

# 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.

an elevator	a can of fizzy drink	a bag of chips	a sidewalk
a can of soda	a movie	a pavement	a packet of crisps
a film	a serving of French fries	a lift	a portion of chips

American	British

### Task 1

Match the American English words (1–7) with the British English words (a–g).

#### American English words

1. .... French fries
2. .... elevator
3. .... sidewalk
4. .... pants
5. .... movie
6. .... chips
7. .... soda

#### British English words

- a. trousers
- b. chips
- c. crisps
- d. fizzy drink
- e. lift
- f. pavement
- 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**

American	British
a bag of chips	a packet of crisps
a serving of French fries	a portion of chips
a can of soda	a can of fizzy drink
an elevator	a lift
a movie	a film
a sidewalk	a pavement

**Task 1**

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