

Differences between British and American culture

Jurayeva Zarnigor Bo‘stonovna

**Student, Tashkent State Pedagogical University,
Uzbekistan**

E-mail: zarnigorjurayeva6@gmail.com

Abstract

A cultural shift is among the most crucial things you need to get ready for when relocating from the UK to the USA, other from packing your belongings. Understanding the differences between these two nations can be crucial while adjusting to life overseas, from language and social customs to perspectives on time management and even educational systems. This article will compare and contrast the cultures of the UK and the USA, highlighting the similarities and contrasts between the two countries and offering advice on how to modify your lifestyle after moving abroad to the USA.

Keywords: Fall-autumn, vacation-holiday, law, voting rights, speech freedom, dialects, higher education

Although both nations use English as their first language, there are minor variances in vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation. American English is used in the USA, whereas British English is typically used in the UK. Various terms for the same thing (holiday vs. vacation, for example), how some words are spoken (tomato, for example), regional accents in both nations, spellings of words with the same meaning (color, for example), and variations in date formats are a few examples.

Vocabulary: Despite the fact that both nations speak English, there are some notable vocabulary disparities between them. One often cited example is that, although we in the UK take “holidays,” people in the USA are more likely to take “vacations.” Additionally, the UK refers to the following season after summer as the “autumn,” whereas the USA generally uses the term “fall.” Furthermore, a lot of terms have distinct meanings depending on the country you are in. For example, in the USA, you would refer to what the British call trousers, while in Britain, you would say “put on

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your pants,” which would indicate your underwear. Be careful what you say because there are a lot of these terms, some of which could make you feel embarrassed!

Pronunciation and Accent: Due to regional dialects within each nation, there are also pronunciation differences between British and American English. The way Americans typically pronounce the word “tomato,” as in “tomayto,” is a famous example of this, as demonstrated by the way Brits pronounce the same word.

The dialects of the two nations also differ greatly, ranging from the gentle Southern drawls that are prevalent throughout much of America's South East to the distinctive New England accent of Bostonians, which contains some peculiar regional vocabulary.

There are variations between US and UK English while writing. Certain words with similar meanings have various spellings. For instance, the word “color” is spelled differently in the UK and the USA. Other nouns also have US spellings that omit the letter “u.” American date formats differ from British date formats, which are day/month/year (01/02/2023) and month/day/year (02/01/2023), respectively.

An essential consideration when relocating from the UK to the USA is language. This adjustment can be made easier by being aware of the variations in writing style, terminology, pronunciation, and accent.

When it comes to timeliness, work-life balance, and workplace timetables, the US and the UK have comparable standards. Flexible work schedules, allowing employees to start earlier or later based on their needs, have also been embraced in the US.

Being on time is highly regarded in the USA and the UK. On the other hand, being late is far more acceptable in the USA in some social settings, including parties, even though it's becoming more typical in the UK to be “fashionably late.” In the corporate world, punctuality is anticipated for meetings and appointments, and deadlines are treated seriously in both nations. Individuals who don't follow these guidelines could be viewed as unprofessional or untrustworthy.

Workplace schedules and expectations: While most offices in both nations are open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., many US companies have implemented flexible work schedules that let workers arrive early or late based on their needs. Although not quite as typical in the UK today, this kind of schedule may gain traction in the future as attitudes toward work-life balance and remote employment continue to change. The UK and the USA have quite different attitudes about time management, including differences in expectations at work and timeliness.

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The political systems of the USA and the UK are very diverse from one another; each has its own distinct laws, rules, policies, voting rights, and leadership styles.

In the UK, a constitutional monarchy is in place where the reigning monarch is the Head of State but has limited powers. The Prime Minister leads the government while Parliament makes laws that apply to all citizens. In contrast, the US has a federal system of government with an elected President as Head of State who holds executive power over both state and federal governments. Congress is responsible for making laws which are then enforced by state governments.

Voting Rights, Laws, Rules, and Speech Freedoms

Citizens eighteen years of age or older have the right to vote in both countries, although in some American states, some categories, including felons or people without permanent residency, may not be allowed to vote. While the constitutions of both nations provide the right to free expression, other liberties differ, and UK legislation is more easily amendable than US law because of the procedures involved. The Human Rights Act of 1998 in Britain, which permits peaceful protest, and the Bill of Rights in the United States, which permits public meetings, have different assembly and petitioning rights.

