open until 6pm Monday".		Up to, until. <i>The shop is open through lunch</i> means it closes at lunch time, whereas in British English it would mean it is open including at lunch time.
tick	the symbol ✓ (US: <i>check mark</i>) a moment ("just a tick") credit ("on tick")	blood-sucking arachnid (see tick) sound of an analogue clock	
tick off	to admonish		to annoy to keep a record of tasks ("He ticked off a list of things that needed to be done beforehand.")
tie	a game between two teams e.g. Manchester won the tie against London	an article of clothing worn around the neck a game result in which neither player/team wins (also <i>draw</i>)	
tights	nylons, usu. sheer, which also cover the groin (US: <i>pantyhose</i> if sheer)		skin-tight, often opaque, trousers (UK: <i>leggings</i>) or one-piece trousers and top (UK: <i>unitard</i>), such as worn by gymnasts
tip	(n.) a place where rubbish is disposed (US: <i>dump</i> (also UK), <i>landfill</i>) (v.) to pour	(n.) pointed or narrow end advice voluntary gratuity paid (as at a restaurant) (v.) (<i>tip off</i>) to advise (v.) to (cause to) lean to one side	(<i>tip one's hand</i> , from Poker) to disclose one's intentions or opinions
tit	various species of small bird of the genus <i>Parus</i> (US: <i>chickadee</i> , <i>titmouse</i>) idiot (slang)	woman's breast (vulgar slang)	
toasted (v)		lightly cooked on both sides (e.g. of a slice of bread)	somewhat drunk (related <i>toast</i>) in trouble ("When the boss catches him, he's

			toast!" "Oh man, we're toast!")
toilet	room containing a toilet (US: <i>restroom</i>) "I left my comb in the toilet," is perfectly acceptable in UK but likely to provoke a visual in American English	apparatus for excretion	
tom	prostitute -- hence <i>tomming</i> (pp.), the activity of prostitution a private in the Parachute Regiment (slang)	unneutered male cat	
torch	handheld device that emits light (US: <i>flashlight</i>)	flaming club used as a light source	(v.) commit an act of arson. (n.) an arsonist.
tosser	idiot *(literally, someone who masturbates, a derogatory term similar to <i>wanker</i>)	one that tosses	not a hoarder; someone who gets rid of things i.e. "are you a keeper or tosser?"
tough (interj.)		I don't care	that's unfortunate (short for "tough luck")
tout	(v.) to resell tickets at higher prices (US: <i>scalp</i>) to get and sell information on racehorses (n.) one who resells tickets (US: <i>scalper</i>) one who gets and sells information on racehorses (n.) a police informer (mainly used in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland [4] (http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2001/nov/11/northernireland2) [5] (http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/Republican-denies-being-MI5-informer.3399551.jp)) (US: <i>stool pigeon</i> , England: <i>grass</i>)	(v.) to importune, solicit, or canvass (n.) one who does this [the n. appears to be in more general use in UK; cf. s.v. US <i>solicitor</i>]	(v.) to promote, recommend ("the movie was touted as a masterpiece")
tower, tower block	a fortified keep, too small to be named a "castle", e.g. along the English/Scottish Border ("a peel tower"), along the English coast & elsewhere (inc. occas. U.S. Eastern Seaboard) ("a Martello tower"), around the Jersey (Channel Islands) coast ("a Jersey tower"); tower block — a high-rise <i>block</i> (q.v.) of flats	man-made structure, taller than it is wide (see control tower, watchtower, water tower)	power line transmission structure (UK usu. & US occas. <i>pylon</i> , q.v.); railroad building containing levers for working <i>switches</i> (q.v.) and signals ("an interlocking tower") (UK: <i>signal box</i>) hence <i>towerman</i> , person in charge of any such tower (UK, for a signal box: <i>signalman</i>)
townhouse, town house	historically, residence of a peer or member of the aristocracy in the capital or major city (Scots) town hall (modern usage) a fashionable urban house, usu. terraced	a house in town (as opposed to one in the country)	one of two or more single-family houses of uniform design and joined by common sidewalls *(US also <i>rowhouse</i> , UK usu. <i>terraced house</i> for more than two, or <i>semi(-detached)</i> for two joined houses)
township	in the past, a subdivision used to administer a large parish (Scotland) a very small agricultural community		an approx. 36-square-mile

