American, n. and adj.

Pronunciation: Brit. /əˈmɛrɪk(ə)n/, U.S. /əˈmɛr(ə)k(ə)n/

Forms:
a. 15– American.

β. Chiefly humorous and nonstandard 19– Americun, 19– Amerkin, 19– Amerricun, 19– Amurkin.

Frequency (in current use):

Origin: From a proper name, combined with an English element. Etymons: proper name America, -AN suffix.

Etymology: < the name of America (see AMERICA n.), Middle French américain, adjective (1567; French américain), noun (1580 or earlier; French américain; compare Middle French amérique inhabitant of America (1556)), Spanish americano, noun (1618), adjective (1635), Portuguese americano, noun and adjective (a1679), Italian americano, noun and adjective (1751); also Dutch Amerikaner, noun (1667 in an apparently isolated attestation), Amerikaan, noun (1790 as American), Amerikaans, adjective (1820 as amerikaansch), German amerikanisch, adjective (1630 as americanisch, or earlier), Amerikaner, noun (1661 as Americaner, or earlier), Swedish amerikansk, adjective (1663), Swedish amerikan, noun (1678).

A. n.

1. An indigenous inhabitant of (any part of) the Americas; an American Indian. Now only with modifying word, as indigenous American, original American, etc.; see also NATIVE AMERICAN n. 1.

1568 T. HACKET tr. A. Thevet New Found Worlde xxxviii. f. 57 These Americans [Fr. Ameriques] do neuer make amongst them any paction or concorde.

1578 G. BEST True Disc. Passage to Cathaya III. 61 They are naturally borne children of the same couloure & complexion as all the Americans are, which dwell vnder the Equinoctiall line.

1633 W. DRUMMOND Entertainm. Charles King of Great Brit. 7 Her attyre was of divers coloured feathers, which shew her to bee an American.

1686 S. SEWALL Let. 15 Feb. in Let.-bk. (1886) I. 23 The Americans welfare here..may be much forwarded by the ministers and Christians in England helping together.

1711 J. ADDISON Spectator No. 56. ¶1 The Americans believe that all Creatures have Souls.

1777 W. ROBERTSON Hist. Amer. II. 417 Amazing accounts are given of the persevering speed of the Americans.

1811 J. BLACK tr. A. von Humboldt Polit. Ess. New Spain II. 96 The zea maize was the only farinaceous gramen cultivated by the Americans before the arrival of the Europeans.

1841 J. F. COOPER Deerslayer (1854) x. 171 Beauty among the women of the aboriginal Americans..is not uncommon.

1888 Science 9 Nov. 228/1 What Dr. Brinton said about the difference between the character and
color of the hair of Mongolians and Americans needs no further refutation.

1945  Bull. Torrey Bot. Club 72 11  The indigenous Americans, as a general thing, did not carry on an extensive agriculture.

1986  R. B. MORRISON & C. R. WILSON Native Peoples iii. 49  It is quite possible that the first Americans were adapted to the North Pacific Coast rather than to the interior.

2005  C. MANN 1491 ii. v. 154  All of them had either Folsom or Clovis points, which convinced many archaeologists that the Clovis people, the earlier of the two, must have been the original Americans.

2.

a. Originally: a native or inhabitant of America, esp. of the British colonies in North America, of European descent (now hist.). Now chiefly: a native or citizen of the United States. Cf. also LATIN AMERICAN n., NORTH AMERICAN n., SOUTH AMERICAN n., etc.

1648  T. GAGE (title)  The English-American his travail by sea and land: or, a new survey of the West India's.

1691  C. MATHER  Triumphs Reformed Relig. in Amer. 88  A rude American.

1702  C. MATHER  Magnalia Christi sig. C4/1  One poor feeble American, capable of touching this Work no otherwise than in a Digression.

1741  G. WHITFIELD Let. 23 Dec. (1772) III. 432  I now have forty-nine children under my care, twenty-three English, ten Scots, four Dutch, five French, seven Americans.

1766  B. GALE in Philos. Trans. 1765 (Royal Soc.) 55 198  Paying quit-rents to monopolizers of large tracts of land, is not well relished by Americans.

1775  JOHNSON  Taxation No Tyranny 13  That the Americans are able to bear taxation is indubitable.

1809  E. A. KENDALL  Trav. Northern Parts U.S. II. lviii. 286  The Americans, that is the subjects of the United States.

1842  DICKENS  Amer. Notes II. i. 11  Whenever an Englishman would cry 'All right!' an American cries 'Go ahead!'

1882  Cent. Mag. Nov. 26  We Americans are terribly in earnest about making ourselves.

1924  Life & Work Feb. 31/1  A Reserve Fund of 41 million dollars was handed over by the Americans to the Filipinised Government.

