American English

The English language is of Germanic origin. Old English had many inflections to show various grammar forms (e.g. singular and plural, tense, person). The pronunciation was different as well. But over centuries words have been simplified and in fact have very few inflections now. On the other hand pronunciation and spelling became more difficult. Many words can be used as different parts of speech (kiss, drink etc.). English borrowed words from many other languages (French, Spanish, even Czech – „robot“). It is obvious that other languages are influenced by the English vocabulary.

There are five main types of English which differ in pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary. They are: British English, American English, Australian English, Indian English and African English. Let’s talk about American English now. We mention the vocabulary, spelling, grammar and pronunciation.

**VOCABULARY**

Some dictionaries give a lot of information about words that are only used in American English or that have different meanings in British and American English:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British</th>
<th>American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gas</td>
<td>plyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chips</td>
<td>hranolky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purse</td>
<td>dámská peněženka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pants</td>
<td>spodky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public school</td>
<td>soukromá škola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subway</td>
<td>podchod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vest</td>
<td>nátělník</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pavement</td>
<td>chodník</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first floor</td>
<td>první patro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flat</td>
<td>byt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>benzín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>čípsy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kabelka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kalhoty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>státní škola</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>metro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vesta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>asfalt, povrch vozovky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>přízemí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>píchlá pneu</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SPELLING**

Here are some common examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British</th>
<th>American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cheque</td>
<td>check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aeroplane</td>
<td>airplane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>archaeology</td>
<td>archeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cosy</td>
<td>cozy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Americans often use the simple past tense when British people use the present perfect:  
British: I’ve just seen her.  
American: I just saw her.

Have you heard the news?  
Did you hear the news?

Americans often use have when British people use have got:  
British: I haven’t got much time.  
American: I don’t have much time.

Have you got a camera?  
Do you have a camera?

There are often small differences in the use of prepositions and adverbs:  
British: stay at home  
American: stay home

Monday to Friday  
Monday through Friday

1 Stressed vowels are usually longer in American English

2 In British English the letter „r“ is only pronounced before a vowel – words like red and bedroom – and is silent in all other words e.g. in car, learn, over. In American English the letter „r“ is always pronounced

3 In American English the letters „t“ and „d“ have a very similar light sound when they come between two vowels, so that the words writer and rider sound almost the same. In British English the „t“ is much stronger