			(93 km ²) division of land comprising 36 sections a unit of local government, see <i>civil township</i>
track		a trail a footprint awareness ("keep/lose track") recorded material distance between wheels of a vehicle a racetrack or racecourse the rails of a railway (UK often: <i>line</i>)	used in railway stations (as with following number) to denote the place where a train arrives at and departs from ("Is that the Chattanooga choo choo, track 29?") (UK: <i>platform</i>) track and field, athletics, esp. the sports performed on the running track categorisation of students according to their needs
tradesman, tradesperson	a person who sells goods in a store; a person who travels to customers' homes to sell things or who delivers goods to a customer's home		(n.) a skilled manual worker in a particular field; a journeyman
trainer	a padded sport shoe (US similar: <i>sneaker</i>)	one who trains	
tramp		homeless person who moves (tramps) from town to town (US also: <i>hobo</i>)	loose or promiscuous woman (see also tramp stamp); prostitute *
transit		act or instance of passing see astronomical transit, navigational transit, transit (surveying)	means of public transportation (q.v.) (esp. of people) ("mass transit", "rapid transit", "public transit") – see Public transport
transport	the system or the business of transporting goods or passengers or the vehicles used in such a system ("public transport") *	the act of transporting an emotion ("transports of delight")	
transportation		the act of transporting penal transportation	the system or the business of transporting goods or passengers or the vehicles used in such a system *
trapezium	a quadrilateral with one pair of parallel sides		a quadrilateral with no parallel sides
trapezoid	a quadrilateral with no parallel sides	in anatomy, the trapezoid	a quadrilateral with one pair

		bone and trapezoid ligament	of parallel sides *
trick		(n.) an action intended to deceive an effective way of doing something	(n.) what a prostitute does for a client (adj.) unstable (of a joint of the body) *
trillion	(traditionally) million million million (10 ¹⁸) (US & modern UK: <i>quintillion</i>)	million million (10 ¹²) (traditional UK: <i>billion</i> , now rare)	
trim (n.)		good condition ("in trim") clothing, decoration a finishing haircut adjustment (as of sails on a vessel or airfoils on an aircraft) an automobile interior ornamentation or upholstery (orig. US)	woodwork, frameworks etc. in a house storefront or shopfront display (slang, somewhat offensive) Female genitalia (usu. as "Get some trim")
triplex		composed of three parts, as a type of cardboard, a cinema, etc.	a 3-storey apartment or 3-apartment dwelling (see <i>duplex</i>) a large steam locomotive with three sets of driving wheels
trolley	cart or wheeled stand used for conveying something (as food or books) ("a supermarket trolley"; "a tea trolley") (US: see s.v. <i>cart</i> , <i>wagon</i>) (<i>off one's trolley</i>) insane (<i>trolleyed</i>) very drunk	a mechanism that rolls along a suspended rail or track	(or <i>trolley car</i>) a streetcar (UK: <i>tram</i>) electrically powered by means of a trolley; hence <i>trolley line</i> , <i>trolley road</i> , and <i>trackless trolley</i> (a trolleybus)
troop	to carry (the flag or colors) in a ceremonial way before troops	a group of persons, particularly in a military or scouting context. Generally, a group of two or more platoons and headquarters staff. (pl.) soldiers, members of the military (we sent 3000 troops)	
trooper	cavalry horse troopship (obs.) rank held by a private in the Household Cavalry, Royal Armoured Corps or SAS		state police officer ("state trooper") (slang) a heroic

			person that prevails against the odds or takes on a difficult labor without complaint (originally 'trouper')
truck	railway vehicle for carrying goods; can be open ("a coal truck") or covered ("a cattle truck") – cf. s.v. <i>wagon</i>	any of various vehicles for carrying esp. things or animals, as a forklift truck or a pickup truck	motor vehicle for carrying heavy cargo *(UK usu. <i>lorry</i>); see also <i>garbage truck</i> (UK: <i>dustcart</i>), <i>truck stop</i> (UK: <i>transport cafe</i>) produce grown for the market; hence <i>truck farm</i> (UK: <i>market garden</i>) a hand truck (UK: <i>trolley</i>) in a railroad car, the undercarriage assembly incorporating wheels, suspension, and brakes (UK: <i>bogie</i>) (v.) to transport by or drive a truck; to move around carelessly
trunk	primary road (<i>trunk road</i>) (<i>trunk call</i>) long-distance telephone call (dated)	the human torso the main stem of a tree large (person-sized) container (also <i>travelling chest</i>) proboscis, particularly that of an elephant	storage compartment of a car (UK: <i>boot</i>) (<i>trunk line</i>) a main railway line (as from Chicago to New York City) (UK: <i>main line</i>)
tube	(often cap.) the London subterranean railway system ("the London Underground"); (sometimes incorrectly applied to that of other cities, e.g. "the Berlin tube")	a cylindrical structure or device	television
turnout	strike, walkout	number of people taking part in an event ("voter turnout") a railroad switch or point equipment output	a place along a highway for slower cars to pull over, in order to let others pass, or for brief parking (UK: <i>layby</i>)
twat	someone who is being stupid *(offensive; considered vulgar by some) to hit someone or something hard ("say that again and I'll twat you!" (pronounced /'twæt/))	vulva (vulgar) (pronounced /'twɒt/)	(chiefly late 1970s, early 1980s) a jerk; someone acting inappropriately; an ass (q.v.)
twister		something that twists; see also Twister (game)	a tornado

