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Laboratorio di Lingua e Traduzione inglese

“Characteristics and Varieties of North American English” John Gilbert

LEXICAL DIFFERENCES in BRITISH-NORTH AMERICAN ENGLISH

N.B. A few examples from among the estimated 4,000 words used differently in common speech:

BE NAE BE NAE

full stop period mad crazy, also mad

inverted commas quotation marks angry mad, also angry

autumn fall, also autumn nasty, vicious mean

holiday(s) vacation mean stingy

bloke (infml) guy (infml) ill sick\* (in BrE tends to

staff faculty, also staff refer to nausea, in AmE

chemist drug store retains older sense of ill

nappy diaper in general), also ill

cot baby’s crib trousers pants (trousers is old use) (cot is a small, narrow bed) jersey, jumper,

flat apartment pullover, sweater sweater

ground floor first floor, also ground floor rubber eraser

first floor second floor condom rubber (infml), also condom

lift elevator fag (infml) cigarette

caretaker janitor gay fag/faggot (infml, derogatory)

car park parking lot fanny (taboo: female genitals) fanny (infml, polite for buttocks), also butt crossroads intersection bum (infml, polite for buttocks)

roundabout traffic circle tramp (infml) tramp, bum (infml)

pavement sidewalk arse (taboo: buttocks) ass (taboo: buttocks)

motorway expressway, freeway,

thruway bollocks (taboo: testicles) nuts (taboo: testicles)

lorry truck pissed (taboo: drunk) pissed (impolite: angry)

engine motor, also engine bugger (taboo: sodomize, ------------

numberplate licenseplate also noun; used as exclamation)

petrol gas, gasoline bloody (infml, not polite; ------------

road surface pavement used as exclamation)

railway railroad \_ \_\_\_\_\_ motherfucker (taboo:

timetable schedule, also timetable used as exclamation

underground, tube (infml) subway or insult)

subway pedestrian underpass

film movie, also film

the cinema the movies

shop store (shop is a small store)

pub bar

crisps potato chips

chips French Fries

biscuit cookies (biscuit is a type of soft bread

or cake baked in small round pieces)

sweets candy

candy floss cotton candy *(zucchero filato)*

corn (generic for corn *(maize* in England)

cereal crop)

tin can

cooker stove

tap faucet, also tap

torch flashlight

rubbish trash, garbage, also rubbish

dustbin, rubbish-bin trash or garbage can (also bin)

post, postbox mail, mailbox

(but Royal Mail service) (but Postal Service)

maths math