

CHEAT SHEET 3—SEPARATED BY A COMMON LANGUAGE— ENGLISH AND AMERICAN

Don't scoff at the Brits. It is somewhat telling that probably the greatest communicator in history, Winston Churchill, had an American mother and an English father. The perfect language is a combination of the two. This section is specifically for Americans who would like to close the deal while engaged in a business meeting, cocktail chat, or pre-hookup explorations with a Brit. Or maybe all three.

EXPRESSION	BRITS HEAR	AMERICAN DOS, DON'TS, AND GENERAL INFO
Bang	Have sex with.	Don't use when referring to a hairstyle with a Brit. The British call American bangs a fringe.
Banger	A sausage, as in a frankfurter. Or an old car.	You can use ironically with the word <i>mash</i> . Nothing to do with head-bangers, who are people who wave their greasy hair about at rock concerts.
Bill	Police or invoice.	Try not to call for the first if you can possibly avoid it, but definitely call for the second in a restaurant. If you

EXPRESSION	BRITS HEAR	AMERICAN DOS, DON'TS, AND GENERAL INFO
Bill (cont.)		ask for the check, the waitress will be wondering why she should be paying you.
Bird	One's girlfriend or any young female.	Use with extreme caution if you're unsure of the sense of humor of any females in the vicinity.
Bin	To throw away, discard.	What straight male Brits do to a bit of fluff.
Bit of fluff	Sexually attractive female lacking in brains.	Not exactly a term of endearment.
Blag	Bluff.	If you want to improve your blagging, don't skip any of these Cheat Sheets.
Bollocking	A severe reprimand.	If working for a Brit, avoid being on the receiving end of.
Bollocks	1. Testicles; 2. Rubbish, nonsense, drivel.	Don't worry about this. It's impossible to say without a genuine Brit accent.
Bonk	To have sex.	Your call. If an attractive Brit suggests it, why not?
Bugger	Anal sex; joking term for addressing someone. Buggered—something's broken, couldn't be bothered. Bugger up—to make a mess of something. Bugger off—go away, leave me alone. Bugger all—absolutely nothing at all.	When in doubt, ask for clarification. The abundance of multiple meanings is unfair.
Can't be arsed	Can't be bothered.	Note for once, nothing to do with sex.

EXPRESSION	BRITS HEAR	AMERICAN DOS, DON'TS, AND GENERAL INFO
Cheers	Thank you. Also used in toasts.	Use sparingly. Brits tend not to mind if an American utilizes it. However, some Americans object.
Cider	Alcoholic drink derived from apples.	In a pub, don't ask for it "hot with a cinnamon stick" unless you'd like a group of burly Manchester United fans to laugh you out of the building.
Crumpet	Attractive female.	Not something worth risking saying within earshot of any female.
Dogging	Anonymous, public sex between strangers, usually taking place in cars or outdoors and in the presence of voyeurs.	In the age of camera phones, it might be best not to engage in this.
Drivel	To talk stupidly and carelessly.	Something you won't be doing once you've read <i>The Intelligent Conversationalist</i> .
Fanny	Vagina.	In general, stay away from this word, even when discussing one's Aunt Fanny in a concerned way.
Fancy	1. Feel like; 2. Find attractive. Fancy dress—costume party attire.	Not to be confused with posh, which is what Brits call Americans' use of fancy. ("Port Out, Starboard Home" was the side of the boat Brits wanted to be on when they traveled to check out the Empire in the East.)
Fit	Attractive person.	You want to be this.
Fry-up	Also known as the full English. A large breakfast that may include any/all of the following: bacon, eggs, black pudding, sausages, and baked beans.	Proper black pudding is made from pork blood—you have been warned.

EXPRESSION	BRITS HEAR	AMERICAN DOS, DON'TS, AND GENERAL INFO
Gooseberry	Third person, outsider.	What you were at one time in high school or college, but would never admit to now.
Graft	Hard work.	Employ a Brit who says he or she will do this.
Grill	What you do to bacon when you're being healthy.	Americans would say broil.
Gutted	Disappointed.	Good word. Okay for Americans to use.
Knob	1. Penis or dim-witted person. 2. Door handle.	If this is said of you in your presence and nowhere near a door, be worried.
IRA	Terrorist group. If you are in the company of a Brit over age thirty, he or she will have a story about missing a bomb by minutes and some choice words about Ted Kennedy and Peter King.	Probably best not bring it up, even if you're referring to individual retirement accounts.
Jock	A Scotsman or a small dog.	Not something American jocks want to be, unless they've Scottish roots.
Mid-Atlantic	Halfway between the US and the UK; Madonna's accent when married to Guy Ritchie.	Clarify your use unless you want to confuse a Brit.
Muppet	Foolish and incompetent person.	Has nothing to do with Jim Henson, <i>Sesame Street</i> , or films showcasing Miss Piggy.
Natter	Talk pleasantly.	Brits not being sarcastic here, for once.
Nick	1. Prison; 2. Police station; 3. To steal.	Avoid.

