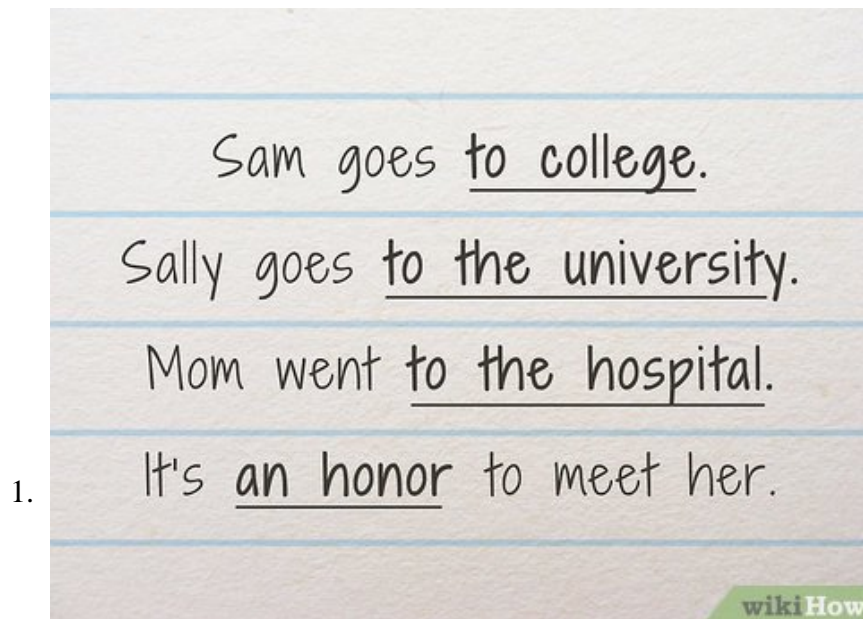


How to Speak American English

English is a tricky language because there are so many exceptions to the rules when it comes to grammar and syntax. American English can be even harder to learn since there are so many variations in dialect and speech from region to...

Method 1 of 3:

Using American Language



Adopt the way that Americans use articles in everyday speech. In English, the articles are 'the,' 'a,' and 'an.' The way that Americans use these articles is unique when compared to other forms of English, but there are no strict rules for how to use them. In general, the article is only dropped for 'church,' 'college,' 'class,' and a few other nouns. Try to repeat back a phrase that sounds odd to you by using the new article to get used to it.^[1]

1. An American would say they 'go to college,' but they'd also say 'go to the university.'
2. A British or Irish speaker would say they 'went to hospital,' but an American speaker always goes to 'the hospital.'
3. The difference between using 'a' and 'an' isn't the first letter that follows the article. It's actually whether the sound of the first syllable is a vowel or consonant. You always use 'an' with vowel sounds, and 'a' consonants. Since Americans pronounce 'honor' like 'on-er,' it's 'an honor' to meet someone if you're speaking American English.
4. Article usage is one of the things that can make learning English so difficult. Stick with it and you'll get used to using the proper articles over time.

toilet/lavatory/loo	→	restroom/bathroom
lift	→	elevator
motorway	→	freeway
jumper	→	sweater
trousers	→	pants
waistcoat	→	vest
trainers	→	sneakers
nappy	→	diaper
petrol	→	gasoline

2.

wikiHow

Use American terms for everyday items to blend in. Like Australian, British, and Irish English, there are a plethora of words that are unique to American English. Using a term like 'motorway' or 'ice lolly' is a dead giveaway that you aren't an American English speaker. If you want to blend in, get used to using American terms and work on committing them to memory by using them every day.^[2]

1. It can be tough to get used to using American terminology if you aren't familiar with it. Give it time. You'll get used to it the more you talk and listen to Americans.
2. Watching a lot of American movies and shows can give you a good sense of the everyday phrases that Americans use. If you can't figure a word out based on context alone, write it down to look it up later.

Common American Phrases

Use "restroom/bathroom" instead of "toilet/lavatory/loo."

Use "elevator" instead of "lift."

Use "trunk" instead of "boot."

Use "freeway" instead of "motorway."

Use "sweater" instead of "jumper."

Use 'pants' instead of 'trousers.'

Use "vest" instead of "waistcoat" (the shirt worn under clothing is often called an undershirt).

Use "sneakers" or 'tennis shoes' instead of "trainers."

