

# **The UK to USA DICTIONARY**

**British English  
vs.  
American English**

By Claudine Dervaes and John Hunter

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The authors would like to thank the many people who purchased the dictionary in the previous editions and the British specialty stores that carry the books.

Bob's Your Uncle!

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*England and America are two countries  
separated by a common language.*

Attributed to George Bernard Shaw

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## PREFACE

Meanings of some words in this book are obvious. Others can cause confusion/misunderstanding when used in the U.S. or in the U.K. Many Americans find the British terms and expressions amusing and fun and vice versa – which is why this dictionary was written.

Just because slang words are included does not mean the authors condone the use of derogatory expressions. Words generally used throughout Britain and the U.S. have been selected, as opposed to ones that may be used in a certain region or locale. Regional dialects and accents include those of London and the Southeast, Southwest England, the Midlands, West Midlands, East Midlands and Yorkshire, Northwest England, Northeast England, Wales and Scotland. The Welsh language has not been included – it is completely distinct, as is Scottish Gaelic.

It's also important to note that spellings will differ, such as the British vs. American spellings for centre/center, theatre/theater, civilised/civilized, manoeuvre/maneuver, etc. The back of the book contains pages of **spelling differences, rhyming slang, pronunciation, cultural specifics, conversion charts, holidays** and **other reference information** about the differences between the U.K. and the U.S. Note: Look for rhyming slang in the comprehensive list at the back rather than in the "dictionary" sections of the book.

We welcome your comments and suggestions.

## ABBREVIATIONS USED

abbr.	abbreviation
colloq.	colloquial
dial.	dialect
n.	noun
N. Eng.	Northern England
punc.	punctuation
Sc.	Scottish
v.	verb

## USING THIS BOOK

Use this book like any other language dictionary. If you are unfamiliar with a term/expression used in the U.K. – look through the first part of the book.

If it's a U.S. term/expression - use the second part.

Check in the back for rhyming slang, pronunciation, spelling, and many other references regarding the differences between the U.K. and the U.S.A.



**UK**

**USA**

**A**

<b>A BIT OFF</b>	somewhat annoying, unfair
<b>ACCLIMATISED</b>	acclimated
<b>ACID DROP</b>	hard candy with a bitter taste
<b>ADVERT</b>	advertisement/commercial
<b>AERIAL</b>	antenna
<b>AERODROME/PLANE</b>	airdrome/plane
<b>AFTERS</b>	dessert
<b>AGLEY (dialect)</b>	off the intended route/awry
<b>AGONY AUNT</b>	advice columnist
<b>"A" LEVELS</b>	"advanced" high school exams
<b>ALIGHT</b>	disembark
<b>ALUMINIUM</b>	aluminum (note spelling)
<b>ANKLE-BITER</b>	rug rat
<b>ANORAK</b>	parka, also "geek" or "nerd"
<b>ANTI-CLOCKWISE</b>	counter-clockwise
<b>APPROVED SCHOOL</b>	juvenile detention center
<b>ARSE</b>	ass, buttocks
<b>ARTICULATED LORRY</b>	tractor trailer
<b>AS HAPPY AS A SAND BOY</b>	as happy as a lark
<b>AT A PINCH</b>	in a pinch
<b>AUBERGINE</b>	eggplant
<b>AULD LANG SYNE</b>	the old days
<b>AUTUMN</b>	fall

**UK**

**USA**

**B**

<b>BACCY</b>	tobacco
<b>BACK BENCHER</b>	Member of Parliament not a Minister
<b>BACKHANDERS</b>	kickbacks
<b>BACK OF BEYOND</b>	the sticks, the boonies
<b>BAD FORM</b>	bad manners, poor behavior
<b>BADMASH</b>	ruffian
<b>BAFFIES (Sc.)</b>	slippers
<b>BAGS</b>	many, lots
<b>BAGSIE</b>	claim, "dibbs" in U.S.
<b>BAIRN</b>	Scottish child
<b>BAKER-LEGGED</b>	knock-kneed
<b>BAKING TRAY</b>	cookie sheet
<b>BALLS/BALLS-UP</b>	foul-up, messed up
<b>BANGER</b>	sausage
<b>BANGER</b>	firecracker
<b>BANGERS AND MASH</b>	sausages and mashed potatoes
<b>BANG ON</b>	just right, terrific
<b>BANK HOLIDAY</b>	legal holiday
<b>BANK NOTE</b>	bill
<b>BANNED (from driving)</b>	license suspended
<b>BANNOCK (Sc.)</b>	unleavened oatmeal cake
<b>BAP</b>	hamburger bun
<b>BARGEE</b>	person working on a barge