EXPRESSION	BRITS HEAR	AMERICAN DOS, DON'TS, AND GENERAL INFO
Pants	Underpants or something that's not very good.	Unless you want a Brit to laugh at you, don't refer to your trousers as pants.
Paralytic	Extremely drunk.	This has nothing to do with neuromuscular functioning. It is the normal state of a Brit who's been at a pub for several hours.
Peckish	Slightly hungry.	Use this either when you'd like a little snack or when you're paralytic and need a fry-up to deal with the alcohol from the cider you drank before the Manchester United fans threw you out the pub's front door.
Piss	Urinate. To take the piss—tease. On the piss—out drinking. Pissed—drunk. Pissed off—annoyed.	If in doubt, ask for clarification.
Plank	A right idiot.	Give a Brit a bollocking if he or she calls you this when it's undeserved.
Pull	To persuade someone to be one's date or sex partner. On the pull—to seek a date or sex partner.	Americans arguably better at this than Brits.
Quite	A little bit. Often used sarcastically. "Quite good" means "not very good."	Never use in the company of a Brit. People have been fired over misunderstanding this phrase.
Roast(ing)	Either roasting meat or a gangbang involving one girl and many men, normally football (aka soccer) players.	Tell a Brit you went to a great "roasting" and he or she will use you as the punch line of all his or her jokes for the rest of time.

EXPRESSION	BRITS HEAR	AMERICAN DOS, DON'TS, AND GENERAL INFO
Roger	Roger—to have sexual intercourse. Roger that—I heard you.	Very important for you to listen carefully here. Ask them to repeat if not quite sure.
Row	Argument.	Not pronounced in the way you would pronounce the verb that has to do with how one propels a canoe or where your seat is in a theater.
Sacked	Fired from a job.	No laughing matter.
Section	To detain under the Mental Health Act.	Scary ground here.
Skint	Penniless/broke.	Good word; Americans allowed to utilize.
Slag	A promiscuous woman. Also occasionally heard with reference to such men.	Practice safe sex if with one or if you are one.
Sod	Unpleasant person, exclamation of frustration originally short for sodomite. Or if preceded by “poor”—an unfortunate person. Sod it—exclamation of contempt or frustration	If you mean turf and you’re with a Brit, say turf.
Strop, Stropping, Stroppy	A bad mood, a fit of fury more fitting for a toddler but indulged in by an adult.	Good insult; consider adopting.
Tit	Fool.	If someone tells you that you’re “making a total tit of yourself,” it’s time to change course, especially if you’re hoping to hook up with them.

EXPRESSION	BRITS HEAR	AMERICAN DOS, DON'TS, AND GENERAL INFO
Tosser	Also a wanker, which as you know is someone who masturbates. And is an idiot.	Nothing to do with salad.
Twat	The female genitals (from the 1600s). A contemptible person, an idiot.	Brits couldn't just leave it at vagina. I apologize for my countrymen.

WISE WORDS

I didn't know he was dead; I thought he was British.

—Woody Allen

SOCIAL SURVIVAL STRATEGY

Argument: “There are some words, such as *bollocks*, that just shouldn't be said in anything other than a British accent.”

Americans usually sound like Dick Van Dyke gone wrong when they try to speak the Queen's English (although Jake Gyllenhaal's enunciation was perfection on Broadway in 2015). Leave the Brits to their colloquialisms; you've plenty of “awesome” slang of your own that can be rendered properly only in an American accent.

Crisp Fact: American cider will disappoint British people.

Most Brits love their alcohol, so either embrace us for it or judge from afar. (The former is far more fun.)

Pivot: “Madonna’s tweed-wearing British phase seems so long ago. Seen her Instagram lately?”

Nicely inclusive, as everyone can summon up an opinion on Madonna, even if it’s just “what has she done to her face?”