1948  William & Mary Q. 3rd Ser. 5 311  Knaves the Americans certainly seemed to be when they objected to the Townshend Duties almost as vehemently as they had to the Stamp Act.

1975  A. A. THOMPSON  Message from Absolom iv. 24  The Americans ate hungrily.

2001  N.Y. Times 1 July VIII. 1/3  She was not...a rising young American aided by the United States Tennis Association.

b. As the second element of compounds forming nouns with the sense ‘an American of the specified origin or descent’. Cf. AFRICAN AMERICAN n., IRISH-AMERICAN n., ITALIAN-AMERICAN n., POLISH-AMERICAN n.

1648 English-American [see sense A. 2a].
1755 Douglass's Summary State Brit. Settlements N.-Amer. (new ed.) I. 107 In this port the British and French Americans carry on a considerable intercourse of trade.

1787 G. Greive tr. F. J. de Chastellux Trav. N.-Amer. I. 226 I was with...all the French, or Gallo-Americans, at Philadelphia.

1894 Cent. Mag. Apr. 849 The first generations of English-Americans subsisted mainly on maize.

1900 Daily News 15 Aug. 3/1 My opponents were of the hyphenated variety—Dutch-Americans and Irish-Americans predominating.

2006 Time Out N.Y. 8 June 99/3 It's even harder for...a middle-class Filipino-American.

†3. An American ship or other vessel. Obs.

1782 T. Pasley Jrnl. 10 Aug. in Private Sea Jrnls. (1931) 266 I discovered a Ship, a Brig, and a Sloop, steering down for the Havana...all Americans.

1790 T. Jefferson Circular to Consuls 26 Aug. in Papers (1965) XVII. 423 We wish you to use your Endeavours that no Vessel enter as an American in the Ports of your District which shall not be truly such.

1817 R. Southey in Q. Rev. 172 He had sailed in an American to Manilla.

1864 Let. 20 June in T. S. Williams & P. L. Simmonds Eng. Commerc. Corr. 275 That vessel however being an American...was almost uninsurable here.

1894 Times 10 July 11/1 When the vessels next met the American was far enough ahead to throw about on the Britannia's weather bow.

4. The variety of English used in the United States; American English.

1787 G. Greive tr. F. J. de Chastellux Trav. N.-Amer. II. 264 You speak American well.

1803 J. Davis Trav. U.S.A. 139 What do you think of the style of Johnson, the Reviewer? It is not English that he writes, Sir; it is American.

1869 P. Gillmore Accessible Field Sports 19 But it was evident I was not boss. [Note] American for 'master'.

1889 R. Kipling From Sea to Sea (1899) xvii. 368 The American I have heard up to the present, is a tongue as distinct from English as Patagonian.

1919 H. L. Mencken Amer. Lang. 26 American thus shows its character in a constant experimentation...a steady reaching out for new and vivid forms.

1966 Listener 2 June 810/3 We have tried...to translate from French into American and vice versa.


5. Brit. In pl. Stocks or shares in American companies or enterprises.

1886 Times Reg. Events in 1885 p. cliii People...who...had come to believe that 'Americans' would never advance any more.

1897 Daily News 7 Sept. 7/1 A further rise in Americans.
1905 *Daily Report* 22 Mar. 1/2 Yankees. As predicted yesterday, Americans have quickly recovered their reaction.

1970 *Times* 25 July 21/4 Among the Americans Texaco rose 2½ to 72½.

**B. adj.**

1. Of or relating to (any part of) the Americas.
   In later use sometimes difficult to distinguish from sense B. 2, except in scientific contexts. Cf. *Latin American* adj., *North American* adj., *South American* adj., etc.

1580 A. Munday *Zelauto* 38 Report running through..the golden American countrey, and the rytch inhabited Islandes of the East and West Indias,..of a gallant and renowned Mayden Queene.

1633 G. Herbert *Temple: Sacred Poems* 190 Religion stands on tip-toe in our land, Readie to pass to the American strand.

1693 C. Mather *Wonders Invisible World* 11 The first planters of these Colonies..embraced a voluntary exile in a squalid, horrid, American desart.

1740 *Oath* 10 Nov. in W. Stephens *Jrnl. Proc. Georgia* (1742) II. 664 Ships..come up to the Town, where the Worm (which is the plague of the American seas) does not eat.