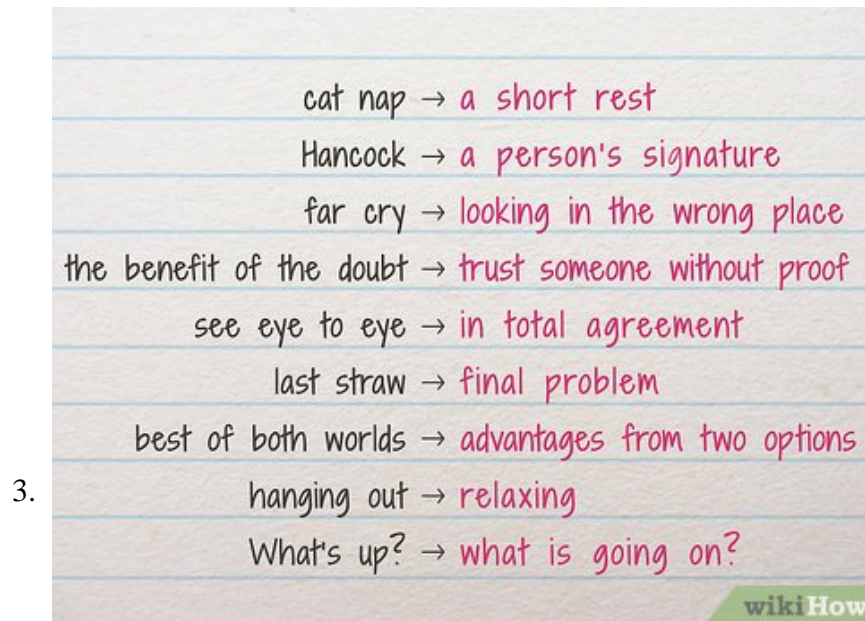
Use "diaper" instead of "nappy."

Use "vacation" instead of "holiday" (holidays tend to mean national bank holidays only or the holiday season around Christmas).

Use "bag of chips" instead of "packet of crisps."

Use "gasoline" instead of "petrol," and "gas station" instead of "filling station," or "petrol station."

Use "truck" instead of "lorry."



Get used to American idioms by incorporating them in your speech. Americans have a lot of idioms, which are culturally-recognized phrases that differ from a phrase's literal meaning. For example, when an American says that it is 'raining cats and dogs,' they mean that it's raining hard, not that animals are falling out of the sky. When you hear an idiom, ask what it means and then try using it in your everyday conversation to get used to it. You'll learn lots of idioms over time simply by trying them out.^[3]

1. 'I could care less' actually means 'I couldn't care less' in American English. While this isn't technically an idiom, it is an odd phrase that means something different than what it literally communicates.

Common American Idioms

A 'cat nap' is a short rest.

A 'Hancock' is a person's signature.

If you're 'barking up the wrong tree,' you're looking in the wrong place or accusing the wrong person.

A 'far cry' is a big difference between two things.

If you're giving someone 'the benefit of the doubt,' you trust them without proof or evidence.

If you 'see eye to eye" with someone, you're in total agreement.

To 'kill two birds with one stone' is to accomplish two things at once.

A 'last straw' is the final problem that forces something to happen.

If you have 'the best of both worlds,' then you have all of the advantages from two options.

If you're 'hanging out,' it means that you're relaxing.

'What's up?' means 'what is going on?' or 'what do you need?'

Method 2 of 3:

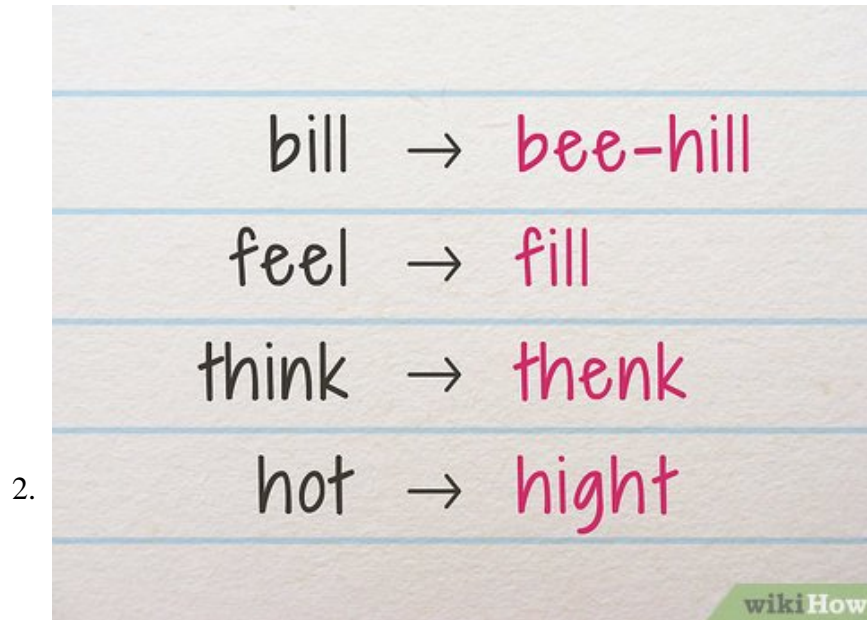
Pronouncing American English Dialects



Hold your vowels and Rs to replicate General American English. While every region of the United States speaks differently, there is a stereotypical form of American English that serves as a solid baseline for American dialects. Generally speaking, use hard vowels and R-sounds by sounding them out more thoroughly. Other forms of English (like British, Irish, and Australian English) tend to blend vowels and R-sounds, while General American English tends to over-enunciate them.^[4]

1. Including a harder R-sound makes words like 'card' sound like 'kaard' instead 'cawd.' Another example would be 'other,' which might sound like 'oth-a' in British English, but sounds like 'uh-ther' in American English.
2. Opting for hard vowels instead of soft vowels makes words like 'cut' sound like 'khut' in American English, while it might sound like 'khat' in British English.

