

British and American English

1 Warm Up About Your Language

How is your language changing? Can you think of any 'new words' in your language?

2 Reading Read the text and fill in the spaces.

Is the language in your country changing? Does the younger generation use the same vocabulary and spelling as their grandparents?

Experts have carried out research into British English. The results show that the amount of American English has risen ¹.....

"My children use words I never say!" explains Carol Brightman. "My son bought me 'season' two of Downton Abbey for ²..... . My youngest daughter says everything is 'awesome'. I think they are addicted to American TV shows."

British television schedules are full of comedy shows from the USA. American English also has a strong influence on Britain thanks to Facebook and Twitter.

Spelling is becoming more American. Most British people now write 'jail' and 'yogurt'. Hardly anyone uses the ³..... British spellings - gaol and yoghurt.

America has, of course, influenced British English for many years. 'Reliable', 'talented' and 'influential' were originally American English. Nowadays, however, everyone in the UK uses these words.

Some people believe that fixing a language's spelling and vocabulary is a good ⁴..... . On the other hand, perhaps the flexibility of English is its greatest strength.



1
5
10
15
20

Missing Words

- IDEA
- CHRISTMAS
- RAPIDLY
- TRADITIONAL

3 Vocabulary #1 Match the two halves of the collocations

the younger
to carry out
to be filled
to have a strong
hardly
on the other

influence on someone
hand
anyone
research
generation
with something

4 Vocabulary #2 Fill in the spaces using your imagination.

- The younger generation often use words such as
- The professor carried out research on
- Living abroad can be great. On the other hand,
- My teacher's loft is filled with
- had a strong influence on me when I was younger.
- In my family, hardly anyone

5 Vocabulary #3 Match the British and American vocabulary.



.....
aubergine
.....
dustbin
.....
pavement
.....
lorry
.....
petrol

faucet
.....
pacifier
.....
period
.....
elevator
.....
diaper
.....

dummy	tap	sidewalk	truck	eggplant
nappy	lift	full stop	garbage can	gas

6

Speaking Practice

Ask your partner these questions. Ask follow-up questions too.

- Is it easier to understand British or American English?
- Do you think Americans and British people can understand each other easily?
- Do you think there is a big difference between American and British English?
- At school, did you learn British English or American English?
- Is it a good thing when new words enter your language?
- Has your language changed a lot in the last 500 years?
- Do America or the UK have a strong influence on your country culturally?
- Do you watch American or British TV shows or movies?

British and American English: Teaching Notes

Target Structure:	Reading and Discussion
Vocabulary:	General
Level:	Lower-Intermediate and above
Time:	90 minutes, depending on discussion
Preparation:	None

Suggested Teaching Method

This is a lower-level version of the worksheet 'Truck or Lorry'. It looks at the growing influence of American English on the United Kingdom.

There is a simplified gap-fill reading, followed by collocation practice exercises.

After a quick quiz on British and American vocabulary, there are extended discussion questions on changes in language and the influence of the USA and UK.

- ❶ As a lead-in, you could ask students if they know any words which are different in British and American English.

Next, direct students' attention to the warm-up. Students can work in pairs, and then compare their answers with a partner. Give an example of some words used in English nowadays that are new. (e.g. *selfie*)

Elicit feedback from the class. Don't spend too long here, as there are extended discussion questions at the end of the worksheet.
- ❷ Students can work alone for the reading. Direct their attention to the four words in the box.

Students should read at a brisk pace. If there are any parts they do not understand, it is better to underline and check later, rather than consult a dictionary. While reading, they should fill in the blanks with a word from the box.

When finished, students can check their answers in pairs. Go through the answers with the group. You could also ask students for the British English versions of *season* and *awesome*. (*series* and *wonderful / great* etc.)
- ❸ Before beginning, have students cover exercise four, as it contains the answers.

Elicit the answer to one of the collocations from a confident student. Assign pairs. Students can work with a partner. Go through the answers with the group.
- ❹ Students can work in pairs. When finished, they can compare answers with another pair. Go through, eliciting example sentences.
- ❺ Begin by practicing the pronunciation of the words. Students could mark the stressed syllable.

Students can work in pairs. Set a time limit and go through the answers with the class.
- ❻ Leave plenty of time for class discussion. To maximize student talking time, it's best to put students in pairs, or small groups. Students should read all the questions first, before beginning the discussion.

While the students are speaking, monitor the conversations, but try not to interrupt. When the discussion comes to a close, ask a few of the questions yourself, and go through any points of English you made a note of while monitoring.

Answer Key (Other answers are possible for some exercises.)

② 1. rapidly 2. Christmas 3. traditional 4. idea

③

the younger	generation
to carry out	research
to be filled	with something
to have a strong	influence on someone
hardly	anyone
on the other	hand

④ **Example Answers**

1. The younger generation often use words such as 'awesome' .
2. The professor carried out research on cloning .
3. Living abroad can be great. On the other hand, you can miss your family.
4. My teacher's loft is filled with teddy bears .
5. My English teacher had a strong influence on me when I was younger.
6. In my family, hardly anyone can cook well.

⑤

tap	faucet
aubergine	eggplant
dummy	pacifier
dustbin	garbage can
full stop	period
pavement	sidewalk
lift	elevator
lorry	truck
nappy	diaper
petrol	gas

How are we doing?

Have you taught this lesson? We'd be very pleased to hear your comments.

Send your feedback to editor@handoutsonline.com.

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