1834 Chambers's *Edinb. Jrnl.* 21 June 168/1 A bird, called the partridge,..is found all over the American continent.

1903 *Science* (N.Y.) 5 June 892/2 The International Union of the American Republics, popularly known as the Pan-American Union.


2005 J. Diamond *Collapse* (2006) vi. 197 Iceland lies in the North Atlantic Ocean about 600 miles west of Norway, on what is called the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, where the American and Eurasian continental plates spread.

b. Of, relating to, or designating the indigenous inhabitants of (any part of) the Americas; of, relating to, or designating American Indians. Now chiefly with modifying word, as early, original, indigenous, etc.

1611 E. Aston tr. J. de Léry *Certaine Things conc. Amer.* in J. Boemus *Manners, Lawes, & Customs of the Indians of America*. The ornaments, bracelets, and all the other compleat attire of the American women.

1734 tr. *Ceremonies & Relig. Customs of the Indians of America*. Most of the American Priests are at the same Time Physicians.

1865 J. Lubbock *Prehist. Times* xii. 414 The American skulls are characterised by a flattened occiput.

1893 *Polit. Sci. Q.* 8 163 This is the first general study..of early American peoples from the vantage ground of the theory of evolution.

1934 A. Dickerson *Orozco Frescoes at Dartmouth* 6 (caption) Into the Valley of Mexico, cradle of the indigenous American civilization.

2004 *San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News* (Nexis) 13 May 3 It's important for non-native people to come and check real American culture and appreciate the beauty.
c. Of, designating, or belonging to any American Indian language, or such languages collectively.

1625  P. HEYLIN Μικρόκοσμος (rev. ed.) 790  Iucutan..in the American tongue, is, what say you.

1689  I. MATHER Brief Relation State New Eng. 16  In an Indian Town..was an Englishman, who being skilful in the American Language, Preached the Gospel to them in their own Tongue.

1744  Let. to H. S. A. M. of —— in D. Malcolm Lett., Ess. & Tracts Antiq. Great Brit. & Irel. 5  The Phraseology of this American sentence seems to be precisely the same with that of the Ancient Scots.


1839  Penny Cycl. XIII. 320  The singular congruity in structure between all the American languages, from the northern to the southern extremity of the continent.

1862  C. A. JOHNS Brit. Birds 415  The American Bittern..seems to differ in no material respect from the European species.

1890  E. B. CUSTER Following Guidon 201  These great black blotches against the faultless sky were my introduction to the American buffalo.

1907  ‘N. BLANCHAN’ Birds Every Child should Know i. 5  When our American robin comes out of the turquoise blue egg that his devoted mother has warmed into life, he usually finds three or four baby brothers and sisters.

1939  E. A. BESSEY Text-bk. Mycol. (new ed.) viii. 198  E. parasitica is the fungus which has destroyed

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d. Designating animals and plants native to or originating in America, chiefly to distinguish them from similar or related species native to Britain or the Old World, as American aloe, crow, marmot, etc. See also Special uses 3b.

American bittern, elm, leopard, masterwort, ostrich, plaice, robin, etc.: see the second element.

1678  J. RAY tr. F. Willughby Ornithol. II. 150  The American Ostrich [L. Struthiocamelus Americanus].is somewhat less than the African. Their Legs are long, the lower about a foot and a half.

1763  R. BROOKES New Syst. Nat. Hist. I. 41  Mr. Catesby in his natural history of Carolina calls this the American Bison; and says it is the only species of the Wild Cow kind known in North America.

1771  J. R. FORSTER tr. P. Kalm Trav. N. Amer. II. 104  The red maple Acer rubrum and the American elm Ulmus Americana began to flower at present; and some of the latter kind were already in full blossom.

1833  Penny Cycl. I. 446/1  The American aloe..yields, when wounded, an abundance of sweet fluid.
nearly all the trees of the American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) since the fungus was introduced from Eastern Asia on nursery stock about 1900.

1972 *Star–News (Pasadena, Calif.)* 29 Jan. 13/1 Marmota monax is the technical name for groundhog, also known as woodchuck or American marmot.

2005 *Connecticut Wildlife* Jan.–Feb. 11/1 Slightly smaller than the American crow, the fish crow is best identified by its short, nasal ‘cahr, cahr’ voice.

2.

a. Originally: of, relating to, or characteristic of the European (esp. British) colonies in North America or their inhabitants. Now chiefly: of, relating to, or characteristic of the United States or its inhabitants.

1616 T. SCOT *Philomythie* (title-page) Monsier Pandorssvs Waldolynnatvs, that merry American Philosopher, or the Wiseman of the New World.

