



Dictionary labels

1 Match the dictionary labels with their definitions.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| a British | 1 Not used in everyday speech or writing. |
| b American | 2 Used in American English, but not in British English. |
| c formal | 3 Used commonly in speech, but not in writing. |
| d informal | 4 Used in British English, but not in American English. |

2 Use an appropriate label from Exercise 1 as a heading for the word lists (1-3).

1	2	3
sweets	guy	alight
pavement	nerd	beverage
rubbish bin		refrain

Check your answers in the dictionary extracts.

3 Work with a partner. Decide what each notice means and where you might see it. Use the dictionary extracts to help you.



- Foot passengers please disembark via the steps at the front of the ferry
- All cyclists must dismount here
- The use of calculators is not permissible
- Do not alight from the train whilst it is still in motion

Write less formal versions of each notice.

- Please don't use your calculator.

4 Rewrite these sentences in American English.

- Last year, I took my holiday in the autumn.
Last year, I went on vacation in the fall.
- We keep our rubbish bin on the pavement in front of our house.
- I never eat sweets or biscuits between meals.
- I get angry with lorry drivers who go too fast on the motorway.
- There's a postbox near to the Underground station.

Are any of the sentences true for you?

5 Check your own dictionary. What kinds of labels does it use?

alight² /ə'laɪt/ verb [I] *formal* to get off a train, bus, or other vehicle

autumn /'ɒtəm/ noun [C/U] *British* fall

beverage /'bev(ə)rɪdʒ/ noun [C] *formal* a drink

biscuit /'bɪskɪt/ noun [C] *British* cookie

disembark /dɪs'mbɑːk/ verb [I] *formal* to get off a ship or plane

dismount /dɪs'maʊnt/ verb [I] *formal* to get off a horse or a bike

guy /gaɪ/ noun [C] ★★ *informal* a man

highway /'haɪweɪ/ noun [C] ★ a wide road that has been built for fast travel between towns and cities

holiday /'hɒlɪdeɪ/ noun [C/U] ★★★ *British* a vacation

lorry /'lɒri/ noun [C] *British* a truck

motorway /'mɔʊtəweɪ/ noun [C] *British* a large highway

nerd /nɜːd/ noun [C] *informal* someone who is boring and not fashionable

pavement /'peɪvmənt/ noun [C] *British* a sidewalk

permissible /pə'rɪmɪsəb(ə)l/ adj *formal* if something is permissible, you are allowed to do it

persons /'pɜːs(ə)nz/ noun [C] *formal* the plural of person is people, but in formal or official language the form persons is used

postbox /'pəʊstbɒks/ noun [C] *British* a mailbox

purchase¹ /'pɜːtʃəs/ verb [T] *formal* to buy something

refrain /rɪ'freɪn/ verb [I] *formal* to stop yourself from doing something

rubbish bin /'rʌbɪʃ 'bɪn/ noun [C] *British* trash can

sweets /swiːts/ noun [C] *British* candy

Underground, the /'ʌndə'graʊnd/ noun [singular] *British* the subway

From the Macmillan Essential Dictionary for Learners of American English.