tyke	someone from Yorkshire (informal, sometimes disparaging)	term of endearment for a child, like "little rascal"	a young animal
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U

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
underground	(often cap.) subterranean railway system, esp. the ones in London & Glasgow (US: <i>subway</i> or <i>metro</i>) -- see also <i>tube</i>	subterranean illicit a subterranean space or channel grapevine (in the sense of an informal communication network)	(<i>Underground Railroad</i> or <i>Railway</i>) (before 1863) the network of clandestine routes by which slaves were helped to escape to free states and Canada
us	objective case of I (i.e. alternative to "me") (informal), esp. in the North of England ("lend us a tenner")	objective case of we ("he saw us")	

V

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
vacation	(UK also: <i>vac</i>)	period between university terms	(n.) time off from work or school recreational trip away from home (UK: <i>holiday</i> for both senses) (v.) to take a vacation
valve	Vacuum tube, as in pre-1960 electronics	a device to control the flow of liquids or gases	
vanity		pride in one's appearance	a sink-unit in a bathroom
vest	garment, usu. sleeveless, worn under a shirt (US: <i>undershirt</i> or <i>beater</i>) sleeveless garment worn as an only visible top		sleeveless garment worn over a shirt (UK: <i>waistcoat</i>) (e.g. ballistic vest *)
vet		(n.) veterinarian (v.) to appraise or verify for accuracy or validity	war veteran or a person who has served honorably in the military
veterinary	(n.) veterinarian	(a.) pertaining to the medical science of caring of animals	
visit (v.)		(trans.) to go and see (a person or place)	(intrans.) to pay a visit, stay as a guest, or be engaged in informal conversation ("visiting together", "visit with a friend")

W

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
waffle	(v.) to speak to no purpose; ramble	A type of pancake with a pattern of square dents in it, made in a waffle iron.	(v.) to equivocate, waver, speak evasively
wagon	railway vehicle for transporting goods (US: <i>freight car</i>)	4-wheeled orig. animal-drawn vehicle (UK also spelled <i>waggon</i> esp. in the past); state of abstaining from alcohol (orig. US slang) a delivery van ("the milk wagon")	small wheeled food service table (UK: <i>trolley</i>); see also paddy wagon (used in the UK, but non PC), station wagon, chuckwagon, wagon train
walk out, walkout	(v.) "walk out with", to be romantically involved with (archaic)	(v.) to leave a meeting in protest to strike (orig. US)	(adj.) (of a room in a building) featuring outdoor access; (n.) such an access ("full walkout