1647 N. WARD *Simple Cobler Aggawam* 23 We make it an Article of our American Creed.

1680 A. SALL *Let. 26 Oct. in R. Boyle Corr.* (2001) V. 220 Our endeavours to convert the natives of this countrie upon maxims like those of the American planters.

1716 C. MATHER *Let. 6 June in Harvard Stud. Philol. & Lit.* (1897) 5 63 I believe y’ American puritanism to be much of a piece with Frederician pietism.

1775 JOHNSON *title* Taxation no tyranny, an answer to the resolutions and address of the American Congress.

1808 H. GRAY *Lett. from Canada* (1809) 275 As we approached the American boundary, we found a few settlements.

1839 *Southern Lit. Messenger* 5 5/2 He was proscribed for his long and faithful services in the American consulate.

1883 *Daily News* 14 May 5/8 The plain evening dress which bespeaks the American Minister everywhere.

1925 A. HUXLEY *Along Road 1. 6* In a Montmartre boîte..sat three young American girls.

1947 *William & Mary Q.* 3rd Ser. 4 302 The English relied on military success in America to discourage France from intervening and recognizing American independence.

1970 *Daily Tel.* 13 Mar. (Colour Suppl.) 47/1 He was not hot-gospelling for pop or for the American way of life.


b. Of, designating, or belonging to the English language as used in the United States (or formerly, in Britain’s North American colonies).

See also *American English n.*

1650 *Exercitation Answered* 26 Under Usurpation (he saies, meaning the present Government in the American tongue) we can expect no settlement.

c. As the second element of compounds in the sense ‘American of the specified origin or descent’. Cf. AFRICAN AMERICAN adj., AFRO-AMERICAN adj., AFRICO-AMERICAN adj., ITALIAN–AMERICAN adj., POLISH-AMERICAN adj.

1761 Compl. Hist. Present War 2 In the year 1749, some English American traders commenced a traffic with the Indians, on the banks of the river Ohio.

1837 R. CHAMBERS Hist. Eng. Lang. & Lit. (ed. 4) 237 The papers referring to Dutch-American traditions were peculiarly relished, on account of the new and grotesque images which they brought before the mind.

1927 F. M. THRASHER Gang II. xii. 208 Most observers agree that the tongs are the product of the Chinese-American community.

1978 Amer. Ethnol. 5 27 The absence of kin in the local community no doubt stimulated the development of voluntary mutual aid associations in Japanese-American communities.

2006 Custom Home (Nexis) 1 Apr. Constructed by Danish-American craftsmen in traditional tongue-and-groove joinery, the wood worktops come in three staved variations.

d. U.S. Of a horse or cow: originating in the eastern states, esp. as opposed to the southwest, being typically of superior quality and relatively large in size. Now hist.

1837 Diplom. Corr. Texas (1908) I. 187 A large number of fine American horses, which there is no doubt had been stolen from citizens of Texas.

1861 T. WINTHROP John Brent (1862) ii. 14 He was an American horse,—so they distinguish in California one brought from the old States.

1875 Cimarron (New Mexico) News & Press 7 Aug. 4/4 Texas cows, $12 to $16 per head; American cows, $25 to $50 per head.

1940 E. FERGUSSON Our Southwest 62 Mounts ranged from nimble Spanish ponies to big American
SPECIAL USES

S1. With nouns and adjectives designating a person or people of a specified origin or descent residing in America or the United States. Cf. senses A. 2b, B. 2c.

1764 London Mag. 33 78/2 The failings of these people, (the American French) are counterbalanced by many excellent good qualities.

1836 H. Bokum Stranger's Gift 30 The state of the great majority of the American Germans does not admit of any extended comparison with the general character of either America or Germany.

1868 Colburn's United Service Mag. Jan. 123 The only way to prevent its spreading was to deal as our forefathers would have dealt with the American or American-Irish adventurers.

1906 J. Joyce Let. 25 Sept. (1966) II. 167 There are ten times as many Irish and American-Irish here than Scandinavians.

2003 New Yorker 10 Nov. 46/3 An obscure American-Hungarian mathematician and demographer.

S2. With participles.

American-born adj.

1777 London Mag. Jan. 299/1 The American born subjects shall be permitted to enter into any of the provincial corps in his majesty's service.

1856 Notes & Queries 5 Jan. 9/2 In a kind of feud now existing between American-born and foreign-born citizens, the former are said to profess Nativism.