While there are certain parallels between the political systems and governmental structures of the UK and the USA, there are also numerous notable distinctions in terms of governance practices, laws, liberties, and voting rights.

The elementary, secondary, and tertiary education systems in the US and the UK differ. While academic skills and elective courses are prioritized in the US, the UK places more emphasis on core topics and extracurricular activities. UK students take tests at the secondary level at age 16, but US students must finish college preparation courses in order to be admitted to universities.

The US and UK have very different primary school curricula. English, math, science, and the humanities are among the basic disciplines that students in the UK are expected to learn. A vast array of extracurricular activities, including music, art, and sports, are also available to them. US schools, on the other hand, place more of an emphasis on the development of academic skills, particularly reading and numeracy. Additionally, elective course options may differ based on the state or district in which the student is enrolled.

Differences in the Secondary School Curriculum: The secondary school curricula in the two nations differ noticeably once more. In most cases, the UK system requires

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students to take GCSE exams at age 16 before going on to A Levels or comparable credentials at age 18 in order to meet university entrance requirements. In the meanwhile, kids in the US usually enroll in a college preparatory program that consists of taking the SAT and ACT exams in order to get admitted to college as well as finishing coursework in subjects relating to their chosen field of study, such as business or science.

Differences in the Higher Education System: In the United States, university education—also referred to as college—is characterized by a number of differences. The first is the average time required to finish a degree; a bachelor's degree in the UK typically takes three years, but it takes four years in the USA. A master's degree (1 year in the UK against 2 years in the USA) and a doctorate (3–4 years versus 5-7 years) follow this. Universities in the UK often focus on lectures and may only offer a single final test, but universities in the USA are more likely to assign multiple projects and papers throughout the course of the semester.

Healthcare: General taxes support the UK's National Health Service (NHS), which provide healthcare services. All residents of the UK are eligible for free healthcare at the point of service. In the United States of America, most healthcare is supplied by private insurance firms, and it is the responsibility of the individual to acquire their own health insurance.

Transport: The United Kingdom is renowned for its vast rail network and its public transport networks, which comprise the London Underground. Its road system is likewise highly developed. Private car ownership is more prevalent in the USA, which boasts a wide network of highways and roads. Cities have different public transit networks.

Cultural Differences: Because of their respective histories, customs, and influences, the UK and the USA have very different cultures. These distinctions are evident in things like cuisine, sports, traditions, and social mores. Compared to their American counterparts, individuals in the UK are typically more courteous and reserved. The British place a great value on tradition and emphasize history and ancestry. Americans, on the other hand, are frequently perceived as being more vocal and open-minded when it comes to sharing their thoughts and beliefs. When meeting someone for the first time, individuals in the UK are typically more formal and shake hands, whilst people in the USA are typically more casual. Even if they have just recently met, Americans often frequently use first names while addressing others. You

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are more likely to talk about the weather than your income when you meet someone in the UK because it is considered unpleasant to discuss personal concerns like salary.

Dining customs and table manners: When it comes to table manners, the UK is often more formal than the US. For instance, in Britain, it's considered rude to begin eating before waiting for everyone at the table to be served. US dining etiquette, on the other hand, is generally less formal; most individuals begin eating as soon as their food is brought, without waiting for others to join them at the table, and meals are frequently consumed standing up at home rather than seated at the dinner table.

While local customs can influence public behavior in both nations, there are certain broad cultural distinctions between American and British cultures that should be taken into consideration before relocating abroad. For example, Americans may come out as friendlier and more laid-back when conversing with strangers in public settings like restaurants or stores, whereas British people tend to maintain a certain level of formality.

It should be noted that American and British cultures might differ greatly. There are numerous distinctions between these two nations, including those in language, social graces, time management attitudes, governmental systems, and educational frameworks. You can readily adapt to these cultural differences, though, if you do a little research and gain some understanding of both. A successful overseas move requires an understanding of the cultural differences between the UK and the USA.

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