Tip: Watch American news reporters speak for a perfect example of what General American English sounds like. The nickname given to General American English is even 'newscaster accent' or 'television English.'^[5]



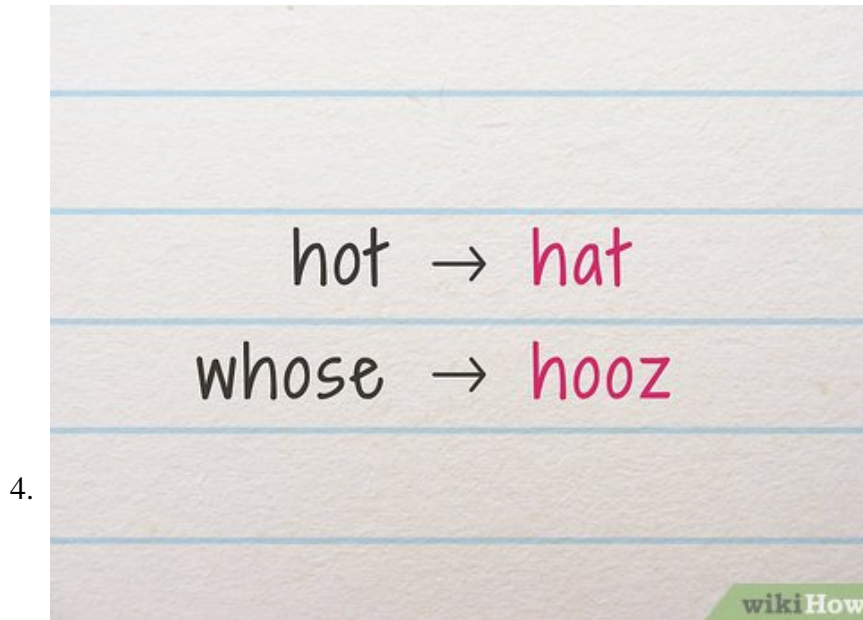
Swap O-, I-, and E- sounds for a Southern accent. While there are several versions of a Southern accent, you can create a general Southern accent by swapping vowel sounds. Turn O-sounds into I-sounds and I-sounds into O-sounds. I-sounds are often drawn out to sound like two E's in words like 'bill,' which makes it sound like 'bee-hill.' The reverse is also true: words like 'pen' sound like 'pin.'^[6]

1. Other examples include 'feel' sounding like 'fill,' and 'think' sounding like 'thenk.' Note that, in each example, the E, and the I-sounds are swapped.
2. Swapping the O and I makes words like 'hot' sound like 'hight,' and words like 'like' sound like 'lok.'



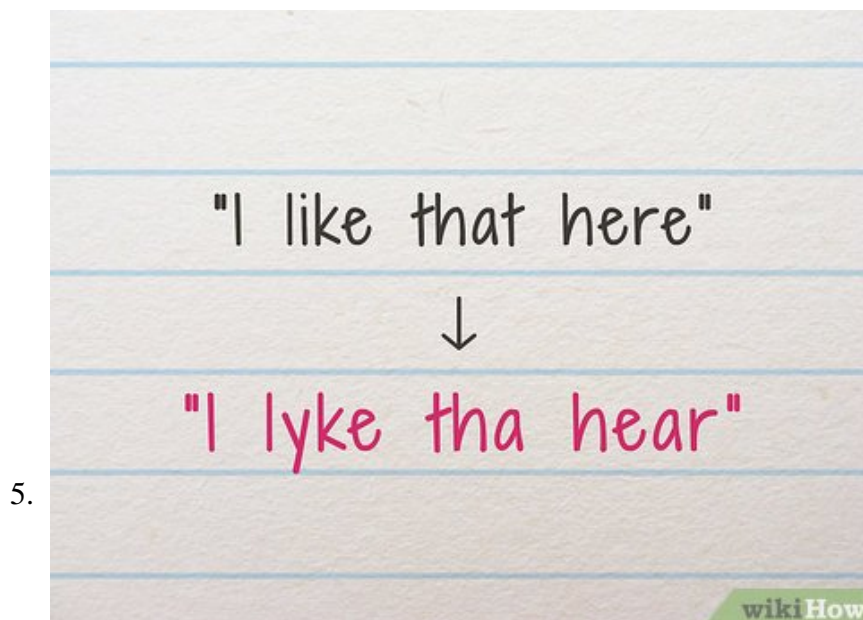
Use 'aw' instead of 'al' or 'o' for a Northeastern accent. While New York, Boston, and Philadelphia all have unique accents, they all tend to replace A-sounds and O-sounds with 'aw' or 'uh.' Use the roof of your mouth more than you usually do and use 'aw' to replace soft-A sounds and O-sounds for a Northeastern accent.^[7]