1963 A. Baraka Blues People ii. 15 With no native or tribal references..the American-born slave had only the all-encompassing mores of his white master.

2004 New Yorker 15 Mar. 74/3 The American-born children of the first generation of exiles..are less bitter than their parents.

American-built adj.

1740 K. William Coll. Papers & Other Tracts 34 The Colliers and Coasting Vessels, were American-built.


1966 Economist 10 Sept. 1040/2 It began offering a 5-year, 50,000-mile guarantee for..its American-built cars.

2007 Kent & Sussex Courier (Nexis) 20 Apr. 22 He found his squadron's American-built Tomahawks were no match for the German Me109s.
**American-made adj.**

1812 *Weekly Reg. (Baltimore)* 22 Feb. 462/1 Nineteen twentieths of the people still have an impression that American made goods, no matter of what kind they are, must be sold dearer than the imported.

1915 'B. M. Bower' *Jean of Lazy A* xx. 265 He smiled...and lifted his American-made Stetson a few inches above his head.

2000 *Plumbing Mag.* May–June 10/3 The saw has...an American-made 140mm blade.

**S3.**

a. **American bar n.** (chiefly outside the United States) a bar that is American in style or serves American-style drinks, (in early use) one where customers sit at the counter.

[1854 *Times* 15 Apr. 9/6 They have already established an American line of coaches to the bay [sc. Melbourne] and American bar-rooms.]

1856 *Harper's Mag.* Sept. 564/2 It [sc. the fête ground of the Bois de Boulogne] has been planted and laid out into arbors, with dancing ground, with quiet temples of refreshment, with brilliant billiard saloons, with American 'bars', etc.

1913 G. W. Hills *John Bull Ltd.* 229 [Many English hotels] proudly bear aloft the sign of relief yclept 'American Bar'; but sign and beverages are alike delusions.

1990 *Illustr. London News* Summer 94/1 *(advt.*) Entirely renovated. Two restaurants with terrace by the lake, American bar, piano bar, cable TV with 22 channels.

**American breakfast n.** a cooked breakfast of a kind originating in the United States, typically including bacon, ham, eggs, pancakes, and waffles.

1799 *Monthly Mag.* Feb. 128/2 An American breakfast is even proverbial for its variety: I seldom sat down to this meal, but in addition to the usual fare of tea and coffee, fish, beef-steaks, ham, cheese, &c. were served up.

1903 *Janesville (Wisconsin) Daily Gaz.* 23 July 3/3 The substantial American breakfast with plenty of everything good from coffee to buckwheat cakes.

2001 *Scotl. on Sunday* (Nexis) 28 Oct. 46 I love American breakfasts, corn beef hash; eggs Benedict; waffles with crispy bacon; pancakes with maple syrup.

**American Century n.** (also with lower-case initial in the second element) (chiefly with the) the 20th century, regarded as dominated or influenced by the United States.

Popularized by the essay *The American Century* by Henry Luce (1898–1967): see quot. 1941.
American cheese n. orig. and chiefly U.S. (a) a mild Cheddar cheese made in the United States; (b) a kind of processed cheese (usually in thin slices) made from a blend of different cheeses, typically including Cheddar (now the usual sense).

American Civil War n. †(a) the American War of Independence (1775–83) (obs.); (b) the war fought in the United States from 1861 to 1865 between the eleven seceding Southern states (the Confederacy) and the remaining (northern) states (the Union).

American cloth n. (a) (chiefly Brit.) a cotton cloth with a glossy, waterproofed surface (in the United States chiefly called enamelled
cloth); (b) cotton cloth originally but in later use not necessarily made in the United States, traded in the Levant and Africa; cf. AMERICANI n.


1896 C. T. JAMES *Yoke of Freedom* 85 Not a single ring of stickiness was to be found upon the American-cloth table-cover.

1915 H. G. DWIGHT *Constantinople* xvi. 474 The coarse cotton used in most of the work is known in the Levant as American cloth.


1991 *Jrnl. Design Hist.* 4 237/2 For the other room a cottage dining-table and six cane seat chairs were offered with an easy chair in American cloth.

**American depositary receipt** n. (also *American depository receipt*) *U.S. Stock Market* a certificate representing shares in a foreign company which are held by an American bank and may be traded on U.S. stock markets; abbreviated ADR.

1927 *Washington Post* 13 Apr. 14 Merrill Lynch & Co. will offer..250,000 American depository receipts for the ordinary shares of Selfridge Provincial Stores.

2006 *Baltimore Sun* 20 Aug. C3/4 Three of the fund’s top portfolio holdings also available in the U.S. as American depositary receipts (ADRs).