		to abandon someone, or to drop out ("she walked out on me") (orig. US) (n.) a kind of strike action (orig. US) the act of leaving a meeting in protest	basement", "walkout to the deck") (n.) one who goes out of a store or shop without buying anything
walking stick		(n.) a stick to aid with walking	(n.) a type of insect (UK : <i>Stick Insect</i>)
warden	any of various officials *(a "traffic warden") an official in certain universities	gener., one in charge of something	official in charge of a prison *(UK usu. <i>governor</i>) in compounds: <i>fire warden</i>
wash up	to wash the dishes; to clean <i>after</i> eating food, hence <i>washing-up liquid</i> (US <i>dish soap</i>)		to wash one's hands and face; to clean <i>before</i> eating food
watershed	(orig. sense, now nontech.) a ridge of hills (which "sheds water") separating two river drainage basins; water parting *(old-fashioned or nontechnical in US; US usu. <i>divide</i>) the time of day before which programme content of a specified or implied kind may not be screened and after which it is permissible	(fig.) a turning point	a drainage basin/water catchment area (shift from orig. sense) *
well	really (colloquial, used for emphasis) ("that was well funny")	adverb of good healthy, in good form pit sunk to obtain water or oil	
wicked	(interjection) used for something very good, astounding or interesting ("Wicked!")*	(adj.) evil; fierce; roguish; vile	(adverb) very (esp. New England) ("Wicked good")
wifebeater, wife-beater	(slang) the beer Stella Artois (perh. also related to "A Streetcar Named Desire")	(<i>wife beater</i>) one who beats up his wife	a sleeveless shirt (such as that worn by Marlon Brando in "A Streetcar Named Desire") *(also Scotland)
wing (vehicles)	panel of a car that encloses the wheel area (US: <i>fender</i>)	apparatus used to create lift in aeronautics a type of spoiler (on racecars) the act of carrying out an activity with little or no planning, To wing something, "Let's wing it!" (slang)	
wing commander	air force officer rank (US equivalent: <i>lieutenant colonel</i>)		a duty title for an air force officer, typically a full colonel or a brigadier general, who commands a wing (Note American wings are larger formations than British wings)
wingnut	(n.) derogatory term for a person with prominent, sticking out, ears	(n.) a nut with projections to allow application of greater torque with the fingers a type of tree	(n.) (mild) a crazy or strange person Wingnut (politics), an uncomplimentary term for someone of right-wing or conservative views
wink	(n.) "winker", slang term for a turn indicator (US: see <i>blinker</i>)	(n. & v.) the closing of one eye	
wrangle (v.)		to bicker or quarrel angrily and noisily	(esp. West) to herd horses or other livestock; back-formation from <i>wrangler</i> to achieve through contrivance; to wangle
wreck (n.)		shipwreck that which remains of something wrecked someone who is unwell or out of sorts (e.g. "nervous wreck")	a usu. major road, rail, or air accident or collision

wrench		a sudden pull or twist emotional distress	a tool used for tightening nuts and bolts *(used in UK chiefly in combination, e.g. <i>torque wrench</i>) something disrupting (often <i>monkey wrench</i>) ("that will throw a monkey wrench into my plans") (UK usu. <i>spanner</i> for both senses)
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X

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
xerox		the Xerox Corporation	(n.) A photocopied document * (v.) To photocopy *

Y

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
yankee, yank	(sometimes disparaging, esp. when shortened to <i>yank</i>)	someone from the U.S.	(n.)1. A patriot from the American Revolution; 2. a New Englander; in the South, someone from the Northern US (often disparaging). A Minnesotan would not consider himself a Yankee or use the word regularly, but would consider someone from Connecticut to be a yankee; a Texan would consider both yankees, but not himself, and would be much more likely to use the word; 3. a player for the New York Yankees baseball team
yard		a courtyard an enclosed space used for a particular activity (as a railway service area, a lumberyard or timber yard, a junkyard, etc.) a unit of length	enclosed area of land surrounding a dwelling, usu. comprising lawn and play area (UK usu.: <i>garden</i>) (<i>yard sale</i>) see garage sale a campus (e.g. Harvard Yard) a place (as in a forest) where deer gather in winter 100 dollars (slang) a billion (slang, finance) <i>go yard</i> , to hit a home run

Z

Word	British English meanings	Meanings common to British and American English	American English meanings
z	(pronounced /'zɛd/)	the last letter of the alphabet	(pronounced /'zi:/) a nap ("to catch some z's") zero or no ("I have z cash right now.")
zebra	(<i>zebra crossing</i>) a type of pedestrian crossing (pronounced /'zɛbrə/) *	an African equine mammal	a referee (as in American football) (from their striped uniforms) (pronounced /'zi:brə/) police car (slang)
zip	(short for <i>zip fastener</i>) a fastening device (US: <i>zipper</i>)	a sharp, hissing sound impetus file format for compressed files ("archive.zip")	zero (often in scores, similar to the UK's <i>nil</i>) (often all cap.) the ZIP code (from <i>Zone Improvement Plan</i>), the postal code used by the USPS

See also

- List of words having different meanings in British and American English: A-L
- List of British words not widely used in the United States

References

Further reading

Note: the below are general references on this topic. Individual entries have not yet been audited against the references below and readers looking for *verifiable* information should consult the works below unless individual entries in the article's table are properly sourced.

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External links

- The Septic's Companion: A British Slang Dictionary (<http://septiccompanion.com>) – an online dictionary of British slang, viewable alphabetically or by category

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