1. This makes words like 'call' and 'talk' sound like 'kawl' and 'tawk,' and words like 'off' and 'love' sound like 'awf' and 'lawve.'



Speak like you're from the Midwest by manipulating O-sounds. While the Midwest has a variety of accents, most of them replace short O-sounds with short A-sounds. Play with O-sounds to make them shorter or longer to sound like you're from the Midwest.^[8]

1. The manipulation of O-sounds makes words like 'hot' sound like 'hat.' However, long O-sounds tend to be extended, so words like 'whose' sound more like 'hooz' instead of 'whues.'



Over-pronounce K-sounds and drop T-sounds to sound Californian. While there's a bit of variety on the West Coast, Californian speakers tend to expand their mouths to accent K-sounds while dropping T-sounds. In addition, use a hard-R whenever a word ends with R.^[9]

1. The Californian accent makes a phrase like 'I like that here' sound like 'I lyke tha hear.'

Method 3 of 3:

Incorporating Slang and Using the Right Tone



Use 'y'all' and other Southern slang to seem Southern. The easiest Southern slang to incorporate is to use 'y'all' instead of 'you all' or 'everyone.' Southerners often say 'git' instead of 'get.' Other common slang terms include 'yonder,' which means 'over there,' and 'fixin',' which means 'about to do.'^[10]

1. The South has a lot of idioms and phrases, like 'bless your heart,' which means 'you are sweet,' and 'pretty as a peach,' which means that something is pleasant, or cute.
2. The South is a very religious region of the United States. To speak like a Southerner, use the word 'bless' often. Phrases like 'bless your heart' and 'God bless you' are common in the South.

2.



Adopt Northeastern slang to sound like an East Coast native. Speakers on the East Coast tend to say 'ey' or 'ah' during breaks in speech. Bostonians will use 'wicked' instead of 'awesome' or 'really.' They also tend to use 'hella' instead of 'very.' A 'hella wicked smaht' person is someone that is 'really very smart,' for example. New Yorkers are notorious for saying 'fuggetaboutit,' a truncated version of 'forget about it.' It means that everything is fine.^[11]

1. Raising your voice a little isn't necessarily considered rude on the East Coast.
2. In Philadelphia, the word 'jawn' can replace any noun and you'll have to use context clues to determine what it means. For example, 'that jawn' could mean 'that girl,' 'that food,' or 'that politician' depending on the subject of discussion. Philadelphians also call submarine sandwiches 'hoagies.'
3. If someone in the Northeast refers to 'the City,' they're talking about New York City. The state of New York (outside of New York City) is almost always called 'New York State.'

3.



Utilize 'you guys' and drink 'pop' to sound like a Midwesterner. Always say 'you guys' instead of 'ya'll,' 'you all,' or 'everyone' to sound like an authentic resident of the Midwest. In addition, Midwesterners typically refer to carbonated beverages as 'pop' instead of 'soda.'^[12]

1. Midwesterners tend to over-use niceties like 'thanks' and 'sorry' in everyday speech. These are often replaced with 'ope.' It's a sort of combination of 'oh' and 'whoops,' and is used to express regret that you made a minor mistake.
2. Chicagoans tend to say 'goes' instead of 'went' or 'go.' They also use the word 'dip' to mean 'leave' or 'vacate.'



4.

Speak like you're from California by acting excited and using 'dude.' Many Californians use an upward inflection while you're speaking. Even a slight upward-inflection creates the impression that they're excited or in a really good mood. A key component of sounding Californian is to use the word 'dude' as well. 'Dude' is a regional-specific term for a person you're familiar with (usually male).^[13]

1. 'Radical' and 'sick' are common terms for 'awesome.' If someone from California says that you're a 'sick dude,' they're paying you a compliment.
2. Like Bostonians, Californians use 'hella.' However, they often pronounce it 'helluva' and use it like a superlative to describe an event or person. For example, if a party was 'a helluva good time,' then it was a really good party.

Tip: You can truncate and abbreviate words to sound like a trendy West Coast native. Many people there will say 'guac' instead of 'guacamole' or 'Cali' instead of 'California.'

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