**American dream** n. (also *American Dream*) (with the) the ideal that every citizen of the United States should have an equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, determination, and initiative.

[a1911 D. G. PHILLIPS *Susan Lenox* (1917) I. xxiii. 439 The fashion and home magazines..have prepared thousands of Americans..for the possible rise of fortune that is the universal American dream and hope.]

1916 *Chicago Tribune* 7 Feb. 6 If the American idea, the American hope, the American dream, and the structures which Americans have erected are not worth fighting for to maintain and protect, they were not worth fighting for to establish.

1931 J. T. ADAMS *Epic of Amer.* 410 If the American dream is to come true and to abide with us, it will, at bottom, depend on the people themselves.

2002 *N.Y. Times* 28 Apr. 12/2 Many claim..rights to housing, education, health care and welfare checks, yet they are denied the up-by-the-bootstraps right to work that..has always underpinned the immigrant’s hope for access to the American dream.

**American Empire** n. (also with lower-case initial in the second element) (a) an empire in America; (b) the United States of America,
esp. viewed as an imperialistic state, either in possessing territories overseas or in exerting power and influence beyond its borders; American imperialism.

1709 J. Oldmixon *Hist. Addr.* xii. 220 A Person that hath not any legal Pretence to the Crown of any Kingdom whatsoever, not so much as an African or American Empire.

1780 *‘INTEGER’ Lett. to High & Mighty United States Amer.* iii. 24 I am not likely to succeed in my application for the office of comptant general to the grand American Empire.

1912 *Times* 7 Aug. 5/4 The shadow of sovereignty that has existed in the Panama nation heretofore now passes away, and the Isthmian State becomes a section of the American Empire, with restricted home rule.

1954 *Hispanic Amer. Hist. Rev.* 34 560 The land-minded citizens of the new and somewhat shaky North American republic were thrusting westward into inevitable collision with Spain's American empire.

1992 R. Poirier in J. Parini *Gore Vidal* 230 Roosevelt had already helped set the course of American empire as McKinley's assistant secretary of the Navy.

2007 *Caribbean Today* (Electronic ed.) Mar. 4 Chavez said the Caribbean did not know where it stood and unless there was unity the region would remain under the control of 'the American Empire'.

**American football** *n.* a sport originating in the United States, based on rugby football and played by two teams of eleven players on a field marked out in the form of a gridiron, points being scored from touchdowns and field goals.

In North America known simply as *football*.

1897 H. Chadwick (*title*) Handbook of winter sports. Embracing: skating (on ice and on rollers,) rink-ball, curling, ice-boating, and American football.

1943 *Times* 8 May 2/6 American football is a dangerous game and the players are suitably padded, each man's equipment weighing about 10lb.

1997 E. M. Kramer *Modern/Postmodern* p. xi In American football, measurements are laboriously and religiously taken so that statistics can be calculated for every conceivable aspect of the game.

**American footballer** *n.* chiefly *Brit.* a person who plays American football.

1897 *Bristol Times & Mirror* 11 Dec. 5/6 The American footballer...has usually distinguished himself by the performance of deeds which should secure him the Victoria Cross.

1955 *Times* 14 Jan. 5/7 Protective clothing of the type worn by American footballers hardly seemed justified.

2006 *Financial Times* (Nexis) 26 Aug. 16 With their helmets and padding, American footballers crash into each other with alarming force.
**American leather n.** chiefly Brit. (now rare) = *American cloth n.*

(a).

[1853] *Times* 9 Nov. 2/2 (adv.) To coachmakers... American leather cloth, 45 inches wide, 2s. 6d. a yard.

1858 P. L. SIMMONDS *Dict. Trade Products Seating*, horse-hair fabric, American leather, or other materials, made for covering the cushions of chairs, couches, &c.

1893 G. ALLEN *Scallywag* I. 97 That peculiar sort of deep-brown oil-cloth which is known...as American leather.

1914 R. C. BOSANQUET *Days in Attica* 5 The pillow should have a removable outer cover of American leather or dark washing material.

**American legion n.** see *LEGION n.* 5.

**American Native n.** (also with lower-case initial in the second element) = *AMERICAN INDIAN n.*

In earlier use probably not a fixed collocation.

1648 T. SHEPARD *Clear Sun-shine of Gospel* 38 I confesse it passeth my skill to tell how the Gospel should be generally received by these American Natives.

1765 *Mem. Chevalier Pierpoint* IV. 96 Ferdinand and his queen Isabella were in the utmost surprise, to see him return at the end of nine months, with some American natives of Hispaniola.

