



## One-Quarter English: Episode 2 Transcript

PODCAST INTRO	
Jenna	Hello, and welcome back to One-Quarter English. I'm Jenna.
Mark	And I'm Mark. Thanks for tuning in. Over the next quarter of an hour we'll present the latest news headlines from around the world before discussing one of the topics in greater detail. We'll then look at some spelling differences between American and British English. After that, you'll find out how to choose between the articles "a" and "an". You'll hear the second installment of a classic Sherlock Holmes story, and then we'll end the podcast with something fun. Enjoy the show.
HEADLINES	
Jenna	In a landmark decision, the government of Kalantria has announced sweeping reforms to its death penalty laws. Effective immediately, the death penalty will be abolished for all crimes except for acts of terrorism and treason. Human rights groups have hailed this decision as a significant step forward, while some political factions argue that it might compromise national security.
Mark	In other news, after months of diplomatic standoffs and border skirmishes between Zandora and Nuvoria, tensions have escalated into full-blown war following an alleged cyber-attack that crippled Zandora's national power grid. Analysts fear this conflict could destabilize the entire region if not contained swiftly.
Jenna	Meanwhile, the coastal city of Rivertown is grappling with severe flooding after unprecedented rainfall over the past 72 hours. Rivers have burst their banks, inundating homes and businesses, and forcing thousands to evacuate. Authorities are urging residents to move to higher ground and heed evacuation orders as more rain is forecast in the coming days.
Mark	A surprising new scientific study from the University of Nordheim has revealed that daily consumption of dark chocolate may lead to increased brain activity in areas associated with learning and memory.
Jenna	And now for some light-hearted news—Guinness World Records has just recognized a new achievement. Max, a border collie from Treeton, has set the record for the "Most Socks Collected by a Dog in One Minute." Max managed to gather a staggering 47 socks in just 60 seconds, delighting his owners and earning him a place in the record books. Max's owner, Linda, says he has always had a peculiar love for socks, and now it seems his quirky habit has paid off.
DISCUSSION	
Jenna	Okay, Mark. In the US, 27 states still use the death penalty as a legal punishment, and I'd like to hear your opinion on it.
Mark	I'm from a state that has capital punishment, Jenna, so I grew up believing that the death penalty serves several important functions in our justice system. For one, it acts as a deterrent to serious crimes. Knowing they could face the ultimate punishment can dissuade potential criminals from committing heinous acts.
Jenna	Are you really sure about that? Studies show that countries and states without the death penalty often have lower murder rates. This suggests that other factors, such as economic conditions, education, and policing strategies, play a far more critical role in crime prevention.
Mark	Hmmm. I'll give you that one, Jenna. But what about the sense of justice and closure the death penalty gives to victims' families. If someone commits a brutal murder, it seems fitting that the punishment reflects the severity of the crime.
Jenna	I understand the desire for justice and closure, but I firmly believe that taking a life as punishment is inherently wrong. It is a violation of human rights and an act of state-sanctioned violence. Plus the death penalty is irreversible, and there have

	been numerous cases where individuals on death row were later found to be innocent through new evidence or DNA testing.
Mark	Okay, I agree with your last point, Jenna, but wouldn't you agree that the safety and security of society are paramount? The death penalty ensures that the most dangerous criminals are permanently removed from society.
Jenna	Yes, it does. But a life sentence without parole can also serve as a severe punishment that protects society without taking a life.
Mark	I guess we just have different definitions of what constitutes severe punishment. Inmates serving life sentences often have access to various luxuries, such as television, educational programs, and recreational activities. They get served three meals a day and have a bed to sleep in and a roof overhead. A lot of people who have never committed a crime, let alone murdered someone, don't have those basic needs met.
Jenna	Yes, Mark, but that's not a problem of the criminal justice system. And while I agree that watching television and having access to educational programs are luxuries, prisoners should be entitled to have their basic needs met; otherwise, we run the risk of violating human rights.
Mark	Do you think inmates should be allowed to vote?
Jenna	That's a whole other kettle of fish, Mark. But no, I don't think they should be allowed to vote.
Mark	Finally, something we can agree on.
<b>AMERICAN ENGLISH VS. BRITISH ENGLISH</b>	
Jenna	Okay, Mark, this episode I'd like to take a look at how American and British English differ in terms of spelling.
Mark	Sure, Jenna. Where should we start?
Jenna	I guess we'll begin with the ones that everyone knows. I think the most well-known difference is in words like colour or favourite.
Mark	Right. British English spells them with "ou" but American English spells them with an "o". What about words like center or meter, Jenna?
Jenna	Easy. Brits spells them with "re" at the end, but Americans spell them with "er", right?
Mark	Exactly. And how do you spell organize?
Jenna	O-R-G-A-N-I-S-E. What about you?
Mark	With a "z", not an "s". And the same goes for realize and analyze and other words ending in "ize" or "yze".
Jenna	What about the word programme? Does it have two "m"s and an "e" on the end?
Mark	Nope. Just one "m". We also spell catalog without the "u" and "e" on the end.
Jenna	And do you double the "l" in words like cancelled or travelled?
Mark	Nope. Just one "l". But we spell enroll and enrollment with two "l"s.
Jenna	Interesting. In British English it only has one "l". Can you think of any other differences?
Mark	One more. How do you spell defense?
Jenna	D-E-F-E-N-C-E. You don't?
Mark	Americans spell it with an "s" instead of a "c". Any others?
Jenna	Hmmmm. Oh! Tyre with a "y". And grey with an "e".
Mark	Really? I spell it T-I-R-E and G-R-A-Y. Wait. I just thought of another one. And this one really bothers me. How do you spell encyclopedia?
Jenna	Umm ... E-N-C-Y-C-L-O-P-A-E-D-I-A.
Mark	American English doesn't use the "AE" or "OE" spellings of words like encyclopedia or maneuver. We just use an "e".
Jenna	Do you know why the differences exist?
Mark	Yeah, I do. One of the most significant influences on American English spelling was Noah Webster, an American lexicographer who published "An American

