

British and American engineering vocabulary games

Instructions for teachers

The games below can be played in any order, with the written activities at the bottom below being done at the end, for homework, or between games. The jigsaw and reversi games use the same worksheet but cut into cards in different ways, so if you want to play both games you will need to make two different sets of cards for each group. See below for instructions on how to cut the cards up.

UK and US technical English drawing game

The instructions for students are at the top of the worksheet. The game can be played with the worksheet cut into cards or just given as it is with students choosing any words they want to draw. Note that some of the vocabulary has been left out of this game because not all the words are easily drawable.

UK and US Engineering vocabulary miming game

The instructions for students are at the top of the sheet. The game can be played with the worksheet cut into cards or just given as it is with students choosing what they want to mime. Note that about half of the cards have been left out of this version because not all things are possible to act out.

UK and US technical English jigsaw game

Make one copy per group of two to four students. Cut down the middle vertically to make two columns, with British in one column and American in the other. Cut up each column so that each card has at least two British words or two American words on it, e.g. “paraffin” and “petrol(eum)” on one card. For classes who are likely to find matching the words difficult, you can make bigger cards of three, four or even five boxes each. Don't cut the cards up into individual boxes. As much as possible, try to make the places where you cut the cards different for each column, e.g. two cards on the left and three cards on the right each time.

Give out the cards and ask students to put them together so that each row has a British word on the left and American for the same thing on the right. They can do this even if they don't know all the words, because if they find one match then the words above or below must also be a correct match. It can also help if you tell them that the finished jigsaw will form a nice rectangle shape.

If they get stuck you can:

- Tell them that the words are grouped by topic, with similar words above and below each other
- Tell them the topics in order (fossil fuels, transport – starting with cars, things connected to buildings, electricity and electronics, maths, people and things they use)
- Tell them which words are British and which words are American (i.e. which cards should be on the right and which cards should be on the left)
- Give them a few key matches
- Read out the answers in order while they listen without touching the cards, then let them try again

Let them check by reading the answers out or giving out the worksheet, then they can test each other in pairs by:

- Reading out a pair of boxes from anywhere on the worksheet and seeing if their partner can spot if they have the same meaning or not (i.e. if they are a British or American pair or not)
- Reading out a pair of boxes and seeing if their partner can repeat back the British one
- Reading out a pair of boxes and seeing if their partner can repeat back the American one
- Reading out words from one column until their partner is sure if they are (all) British or (all) American
- Reading out one card and seeing if their partner can say a synonym of it
- Explaining, drawing and/ or miming a word without saying either form of the word until their partner says one or both forms

US and UK technical English reversi games

Cut along the worksheet horizontally (only), so that the cards are joined in British and American English pairs, e.g. with “hard hat” and “bump cap” next to each other on the same card. Don't cut vertically between the two columns. Students spread the cards across the table and then fold them so that British is on one side and American on the other. It doesn't matter which side is top when they start the game.

One student says what they think is on the other side of a card, e.g. “fire engine” if the side that they can see says “fire truck”, then turns that card over to check. If they correctly guessed (exactly) what is on the other side of the card, they leave it turned over (so that in future people have to do the transformation the other way round) and can try the next card. Whenever they make a mistake, play passes to the next person.

You can let students choose which cards they want to do each time or, for more challenge, get them to put the cards in a column and start from the bottom of the column each time. The winner could be the first person to reach a certain number in a row without making a mistake (e.g. reaching the top of the column or ten in a row), the person with the highest number of correct guesses throughout the game, or the person who manages the longest string of correct guesses in a row during the whole game (without needing to keep a total score, i.e. not adding up the correct guesses throughout the game).

If students find the game difficult, you could let them look at both sides of all the cards for two minutes to try to memorise them before they try again, and/ or let them work together instead of competing.

After the game, they can test each other in pairs.

UK and US technical English dominoes

Although it is possible to play actual dominoes with these cards, it is usually better to get them to work together to arrange the cards in a big circle. They can then test each other, e.g. reading out halves of collocations or reading out one version of the collocation.

British and American engineering vocabulary drawing game

British	American
petrol(eum)	gas(oline)
bonnet	hood
bumper	fender
windscreen	windshield
tyre	tire
exhaust pipe/ silencer	tailpipe/ muffler
accelerator (pedal)	gas pedal
handbrake	parking brake
gearbox	transmission
lorry	truck*
fire engine	fire truck
dustcart	garbage truck
skip	Dumpster
bin	trashcan/ garbage can
tap	faucet
lift	elevator*



hoover	vacuum cleaner*
(electrical) socket	(electrical) outlet
(electricity) pylon	transmission tower/ mast
aerial	antenna*
(electric) torch	flashlight
mobile (phone)	cellphone
hash (sign)	pound (sign)
maths	math
anti-clockwise	counter-clockwise
nought point oh five	zero point zero five*
three thousand two hundred*	thirty two hundred
a hundred and thirty	a hundred thirty
a thousand million	a billion*
(service) engineer	(service) technician
hard hat	bump cap
spanner	wrench

British and American English for engineers miming game

British	American
accelerator (pedal)	gas pedal
handbrake	parking brake
gearbox	transmission
bin	trashcan/ garbage can
tap	faucet
lift	elevator*
hoover	vacuum cleaner*
(electrical) socket	(electrical) outlet
(electric) torch	flashlight
mobile (phone)	cellphone
anti-clockwise	counter-clockwise
nought point oh five	zero point zero five*
three thousand two hundred*	thirty two hundred
a hundred and thirty	a hundred thirty
hard hat	bump cap
spanner	wrench