1823 *Missionary Herald* (Boston) Dec. 397/2 The singular anomaly, amongst the American natives, of a people dedicated to...making propitiatory offerings of human victims.

2002 *Wicazo Sa Rev.* 17 206 It covers only American Natives and does not extend to 'other Others', like the Greenlanders.

**American oilcloth n.** chiefly Brit. (now rare) = *American cloth n.*

(a).

1869 E. LOTT *Grand Pacha's Cruise on Nile* I. 286 Several sheets of American oil cloth to place upon the damp ground, with fine mats to lay over them.

1904 E. NESBIT *Phoenix & Carpet* x. 190 The marble-patterned American oil-cloth which careful housewives use to cover dressers and kitchen tables.

1963 A. CLARKE *Flight to Afr.* 33 The kitchen table, American oil-cloth on it.

**American organ n.** chiefly Brit. a reed organ in which the air is drawn inwards to the reeds by means of bellows, instead of being driven outwards as in the harmonium proper; a melodeon.
The depth, purity, sweetness, and volume of tone, and the beauty and variety of its stop combinations, make the American organ a more desirable instrument than either a piano or a harmonium.

T. BEECHAM Mingled Chime ii. 14 I..much preferred to be at home, especially in the music room where had now been installed a pipe organ, an American organ, a concert grand piano and musical boxes of every kind.

There was an American organ, a harmonium, in the room.

American plan n. N. Amer. the method or practice at a hotel of charging a rate inclusive of all meals (cf. modified American plan n. at MODIFIED adj. and n. Special uses); opposed to European plan.

On the American plan, the student being required to board in a hotel provided for him, must board there at a fixed price.

Windsor Hotel..Rates: American Plan, $1.50–$2.50. European Plan, 75c. to $1.50.

The Athenaeum Hotel..follows the American plan. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included in the room price.

The revolt of the thirteen American colonies against British rule in the late 18th cent., culminating in the American War of Independence (1775–83) and ultimately leading to the formation of the United States; the American War of Independence itself.

A pair of John Fiske's delightful volumes upon the American Revolution.

Berthier..fought in the American Revolution with Lafayette.

A pair of John Fiske's delightful volumes upon the American Revolution.

The title character..is a Loyalist fighting in the American Revolution.

The American Revolution started with a demand for no taxation without representation.

Now hist. coarse cotton cloth made in America, esp. as exported to or traded in East Africa; cf. American cloth n. (b), AMERICANI n.

A number of English papers admit that American sheeting is more popular than English in India.

The value of the import [to Addis Ababa] during the year considerably exceeds that of the exports; the staple imports being American sheeting.
They [sc. Indian and Arab merchants in the Majeerteen Sultanate] sold coarse white American sheeting, blue-striped turbans, and small bars of iron.

**American Sign Language** *n.* (also with lower-case initials in the second and third elements) a form of sign language developed in the early 19th cent. for the use of the deaf in the United States; abbreviated *ASL*; cf. *AMESLAN* *n.*

The American sign language is the most complete which exists, and rather difficult to acquire; so that it would take a deaf person a considerable time to thoroughly master it.

American Sign Language is not a manual translation of English. Its syntax, grammar, and vocabulary do not coincide with that of English.

**American Standard Version** *n.* an English translation of the Bible first published in the United States in 1901, based on the Revised Version with the incorporation of additional work by American scholars; abbreviated *ASV*.

The American Standard Version of the Revised Bible.

It is a revision of the American Standard Version published in 1901.


**American-style** *adj.* of a style characteristic of or associated with the United States.

Our American style pickles.

Roads lined with more than 2,000 new American-style homes.

The food comes in huge, American-style portions.

**American supper** *n.* *Brit.* a social function held esp. to raise money to which the guests contribute by bringing food and drink to share.

Proceeds of American supper at Sproatley Institute, Yorks.

Clubnight is at the Barrow Cricket Club... (American supper, so please bring a contribution to the food.)

**American tea** *n.* *Brit.* = **American supper** *n.*
The group met for a bring and share American tea.

**American tournament** *n.* **Sport** (chiefly Brit.) a tournament in which each competitor plays each of the others in turn; opposed to **knockout**.

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**American Way** *n.* (also with lower-case initial in the second element) (with the) a method, or a manner of living or behaving, regarded as unique to or characteristic of the United States; the American way of life.

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**American Beauty** *n.* (more fully **American beauty rose**) a variety of cultivated rose with deep red petals.

