Grammar differences between British and American English

The following guide is meant to point out the principal differences between British and American English.

**Use of the Present Perfect**

In British English, the **present perfect tense** is the most common tense used to talk about recently finished actions and events. In American English, both **present perfect** and **simple past tense** are possible in this case.

- I *have broken* my arm. (British English)
- I *broke* my arm. / I *have broken* my arm. (American English)
- There *has been* an explosion near the bridge. (British English)
- There *was* an explosion near the bridge. / There *has been* an explosion near the bridge. (American English)

Note that past tense forms are more common than present perfect tense forms in American English.

In British English, the indefinite times adverbs **already, just** and **yet** are only used with the present perfect tense. In American English, these time adverbs are also used with the simple past tense.

- They *have already* arrived. (British English)
- They *already arrived.* / They *have already arrived.* (American English)

**Have and have got**

In British English, both **have** and **have got** are used to indicate possession. The forms with **have got** are more common.

- She *has got* a nice home. OR She has a nice home. (British English)
- *Has* she *got* a nice home?
- No, she *hasn’t got* a nice home.

In American English, the forms with **have got** are not all that popular. They are possible, but Americans prefer using have without got. In this case, questions and negatives are made with **do**.

- She *has* a lovely daughter.
- **Does** she *have* a lovely daughter? (NOT Has she a lovely daughter?)
- No, she *doesn’t have* a lovely daughter. (NOT No, she hasn’t a lovely daughter.)