How to understand the differences between British and American English

Learn some common words that are used differently in British and American English.

Tasks
Do the preparation task first. Then watch the video and do the task. You can read the transcript at any time.

Preparation task
Put the words in the correct group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>an elevator</th>
<th>a can of fizzy drink</th>
<th>a bag of chips</th>
<th>a sidewalk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a can of soda</td>
<td>a movie</td>
<td>a pavement</td>
<td>a packet of crisps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a film</td>
<td>a serving of French fries</td>
<td>a lift</td>
<td>a portion of chips</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>British</th>
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Task 1
Match the American English words (1–7) with the British English words (a–g).

American English words  | British English words |
-------------------------|-----------------------|
1. ..... French fries    | a. trousers           |
2. ..... elevator        | b. chips              |
3. ..... sidewalk        | c. crisps             |
4. ..... pants           | d. fizzy drink        |
5. ..... movie           | e. lift               |
6. ..... chips           | f. pavement           |
7. ..... soda            | g. film               |

Discussion
Do you know of any other differences between British and American English?
Transcript

Man: Hey! Nice pants!
Woman: Excuse me?
Man: I said, ‘nice pants’.
Woman: You can’t see my pants, can you?
Man: Of course I can.
Woman: How can you see my pants?
Man: They’re on your legs!
Woman: Ha. You haven’t been to America recently, have you?
Man: Oh, I, er, have, actually. I’ve just got back from LA! That’s ‘Los Angeles’ by the way.
Woman: I know.
Man: Yeah, I picked up some of the American words, and now I forget which ones to use! So confusing!
Woman: Well, we call these ‘trousers’ in Britain.
Man: Of course we do. You know there are so many things, though. It’s like a completely different language sometimes!
Woman: Really?
Man: Yeah!
Woman: Would you like a crisp?
Man: Crisps? In the States, they’re ‘chips’!
Woman: Oh. So if I want to order our chips in America, what do I ask for?
Man: French fries!
Woman: I see.
Man: And you know what that is, don’t you?
Woman: A fizzy drink.
Man: That’s a ‘soda’!
Woman: Hmm …
Man: You know the lift over there?
Woman: Yeah?
Man: That’s an ‘elevator’.
Woman: Oh really?
Man: You know in the States, you don’t go to watch a film …
Woman: You watch a ‘movie’!
Man: Exactly! And you don’t walk on the pavement …
Woman: You walk on the ‘sidewalk’!
Man: You got it!
Woman: I’ve watched a lot of films … oops … movies!
Answers

Preparation task

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Task 1
1. b
2. e
3. f
4. a
5. g
6. c
7. d