**UK**

**BARM CAKE**  
**BARMY**  
**BARNY**  
**BARRISTER**

**BARTON**  
**BASH (HAVE A)**  
**BATMAN**

**BATHERS**  
**BAWBEE** (dialect)  
**BEADLE**  
**BEAK**

**BEANO/BEANFEAST**

**BEASTLY**  
**BEAVERING**  
**BED ONLY**  
**BEDROOM ENSUITE**  
**BEDSIDE TABLE**  
**BEDSIT/TER**

**BEER & SKITTLES**  
**BEETLE CRUSHERS**  
**BELISHA BEACON**

**USA**

hamburger bun  
crazy/silly  
fight, argument  
lawyer able to appear in the  
upper courts  
farm yard  
try, attempt  
British Army Officer's  
Orderly  
bathing suit  
trifle/insignificant thing  
church official  
school headmaster/justice of  
the peace  
employer's annual dinner/  
any celebration dinner  
very unpleasant  
working hard  
hotel room without meals  
room with a private bath  
nightstand  
sleeping room (may include  
kitchen/washroom)  
pleasure, amusement  
heavy boots  
flashing amber light at a  
pedestrian crossing

## UK

**BEN** (Sc.)  
**BERK/BURK**  
**BESPOKE or MADE TO MEASURE**  
**BEST OF BRITISH**  
**BETTING SHOP**  
office  
**BIFFIN**  
**BIG DIPPER**  
**BILL** (restaurant)  
**BILL** (account)  
**BILLY NO-MATES**  
**BILLYCOCK** (N.Eng)  
**BIN LINER**  
**BIRD**  
**BIRO**  
**BIRTHDAY HONOR'S LIST**  
  
**BISCUIT** (sweet)  
**BISCUIT**  
**BIT OF A LAD**  
**BITS AND BOBS**  
**BITTER**  
**BLACK OR WHITE** (coffee)  
**BLACKLEG/SCAB**  
**BLACK MARIA**  
**BLACK TREACLE**

## USA

a mountain peak  
jerk  
  
custom-made  
good luck  
licensed public betting  
  
red cooking apple  
roller-coaster  
check or tab  
account  
person without friends  
derby hat  
trash bag  
woman, "chick" in U.S.  
ballpoint pen  
list of people who have titles given to them on the sovereign's birthday  
cookie  
cracker  
a ladies' man  
miscellaneous items  
popular type of ale  
without or with cream  
scab (strike breaker)  
police van  
molasses

## UK

**BLANCMANGE**  
**BLAG**  
**BLEEDING**  
**BLIGHTER**  
**BLIMEY** (slang)  
**BLIND** (window)  
**BLINDER (TO PLAY A)**  
**BLINDING**  
**BLINKING**  
**BLOCK OF FLATS**  
**BLOKE**  
**BLOODY** (slang)  
  
**BLOODY-MINDED**  
**BLOOMER**  
**BLOOMING** (slang)  
**BLOW THE GAFF**  
**BLOWER**  
**BLUE-EYED BOY**  
**BLUE FUNK**  
**BOARD**  
  
**BOB'S YOUR UNCLE**  
**BOBBINS**  
**BOBBY**  
**BOBBY-DAZZLER**

## USA

vanilla pudding  
“mooch” in U.S.  
similar to “bloody”  
mean person  
an oath (from “blind me”)  
shade  
to do really well  
great  
similar to “bloody”  
apartment house/building  
man or fellow  
expletive, used with other  
words to mean huge, ex.  
a “bloody big house”  
obstinate  
mistake or blooper  
used like the word bloody  
give away a secret/plot  
phone  
fair-haired boy, favorite  
state of fright/terror  
interview, review, or  
promotion panel  
all is well, “you’re all set”  
useless junk  
police officer  
remarkable, notable person