

Try not to look at this until you've done all the exercises that go with the listening.

You say *to-may-to*

- Jackie: For this week's podcastsineenglish.com we're looking at the differences between words used in the United States and in the United Kingdom. With me is Sarah, who's an American. Hi, Sarah.
- Sarah: Hi
- Jackie: Which part of America do you come from?
- Sarah: Ah... I was born in Texas and I grew up in Minnesota.
- Jackie: Right, great. Now I know Sarah that you're not living in the US now, have you ever had any funny situations because of the differences between the two languages?
- Sarah: Sometimes we use words in American English that are not the same meaning in British English. For example, *pants* er... which I believe in British English are *trousers*.
- Jackie: Yes
- Sarah: So when we talk about, you know, your *pants* it of course makes all the British people laugh. Er... and I know that sometimes when we were in London with my friends ah... speaking American English, people would claim not to understand us.
- Jackie: When you say claim, you mean, you... you think that they were lying?
- Sarah: Well, I mean, we are all speaking English. I can't understand how they couldn't figure out* what we were saying. There was namely one time when my friend and I went to a store and we were looking for Neil's Yard Dairy which is a famous cheese shop.
- Jackie: In Covent Garden.
- Sarah: Exactly. And we must have said it to the store* owner four or five times and finally we just said it to him with a British accent and then he understood perfectly.
- Jackie: I don't know because, like when I was in America, sometimes American people did say things to me that I didn't understand, that I had to get them to repeat quite a few times.

Sarah: Well, I think Americans have a tendency to mumble. We, sort of, eat the ends of our words; we don't pronounce all of the letters. So I do think that that would probably create some problems.

Jackie: Ok, you mentioned the difference between *pants* and *trousers*. But I also know that um... an American, who have cut themselves um... they... they have real problems because they can't go to a *chemist* and ask for a *plaster*.

Sarah: That's very true. That would not make any sense in American English. Er... we would go to a *pharmacist* and ask for a *cast*, I suppose?

Jackie: Ah... no, you see, it's a Band-Aid.

Sarah: A *plaster* is a *Band-Aid*? I did not know that.

Jackie: Yeah. And it's funny that um... as well because it's *pharmacy* or it's a *drug store*, isn't it?

Sarah: A *drug store*, yes.

Jackie: And for me, the first time I saw the word *drug store*, I thought they're selling drugs [both laugh] in the high street! Oh, you don't have *high streets* in America, do you?

Sarah: No we don't. No, we have large avenues perhaps.

Jackie: The *high street* is the main, the main street ...

Sarah: Right

Jackie: ...in the town.

Sarah: Yeah, well our towns are structured so differently than British cities. They're much more sprawling, and there's not normally one centre place.

Jackie: Right. Oh, and the other, one of the other differences as well and may be you found this when you were eating in... in Britain, was um... the difference between *chips* and *crisps*. [laughs]

Sarah: Yes, that's true, that's true. *Crisps* being our *chips* and *chips* being our *French-fries*.

Jackie: *French-fries*, yes.

Sarah: Different words for *cigarette* as well...

- Jackie: Oh, really?
- Sarah: Oh, for sure*. The British or the English slang is a *fag*** which has a completely different meaning in American English.
- Jackie: But there's also... am I right in saying there's a different pronunciation, we say *cigarette* and you say *cigarette*.
- Sarah: Right. Though one of the big ones, I think, is the word *pecan*.
- Jackie: The what?
- Sarah: *Pecan*, exactly, the English say *pecan*, I believe.
- Jackie: Ah... the nut!
- Sarah: The nuts.
- Jackie: Ah... and I know it's the different um... different spelling as well as pronunciation for *aluminum*. You say *aluminum* but we say *aluminium*.
- Sarah: Yes, you have the extra 'i, I believe.
- Jackie: Yeah. Well, how would you, in American English, how would you finish a show?
- Sarah: People say, "That's all, folks". That's a pretty* American statement.
- Jackie: Ok, thank you very much, Sarah. That's all folks!

*Note that Sarah uses quite a few American words and expressions in the podcast:

figure out = understand

store = shop

for sure = definitely

pretty = very (She speaks pretty good French = She speaks very good French)

** *fag* is very common slang for cigarettes in the UK (A packet of fags, please or I'm going outside to have a fag) However, this is a derogatory (ie it has a negative meaning) for homosexual in the US.