	Dictionary of the English Language" in 1828. Webster advocated for spelling reforms to make American English more logical and phonetic. He simplified many British spellings, and these changes were widely adopted in the United States.
Jenna	So if you're not sure which is the American English and which is the British English spelling, the simpler and more phonetic spelling is American English most of the time. But both are perfectly acceptable. Just remember to be consistent.
Mark	Except if you're Canadian.
Jenna	Canadian? What do you mean, Mark?
Mark	How about I let my Canadian friend Steve explain. He's a journalist and has to follow spelling guidelines set by the Canadian Press. Alright Steve, the floor is yours.
Steve	Okay. I'm going to list a bunch of words and tell you whether each is spelled the American or British way in Canadian English. Ready? colour - British. theatre - British. organize - American. program - American. analogue - British. travelling - British. enrol - British. defence - British. tire - American. encyclopaedia - British. grey - British. And dreamed - American.
Mark	Dreamed? What's the British way?
Jenna	Dreamt with a "t".
Mark	So what's the tally for Canadian English?
Jenna	Eight British and four American spellings.
Mark	Not very consistent right? So for most English learners, it's probably easier to follow American or British spelling rules.
<b>GRAMMAR</b>	
Mark	In this episode, I'd like to focus on a particular grammar mistake that drives me nuts. And even the most advanced English learners get this wrong. I'm gonna say a bunch of words, and I want you to tell me if you put "a" or "an" in front of them.
Jenna	Okay, I'm ready.
Mark	Here we go. Mouse
Jenna	A mouse
Mark	Classroom
Jenna	A classroom
Mark	Subsidy
Jenna	A subsidy
Mark	Antidote
Jenna	An antidote
Mark	Odyssey
Jenna	An odyssey
Mark	Good. So you know the grammar point I wanna review today, right?
Jenna	Definitely. "A" goes before a consonant, and "an" goes before a vowel.
Mark	That's how it's usually taught, but that's not quite right.
Jenna	It isn't?
Mark	No. Try these words. Octopus.
Jenna	An octopus
Mark	One
Jenna	A one
Mark	Umbrella
Jenna	An umbrella
Mark	University
Jenna	A university
Mark	Utopia
Jenna	A utopia
Mark	Understanding

Jenna	An understanding. Aha. I see what you're getting at, Mark. It's not the letter that's important, it's the sound. Because some vowels can actually sound like consonants like in university or one.
Mark	Exactly. And some consonants at the start of a word are silent, so you only hear the following vowel.
Jenna	Can you give me an example?
Mark	Sure. Honour. It was an honour to meet you.
Jenna	I think it's also important to point out that the "a" or "an" always agrees with the sound of the first letter of the word directly after it, regardless of whether that word is a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.
Mark	Can you give me an example?
Jenna	Well, you say an incredible movie or a thoughtful answer.
Mark	Good point, Jenna. A lot of learners make the mistake of thinking the article has to agree with a noun. Acronyms can be tricky too. What's the article for these words? VIP
Jenna	A VIP
Mark	CCTV camera
Jenna	a CCTV camera
Mark	UN mission
Jenna	a UN mission
Mark	ICU patient
Jenna	an ICU patient
Mark	MP3 file
Jenna	An MP3 file
Mark	Good. So in acronyms, it's the sound of the first letter, not what the letter actually is, that's important. If it sounds like a vowel, use "an". If it sounds like a consonant, use "a".
Jenna	Okay, Mark. It's crystal clear now. Using "a" or "an" is a piece of cake, not an impossible task.
<b>SHERLOCK HOLMES</b>	
Mark	It's that time again. Are you ready for the second installment of The Speckled Band, Jenna.
Jenna	Go for it, Mark. I'm all ears.
Stoner	Alas. The very horror of my situation lies in the fact that my fears are so vague, and my suspicions depend so entirely upon small points, which might seem trivial to another, that even he to whom of all others I have a right to look for help and advice looks upon all that I tell him about it as the fancies of a nervous woman. He does not say so, but I can read it from his soothing answers and averted eyes. But I have heard, Mr. Holmes, that you can see deeply into the manifold wickedness of the human heart. You may advise me how to walk amid the dangers which encompass me.
Holmes	I am all attention, madam.
Stoner	My name is Helen Stoner, and I am living with my stepfather, who is the last survivor of one of the oldest Saxon families in England, the Roylotts of Stoke Moran, on the western border of Surrey.
Watson	Holmes nodded his head.
Holmes	The name is familiar to me.
Stoner	The family was at one time among the richest in England, and the estates extended over the borders into Berkshire in the north, and Hampshire in the west. In the last century, however, four successive heirs were of a dissolute and wasteful disposition, and the family ruin was eventually completed by a gambler in the days of the Regency. Nothing was left save a few acres of ground, and the two-hundred-year-old house, which is itself crushed under a heavy mortgage. The last squire

