Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary. My name is Catherine, and I’m here today with our special guest presenter Doug. Welcome to the show Doug.

Hi Catherine, how are you?

I’m fine thank you. How are you Doug?

Fine.

Tell us a bit about yourself Doug – you’re originally from Canada, right?

Yes, I’m from Vancouver, which is in western Canada, but I moved here a long, long time ago.

But you’ve still got an American English accent I noticed.

Yes, I haven’t lost that.

And that’s cool, because this show is all about the differences between British English and American English vocabulary. So, tell me Doug, do Canadians like you speak American English?

I don’t think Canadians would say that. Let’s say they speak North American English. But it is very similar.
Catherine
Fantastic. So American English and British English aren’t really that different; I’m British and me and Doug can understand each other perfectly – yes?

Doug
Yes, usually. No, of course we can. Of course we understand you.

Catherine
We can. But there are a few vocabulary differences between American and British English that it’s very helpful to learn. And today, with Doug’s help, we’re going to take you through some of them. So, over to you Doug…

Doug
OK, thanks Catherine. Let’s start with some examples. This is John, from the US, talking about his recent visit to Britain. Here’s a question for you while you’re listening: Did John enjoy his visit? Here’s John.

INSERT
John
I went to Britain for two weeks last fall. Actually, British people don’t say fall, they say autumn. In the States we pay the check, but in Britain they pay the bill… we mail a letter, but the British post a letter… we go to a store to buy candy and cookies, but the British go to a shop to buy sweets and biscuits. But I had a great time there.

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Doug
So, the question was: according to John, did he enjoy his visit?

Catherine
And the answer is: yes, he did. He said he had a great time. Well done if you got that right at home. Now, let’s have a closer look at some of the vocabulary John used. Here’s a clip, and another question for you: what’s the name of the season after summer?

INSERT 1 CLIP 1
British people don’t say fall, they say autumn…

Catherine
So, in Britain the season after summer is called autumn.

Doug
Yes, but in American English it’s called fall because the leaves fall.
Catherine
Fall.

Doug
Next question: when you’re in a restaurant, and you’ve finished the meal, what do you ask for, what do you pay? Listen again:

**INSERT 1 CLIP 2**
In the States we pay the **check**, but in Britain they pay the **bill**…

Doug
In America, the word is **check**. You pay the **check** at the end of a meal.

Catherine
You pay the check. But in Britain, we pay the **bill**.

Doug
Here’s another difference between British and American English: what do we do when we ‘send a letter’? Can you remember the British word, or the American word, or both? Listen again:

**INSERT 1 CLIP 3**
…we **mail** a letter, but the British **post** a letter…

Catherine
So, in Britain we **post** a letter, but Doug, North Americans say…?

Doug
**Mail** a letter. OK, now, John said that British people go to a **shop** to buy **sweets** and **biscuits**. Well, where do Americans go, and what do they buy there? Listen one more time:

**INSERT 1 CLIP 5**
…we go to a **store** to buy **candy** and **cookies**…

Catherine
The British say **shop**…

Doug
…but the Americans say **store**…

Catherine
…the British say **sweets**…
Doug
…but the Americans say candy...

Catherine
…the British say biscuits …

Doug
…and in North America, that’s cookies.

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6 Minute Vocabulary, from BBC Learning English dot com.

Doug
And our topic for today is British and American vocabulary.

Catherine
Doug - a question for you: A lot of learners of English want to know which one is better – is it British English or American English? What do you think?

Doug
To be honest, there’s no difference -just use the one you like.

Catherine
Good. And now it’s time for a quiz. Doug is going to say an American English word, and you have to say the British English word with the same meaning.

Doug
Ok, so, the first American English word is check. What’s the British word for check?

Catherine
And the answer is: bill.

Doug
Next word: candy. What do British people say instead of candy?

Catherine
And the British word for candy is sweets.

Doug
Good, and the last American word is mail. What’s the British word for mail?

Catherine
The British word for mail is post. And that’s all our questions for today. Before we go, here’s a tip to help you with your vocabulary studies.
Doug
Yes - people speak English with many different accents: Australian, Indian, Nigerian, Singaporean, West Indian… so, it’s a good idea to practice listening to lots of accents, not only British accents or American English! It’s easy to find examples of many different accents, just go online!

Catherine
Top tip Doug, thanks very much and thanks for being with us today. Well, that’s the end of the programme, but there’s lots more about this at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again soon for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

Both
Bye!
Vocabulary points to take away

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>American English</th>
<th>British English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the fall</td>
<td>the autumn</td>
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<tr>
<td>the check</td>
<td>the bill</td>
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<tr>
<td>to mail</td>
<td>to post</td>
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<td>a cookie</td>
<td>a biscuit</td>
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<td>a store</td>
<td>a shop</td>
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<tr>
<td>some candy</td>
<td>some sweets</td>
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