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| **L12 - LINGUA E TRADUZIONE INGLESE III**  **Modulo B Lingua e Traduzione per L’impresa Internazionale a.a. 2022-2023**  **LETTORATO Dott.ssa M. Condon/ Dott.ssa R.O’Doherty**  [**marie.condon@unimc.it**](mailto:marie.condon@unimc.it)  **rebecca.odoherty@unimc .it**  **LESSON PLAN 22/3/2023** |

**BRITISH ENGLISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH**



**“England and America are two countries separated by the same language”**

**– George Bernard Shaw**

**DISCUSS:** What do you think of the quote above? Discuss whether you agree or disagree.

**Varieties of language within a language**

1. When the same language exists in more than one part of the world, there are often some differences between the two languages. These are called varieties of the language. Are there any varieties of your native language?
2. Do you speak dialect in your language? Who do you speak it with? Who do you not speak it with?
3. What differences in language are there in your own country? For example, do people in the capital city speak a different kind of language than people in the country? What are some of these differences?
4. What is the difference between dialect and accent?
5. What varieties of English can you name?

**Differences between British and American English can be divided into ones related to (in approximate order of importance):**

1. Vocabulary
2. Functional language (apologising, etc)
3. Pronunciation
4. Numbers, times and dates
5. Spelling
6. Grammar

**1 – VOCABULARY**: How well do you know the different vocabulary words? Look at the glossary supplied. How many words did you already know?

**Now, test your knowledge with the two quizzes below.**

**Replace the American English word in italics with a British English word.**

1. I'd like to hang the *drapes* tonight. Do you have time?
2. We took the *elevator* to the 10th floor.
3. Would you like to see a *movie* tonight?
4. Have you seen Tim's new a*partment* yet? It's very nice.
5. Run down to the *drug store* and buy some aspirin, please.
6. Let's go to the *bar* and get a drink.
7. I'll take the *garbage* out before I leave tomorrow morning.
8. Take the second exit at the *traffic circle*.
9. Let's get have some *potato chips* with lunch.
10. Could you hand me the*flashlight* so I can take a look in the closet?
11. Peter wore a pair of slim fitting *pants* to the party.
12. She opened the*tap* and watered the garden.
13. Have you ever worn a *vest*with a suit?
14. I'll pick up the *mail*on the way home from work.
15. Could you buy me a pair of *pantyhose* at the mall?

British to American English Vocabulary Quiz

**Replace the British word in italics with an American English word.**

1. We need to find a *public toilet* soon.
2. Let's get the pram and take a walk with Jennifer.
3. I'm afraid I had a puncture and had to get it fixed.
4. Could you bring in that tin of tuna over there?
5. He puts his trousers on like any other person.
6. She's very mean with her money. Don't ask her for any help.
7. I generally don't wear a suit with a waistcoat.
8. We should ask a constable for help.
9. Let's go to the off-license and get some whiskey.
10. Get on queue and I'll get us something to eat.
11. Grab a tea-towel and clean that up.
12. Look at the schedule and see when the train leaves.
13. The car has a dent in the wing.
14. Choose a sweater from the wardrobe and let's get going.
15. The lights have gone out, and we'll need a torch.
16. Numbers, times and dates

Americans say and write the month before the day (“January twenty seventh nineteen seventy”, etc) This can be confusing! (02/03/23 could mean either the 2nd of March or the 3rd of February)

There are also aspects of dates which could be said to be more related to vocabulary and grammar such as “fortnight” (only in British English)

“at the weekend”/ “on the weekend”

“Monday to Friday”/ “Monday through Friday”.

The British add “and” between hundreds and tens (“a hundred and twenty one”, etc)

Americans prefer using “… hundred” to talk about numbers over a thousand (“thirty two hundred”, etc)

The British use “nought” and “oh” for “zero”

Say these numbers aloud in both ways:

1500 – 347 – 106 ------- today’s date, last week’s date, a date from three months ago.

1. Pronunciation:

Listen (don’t watch!) to the following and write the words as they are pronounced – notice the difference in pronunciation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZjrjZPfK9A>

1. Spelling

The main difference is that British English keeps the spelling of words it has absorbed from other languages, mainly French and German. Whilst American English spellings are based mostly on how the word sounds when it is spoken.

mainly follow patterns like “-our”/ “-or” eg colour/color, favour/favor

“-re”/ “-er” example: centre/center

“-ogue”/ “-og”, example monologue/monolog

amme / am, eg. programme/program

but there also individual ones like “grey”/ “gray”, “storey”/ “story” and “tyre”/ “tire”, gaol/jail.

**Look at the attached glossary for more spelling examples**.

1. Grammar

Speakers of American English generally use the present perfect tense (have/has + past participle) **far less** than speakers of British English. The two situations where this is especially likely are:   
  
**1. Present perfect/past tense**

**In sentences which talk about an action in the past that has an effect in the present:**

**American English (AmE) / British English (BrE)**

Jenny feels ill. She ate too much. (AmE)

Jenny feels ill. She's eaten too much. (BrE)

I can't find my keys. Did you see them anywhere? (AmE)

I can't find my keys. Have you seen them anywhere? (BrE)

2**. In sentences which contain the words already, just or yet:**

**American English / British English**

A: Are they going to the show tonight?

