Answers Unit 9

1. Here is a selective list of items that are spelled differently in British and American English (sources: David Crystal (2019), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*, 3rd ed. Cambridge: CUP, p. 307; Gunnel Tottie (2002), *An Introduction to American English*, Malden MA: Blackwell, pp. 10-12.)

British English	American English
I. "Productive" differences (applying to large numbers of words)	
-re (centre, litre, kilometre, meagre)	-er (center, liter, kilometer, meager)
-our (e.g. colour, favour, harbour, honour, humour, odour, rumour, parlour)	-or (color, favor, harbor, honor, humor, odor, rumor, parlor)
-ogue (dialogue, catalogue, monologue, prologue)	-og (dialog, catalog, monolog, prolog)
-ll- (cancelled, cancelling; travelled, travelling; marvelled, marvelling)	-l- (canceled, canceling; traveled, traveling; marveled, marveling)
II. Differences applying to individual words	
aeroplane	airplane
cheque	check
draughty	drafty
programme	program
pyjamas	pajamas
tyre	tire
skeptical	sceptical
yogurt	yoghurt

2. It is always a little more difficult to look for grammatical and lexical variation in corpora than for variable spellings. The easiest items are *rubbish* and *garbage*. These nouns usually occur in the singular, so that you don't have to worry about plurals. Remember, however, that there is a verb *to rubbish*. For *lorry* and *truck*, lemma searches are advisable, because they will give you both the singulars and the plurals. Think about whether either or both of these two nouns can be used as verbs.

   With the *got-gotten* variable, it will be easy to look for *gotten*, but you will have a harder time thinking about intelligent strategies to home in on the relatively small proportion of uses of *got* that are relevant for the study of this variable.

3. At a very general level, the correlation between linguistic and cultural influence clearly holds. The really interesting thing, however, is that influence from American English does not work across the board, but selectively. For example, speakers of British English may be very open to lexical influences from American English, including informal, slang and nonstandard usage, but still hold on to their own spelling conventions. Your figures for *truck/lorry* will show interesting patterns of variable linguistic loyalty among former British colonies.

4. As a first step, make a list of the verbs, adjectives and nouns that may take the mandative subjunctive, for example based on Quirk et al.'s 1985 *Comprehensive Grammar of the English language* (Chapters 3.59, 16.32, 16.72).

   For an efficient search routine, you need to define a kind of typical formal backbone that will recur in a large number of examples of the subjunctive construction, something like:

   NP (*I, he, Susan,* …), followed by
   VP (*demand, insist,*…) followed by
   the conjunction *that*,
   followed by NP (*you, the government, she,* …), followed by
   VP in the subjunctive mood

   The two specific criteria for assessing the quality of a corpus search are **precision** (you mostly get what you are looking for and don't have to go through the search output manually in order to eliminate large amounts of it as irrelevant junk) and **recall** (you ideally get all relevant examples from the corpus, or – more realistically – at least a representative sample).

   If you decide to carry out a search for ***demand* that****,* recall will be high, because you will get practically all mandative subjunctives triggered by the verb *demand*. Precision, on the other hand, will be minimal. For example, you will have to eliminate hundreds of examples such as *Nobody demanded that*.

   If you look for ***DEMAND that _pp BE*** (= any form of the verb *demand*, followed by *that*, followed by a personal pronoun, followed by a form of the verb *to be*), precision will be much higher, because many of the examples you obtain will in fact be subjunctives. Recall decreases drastically, though. For example, you only get subjunctives for the verb *be*, which biases your output in many ways, for example by over-representing passives of the type *we demand that such behaviour be punished*.

   I'm sure my curious and intelligent readers will find intelligent search strategies somewhere in between these two extremes.

5. Reference materials useful for answering this question include:

   Crystal, David. 2003. *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English*

language. 3rd ed. Cambridge: CUP. p. 326-331.
Tottie, Gunnel. 2002. *An introduction to American English*. Malden, Mass. et al.: Blackwell.
Trudgill, Peter, and Jean Hannah. 2002. *International English. A guide to varieties of standard English*. 4th edition. London: Arnold.

6. Useful reference grammars include:

Quirk, Randolph et al. 1985. *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Longman.
Huddleston, Rodney & Geoffrey Pullum. 2001. *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge: CUP.

If you look at the BNC, COCA and GloWbE, you will get a pretty good idea of current usage in varieties of English. If you add the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), you will be able to make interesting discoveries about the recent history of American English.