British and American engineering vocabulary jigsaw and reversi games

paraffin	kerosene
petrol(eum)	gas(oline)
bonnet	hood
bumper	fender
windscreen	windshield
tyre	tire
(car) silencer	muffler
exhaust pipe	tailpipe
accelerator (pedal)	gas pedal
handbrake	parking brake
gearbox	transmission
lorry	truck*
fire engine	fire truck
dustcart	garbage truck
skip	Dumpster
bin	trashcan/ garbage can
tap	faucet

lift	elevator*
hoover	vacuum cleaner*
(electrical) socket	(electrical) outlet
(electricity) pylon	transmission tower/ mast
aerial	antenna*
(electric) torch	flashlight
mobile (phone)	cellphone
hash (sign)	pound (sign)
maths	math
anti-clockwise	counter-clockwise
nought point oh five	zero point zero five*
three thousand two hundred*	thirty two hundred
a hundred and thirty	a hundred thirty
a thousand million	a billion*
(service) engineer	(service) technician
hard hat	bump cap
spanner	wrench

British and American technical English collocations dominoes

hoover (e.g. Roomba) vacuum cleaner (e.g. Roomba)	paraffin kerosene
stove heater	petrol gas
station station	front/ rear/ back front/ rear/ back
bumper fender	windscreen windshield
wipers wipers	snow snow
tyres tires	exhaust tail-
pipe pipe	accelerator gas
pedal pedal	hand- parking
brake brake	automatic/ manual automatic/ manual
gearbox transmission	lorry truck*
driver driver	fire fire
engine truck	(rubbish) trash-/ garbage
bin can	hot/ cold (water) hot/ cold (water)
tap faucet	(electrical) (electrical)
socket outlet	TV TV



aerial antenna	pocket pocket
torch flashlight	hash pound
sign sign	maths math
teacher teacher	turn turn
anti-clockwise counter-clockwise	nought point zero point
oh five zero five	mobile cell-
phone phone	hard bump
hat cap	adjustable adjustable
spanner wrench	service (service)
engineer technician	a hundred a hundred
and thirty thirty	dustcart garbage truck
driver driver	bonnet hood
ornament ornament	rental rental/ hire
skip Dumpster	lift elevator
to the 12 th floor to the 12 th floor	robot robot

British and American English for engineers written practice**Matching British and American English**

Match up the British and American words below:

accelerator (pedal)
bin
bonnet
bumper
dustcart
exhaust pipe
fire engine
gearbox
handbrake
lorry
paraffin
petrol(eum)
(car) silencer
skip
tap
tyre
windscreen

(electric) torch
(electricity) pylon
(service) engineer
a hundred and thirty
a thousand million
aerial
anti-clockwise
hard hat
hash (sign)
hoover
lift
maths
mobile (phone)
nought point oh five
socket
spanner
three thousand two hundred*

Dumpster
fender
fire truck
garbage truck
gas pedal
gas(oline)
hood
kerosene
muffler
parking brake
tailpipe
tire
transmission
trashcan/ garbage can
truck*
windshield
faucet

(electrical) outlet
technician
a billion
a hundred thirty
antenna
bump cap
cellphone
counter-clockwise
elevator
flashlight
math
pound (sign)
thirty two hundred
transmission tower/ mast
vacuum cleaner*
wrench
zero point zero five*

Identifying British and American English

Write "UK" and "US" next to the words on each side of the pairs below. Then look at the cards to check, the first time pens down and remembering them to try this task again. As on the cards, the ones which can be both British or American have a star (*) next to them.

kerosene/ paraffin
gas(oline)/ petrol(eum)
bonnet/ hood
bumper/ fender
windscreen/ windshield
tire/ tyre
muffler/ (car) silencer
exhaust pipe/ tailpipe
accelerator (pedal)/ gas pedal
handbrake/ parking brake
gearbox/ transmission
lorry/ truck
fire engine/ fire truck
dustcart/ garbage truck
Dumpster/ skip
bin/ trashcan or garbage can
faucet/ tap
elevator*/ lift
hoover/ vacuum cleaner*
(electrical) outlet/ socket
(electricity) pylon/ transmission tower or mast
aerial/ antenna
flashlight/ (electric) torch
cellphone/ mobile (phone)
hash (sign)/ pound (sign)
math/ maths
anti-clockwise/ counter-clockwise
nought point oh five/ zero point zero five*
thirty two hundred/ three thousand two hundred*
a hundred and thirty/ a hundred thirty
a billion*/ a thousand million
(service) engineer/ (service) technician
bump cap/ hard hat
spanner/ wrench

Changing between British and American English

Write the other form of the words below:

British	American
paraffin	
petrol(eum)	
	hood
	fender
	windshield
tyre	
	muffler
	tailpipe
	gas pedal
	parking brake
	transmission
lorry	*
fire engine	
dustcart	
skip	
bin	
	faucet
lift	
hoover	
socket	
(electricity) pylon	
aerial	*
(electric) torch	
	cellphone
	pound (sign)
maths	
	counter-clockwise
nought point oh five	
*	thirty two hundred
	a hundred thirty
a thousand million	*
	(service) technician
	bump cap
spanner	

Check above.