B: No. They already saw it. (AmE)

A: Are they going to the show tonight?

B: No. They've already seen it. (BrE)

A: Is Samantha here?

B: No, she just left. (AmE)

A: Is Samantha here?

B: No, she's just left. (BrE)

A: Can I borrow your book?

B: No, I didn't read it yet. (AmE)

A: Can I borrow your book?

B: No, I haven't read it yet. (BrE)

**2. Verb agreement with collective nouns**

In British English, collective nouns, (i.e. nouns referring to particular groups of people or things), (e.g. staff, government, class, team) can be followed by a singular or plural verb depending on whether the group is thought of as one idea, or as many individuals, e.g.

My team is winning.

The other team are all sitting down.

In American English, collective nouns are always followed by a singular verb, so an American would usually say:

Which team is losing?

whereas in British English both plural and singular forms of the verb are possible, as in:

Which team is/are losing?

**3. Use of verbs have and take in collocations**

**In British English**, the verb ‘have’ is frequently collocated with nouns referring to common activities such as washing or resting, e.g:

I'd like to have a bath.

She's having a little nap.

I'll just have a quick shower before we go out.

**In American English**, the verb take, rather than have, is used in these contexts, e.g.

Joe's taking a shower.

I'd like to take a bath.

Let's take a short vacation.

Why don't you take a rest now?

**4. Use of auxiliaries and modals**

**Needn’t/Don’t need to**

**In British English**, needn't is often used instead of don't need to, e.g.

They needn't come to school today.

They don't need to come to school today.

**In American English**, needn't is very unusual and the usual form is don't need to, e.g.

They don't need to come to school today.

In British English, shall is sometimes used as an alternative to will to talk about the future, e.g.

I shall/will be there later.

**Shall v Will**

**In American English,** shall is unusual and will is normally used.

**In British English,** shall I/we is often used to ask for advice or an opinion, e.g.

Shall we ask him to come with us?

**In American English,** should is often used instead of shall, e.g.

Should we ask him to come with us?

1. **Use of prepositions**

**AT -ON**

In British English, at is used with many time expressions, e.g.

at Christmas/five 'o' clock

at the weekend

In American Englis**h, on** is always used when talking about the weekend, not at, e.g.

Will they still be there on the weekend?

She'll be coming home on weekends.

In British English, **at**is often used when talking about universities or other institutions, e.g.

She studied chemistry at university.

In American English, in is often used, e.g.

She studied French in high school.

**TO -FROM / FROM-THAN**

**In British English**, **to and from** are used with the adjective different, e.g.

This place is different from/to anything I've seen before.

In American English from and than are used with different, e.g.

This place is different from/than anything I've seen before.

**In British English**, **to** is always used after the verb write, e.g.

I promised to write to her every day.

In American English, to can be omitted after write, i.e.

I promised to write her every day.

1. **Past tense forms**

**Look at the glossary document for** a table showing verbs which have different simple past and past participle forms in American and British English. Note that the irregular past forms burnt, dreamt and spoilt are possible in American English, but less common than the forms ending in -ed.

**EXERCISE 1**

**Write the corresponding American English words**

1. to queue up/ to get in line
2. biscuit
3. petrol station
4. Mum
5. café
6. pavement /sidewalk
7. tap /faucet
8. loo/lavatory/bathroom
9. dust bin = litter bin (city) /trashcan /garbage can
10. Autumn

**EXERCISE 2**

**Are the sentences more typical of British English or American English?**

1. Shall we go for a walk?
2. My computer isn't working. I haven't gotten anything done.
3. Can I get you a coffee?
4. His family live in Helsinki.
5. We'll have a break at 11.
6. She's got behind with her work recently.
7. Did you eat yet?
8. The children are having a bath.
9. You could have gotten hurt
10. English is my favourite subject at school.
11. Have you seen Dick's new truck?
12. The park is in the center of our town.
13. Mr Barnes, our caretaker, found my key.
14. I like French fries, they're very crispy.
15. Have you seen the latest movie?
16. I've passed this test. So I'll get my driving licence very soon
17. The accident happened because the blue car didn't stop at the traffic lights.
18. Tom told me to get off the Underground at Tower Hill.
19. We have to hand in our résumé by Friday.

**EXERCISE 3**

Scotland Yard police are looking for a famous American bank robber called Dirty Dan. Dirty Dan robbed a bank in London last Friday night. They are interviewing three different people. All three have British accents, but the police know that Dirty Dan can imitate a British accent. Read parts of each of the transcript. **Can you identify Dirty Dan from the language he uses? Identify why.**

**Suspect 1**  
I already said this. I didn’t do anything special on the weekend. Friday night I took a shower in my apartment and then went out to see a movie. It was a movie I had already seen, Matrix Revolutions. I really like action movies. I went with my girlfriend Samantha.

**Suspect 2**  
I wasn’t in town at the weekend, and I certainly wasn’t anywhere near the bank on Friday night. I was at a hotel in Paris with a special friend of mine. Shall I give you the hotel phone number? You needn’t bother asking me any more questions. You’ve got the wrong man.

**Suspect 3**  
I’ve already said this. On Friday night I went to see a film at the cinema. It was Matrix Revolutions. I don’t really like action films, but my friends really wanted to see it. It was rather boring. After that, I went home and had a nice hot bath. I went to bed around midnight.