

AMERICAN ENGLISH FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS
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Historically we study the British version of the English language is school or university. And we better know all the grammatical, pronunciation, lexical features that are special for this variant of language.

Some specialists say that American English is the lighter version of English language, with an impact of French, Spanish, Dutch, Injun and some other languages.

First of all, I can say that American version is more tolerant to word meanings and to changing in its pronunciation. For example, American intonation is not so variable during the phrase, they have just two of them *flat intonation* and *downward intonation*.

What is more, they have some changes in word emphasis, such as *address*, *cafe* in British English (BA) versus *address*, *cafe* in American English (AE). And, it seems like almost all words with the letter A sound more with American [ə] than British [a:].

Differences in vocabulary are caused by nature and lifestyle specialties. In the USA they have *moose*, while in Great Britain they have *elk*, for us it can be the same thing, but for British and American people they are two different animals.

American linguist Noah Webster in his «Dictionary of the English Language» made some rules for American English, such as writing suffixes *-or*, *-er* instead of *-our*, *-re*, that means, that in USA they say and write *color*, *labor*, *theater*, *center*, while in Great Britain people have *colour*, *labour*, *theatre*, *centre*. Also, a lot of irregular verbs became regular in American English, for example, *to spoil*, *to burn*.

If to talk about some groups, like insects, animals, phenomenon, in AE you can find a name for it, which is also the name of a group representative: *bug* for insects, *pine* for any fir tree.

One more distinction is in having different meaning to the same word, like *cookies*, *pants*, *pavement*, *football*, *chips*. Or having different spelling, which is not obey to any language rule. So in the USA they write *apologize*, *plow* and *thru*, but in Great Britain they still use *apologise*, *plough*, *through*.

Moreover, American English is not so strict in some grammar cases. While you are thinking how to say something that happened before something else, they can easily say it in Simple tense and not feeling themselves illiterate. Or if you want to say «*I shall...*» American English speaker would hardly understand you. I think you should better say «*I am going to...*» or even «*I gonna...*», because that is the way they say about their plans or anything in the future. And for you, not a native speaker this construction is easier to build. Also Simple construction is getting more preferred instead of Continues. So, if you want to say that you are eating something right now, you can easily say «*I eat*» and you will be totally right. This tendency is just making language more alive and real to multicultural America.

Not really the American English feature, but still the most spread out with its native speakers, not using third party version to verb *do*, and they would not be in a wonder, if you do it. That is a good thing for people who speak English as a second language, because we usually forget to use this version. What is more, in AE you have to use *the* before hospital, say «*on weekend*» instead of «*at weekend*», «*on a street*» not a British «*in a street*». Adjectives *slow* and *real* are the same to adverbs *slowly* and *really*. Plural verbs after collective nouns are not so welcome in AE than in BE, so, do not be afraid to say «*the audience was*» instead of «*the audience were*». Let us look through differences in word meaning in British and American English:

American word	Russian meaning	British word
administration	правительство	government
apartment	квартира	flat
appetizer	закуска	starter
closet	гардероб	wardrobe
elevator	лифт	lift
gasoline	бензин	petrol
last name	фамилия	surname
line	очередь	queue
napkin	салфетка	serviette
oatmeal	овсяная каша	porridge
reserve	заказать	book
truck	грузовик	lorry
vacation	каникулы	holiday
zip code	почтовый индекс	postal code

But it is hard to say that all over the United States of America you will hear the same English. They have really different pronunciation, especially it is noticeable in southern and northern parts, and not so obvious from east to west. It is caused by countries, which are bordering to the United States of America.

If you are somewhere in northern state, you will hear pretty slow talk using *yeah, yep*, instead of *yes* and *nope*, if they want to say *no*, I think that it is the Canadian influence. Be ready not to hear some vowels in words, for example, *veterinary* sound like *vetrinary*. They also have weakening reduction of diphthong if it is not percussive, it means that *yellow* will sound like *yella*.

Such words like *wanna, gonna* are fearful at first, but you can understand the meaning or find out what they are talking about when you see the object of the speech. So, when you need to understand what does *pantry* mean or where to put your luggage in the airport, when in the USA they have just *baggage* on information board, in that case you have to use your instincts and logic to make a right choice.

Moving to southern states, you have to prepare, because English in that places is faster, mostly with the Spanish accent and some hardly understandable words. Do not be afraid to ask a pardon, if you did not get something. They do not have this total love to word reduction, which is so popular northerly that places. Also, they usually do not pronounce the last consonant in a phrase: «*old zoo*» they say like «*ol' zoo*». Moreover, southern Americans like to make percussive vowels longer, especially in Pacific ocean parts: *washed, stressed, jacket, job, much, so*.

It seems to me that if you are not an advanced speaker, you know general grammar, lexis, pronunciation rules, you can get in touch with American variant of English pretty easy. For me it was easier to intonate, to use Simple tense overwhelmingly. British English is stric-

ter than American. It does not let you to put all your emotions in a speech, because you have to follow the rules. And, actually, American English is mostly spread with popular culture, music, movies and television, so we see and hear it more than British version.