	<p>dragged out his existence there, living the horrible life of an aristocratic pauper. But his only son, my step-father, seeing that he must adapt himself to the new conditions, obtained an advance from a relative, which enabled him to take a medical degree, and went out to Calcutta, where, by his professional skill and his force of character, he established a large practice. In a fit of anger, however, caused by some robberies which had been perpetrated in the house, he beat his native butler to death, and narrowly escaped a capital sentence. As it was, he suffered a long term of imprisonment, and afterwards returned to England a morose and disappointed man. When Dr. Roylott was in India he married my mother, Mrs. Stoner, the young widow of Major-general Stoner, of the Bengal Artillery. My sister Julia and I were twins, and we were only two years old at the time of my mother's re-marriage. She had a considerable sum of money—not less than 1000 pounds a year—and this she bequeathed to Dr. Roylott entirely while we resided with him, with a provision that a certain annual sum should be allowed to each of us in the event of our marriage. Shortly after our return to England my mother died—she was killed eight years ago in a railway accident near Crewe. Dr. Roylott then abandoned his attempts to establish himself in practice in London, and took us to live with him in the old ancestral house at Stoke Moran. The money which my mother had left was enough for all our wants, and there seemed to be no obstacle to our happiness. But a terrible change came over our step-father about this time. Instead of making friends and exchanging visits with our neighbors, who had at first been overjoyed to see a Roylott of Stoke Moran back in the old family seat, he shut himself up in his house, and seldom came out save to indulge in ferocious quarrels with whoever might cross his path. Violence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family, and in my step-father's case it had, I believe, been intensified by his long residence in the tropics. A series of disgraceful brawls took place, two of which ended in the police-court, until at last he became the terror of the village, and the folks would fly at his approach, for he is a man of immense strength, and absolutely uncontrollable in his anger. Last week he hurled the local blacksmith over a parapet into a stream, and it was only by paying over all the money which I could gather together that I was able to avert another public exposure. He had no friends at all save the wandering gypsies, and he would give these vagabonds leave to encamp upon the few acres of bramble-covered land which represent the family estate, and would accept in return the hospitality of their tents, wandering away with them sometimes for weeks on end. He has a passion also for Indian animals, which are sent over to him by a correspondent, and he has at this moment a cheetah and a baboon, which wander freely over his grounds, and are feared by the villagers almost as much as their master. You can imagine from what I say that my poor sister Julia and I had no great pleasure in our lives. No servant would stay with us, and for a long time we did all the work of the house. She was but thirty at the time of her death, and yet her hair had already begun to whiten, even as mine has.</p>
Holmes	Your sister is dead, then?
Stoner	She died just two years ago, and it is of her death that I wish to speak to you.
Mark	And that's it for this installment of The Speckled Band. Next time we'll find out about the mysterious death of Helen Stoner's sister. And maybe I'll finally get my promised cameo, right Jenna?
Jenna	Remember that patience is a virtue, Mark.
RIDDLE	
Jenna	Anyway, it's time to move on to something fun. I've got a riddle here that needs answering. Let's see who can solve it first, Mark or Steve. Are you two ready?
Mark	I'm ready.
Steve	I'm good to go, Jenna.

Jenna	Alright then. Here's the riddle. I'm not alive, but I grow. I don't have lungs, but I need air. I don't have a mouth, but water kills me. What am I?
Mark	Hmm. A tree? No!!! That wasn't my guess. Water definitely doesn't kill a tree.
Steve	Too late. You spoke too soon. What about a balloon?
Mark	A balloon? You can't kill a balloon, Steve. Damage, yes. But not kill.
Jenna	Any other ideas?
Mark	Grows, needs air, doesn't like water. Ha! I've got it! It's fire!
Jenna	Good job, Mark!
Steve	Yeah, nice work!
<b>PODCAST EXTRO</b>	
Mark	Well, that's it for this episode. We hope you enjoyed it!
Jenna	Tune in next time for more headlines, more in-depth discussions, another difference between British and American English, a grammar point explained, and more Sherlock Holmes. Plus there will be something fun at the end. Bye for now!
Mark	Until next time.