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**American bison** *n.* the bison native to North America, **Bos bison**; cf. **BISON n. 2**, **BUFFALO n. 1c**.
American bison

The American bison, besides the conformation of the head, and other important anatomical differences, has a pair of ribs more than domestic cattle.

The American Bison is a striking animal with its huge, low-slung head and massive hump, the latter supported by vertebral extensions.

Environmental authorities in the United States and Mexico are working with the Nature Conservancy to reintroduce the American bison, which was on the verge of extinction in the 19th century.

American blackbird

n. any of various grackles and other birds of the New World family Icteridae; (formerly) spec. the common grackle, Quiscalus quiscula; cf. BLACKBIRD n. 2a.

The American blackbirds, so destructive of the young maize-crop, are of a different race [from the European blackbird].

In...his cunning way of canting his head to one side upon occasion, he reminds one of the American blackbird.

A careful study of the American blackbird family (Icteridae) during the past several years.

One of 94 species of American blackbirds, the bobolink, migrates seasonally through the forests.

American blight

n. the woolly aphid, Eriosoma lanigerum, which infests the bark of apple trees and related plants.

The greatest enemy of this tree, and which has been known in this country [sc. England] only about twenty years, is the apple-aphis, called by some Coccus, and by others the American blight.

Of the prominent European injurious insects..but three are said to have come from America; the grape-vine Phylloxera.., the woolly root-louse of the apple or ‘American blight’,.., and the Mediterranean flour moth.

American blight is an apple tree pest which can be eliminated only by spraying.

This aphid originated in the eastern part of North America and is sometimes known as American blight.

American centaury

n. any plant of the genus Sabatia (family Gentianaceae), comprising herbaceous plants of North America and the West Indies, typically having pink flowers; esp. S. angularis; (in later use also) any North American species of the genus Centaurium.

Plants of the genus Sabatia are now more commonly called marsh pink.
1978 *Systematic Bot.* 3 301 In this sample of well over half the American centauries, no diploids nor their immediate aneuploid derivatives were found.

2006 C. WIART *Medicinal Plants Asia & Pacific* xxxii. 239 A large number of Gentianaceae are bitter, but have been used in Western medicine to promote appetite. These include *Sabatia angularis* (American Centaury).

**American crocodile** *n.* †*(a)* an armadillo (*obs.*); †*(b)* the American alligator, *Alligator mississippiensis* (*obs.*); *(c)* a neotropical crocodile, *Crocodylus acutus*, with a long tapering snout, found from Florida and Mexico to Venezuela and Peru.

1678 J. P. tr. J. Johnstone *Descr. Nature Four-footed Beasts* iii. 92/2 He is fourfooted, covered all over, tail and all with a hide like the slough of a Serpent, called the American-Crocodile, betwixt white, and ash-colour, but inclining more to white, like a Barbed war-horse, as big as an ordinary Dog, harmless, burrowing himself in the earth, like the Conies.

1733 S. HUMPHREYS tr. N. A. Pluche *Spectacle de la Nature* i. xiii. 153 You mean the American Crocodile.

1851 *De Bou’s Rev.* July 52 I shall now proceed to..other lower orders of animals, and the most prominent is the Alligator, or American Crocodile, sometimes called Lacerta Alligator.


**American eagle** *n.* the bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, a North American sea eagle with a white head and neck; a representation of this eagle as the national emblem of the United States (also *fig.*., symbolizing the United States).

1782 *Jrnl. Congr.* 7 395 The escutcheon on the breast of the American eagle displayed proper, holding in his dexter talon an olive branch and in his sinister a bundle of thirteen arrows, all proper, and in his beak a scroll inscribed with this motto 'E pluribus Unum.'

1833 H. BARNARD in *Maryland Hist. Mag.* (1918) 13 356 The Union badge is an American eagle mounted upon black with a small tassell.

1849 *Knickerbocker* 34 150/2 While he was a-talking about the American eagle, a tolerable-sized bird of that specie come and lit upon his crown.

1919 *Mr. Punch’s Hist. Great War* 20 The American Eagle is not the Eagle we are up against.

1957 *Encycl. Brit.* VII. 822/2 (*caption*) American eagle... In the adult of this ‘bald’ sea eagle, the head, neck and tail are white.

1995 *New Yorker* 5 June 85/1 His earliest commission had been to paint an American eagle over the electric meter in a neighbor's basement.
**American Eskimo** *n.* chiefly *U.S.* a breed of dog of the spitz type, distinguished by a dense coat of long white hair, pointed ears, and thick curled tail; a dog of this breed.


1989 N. J. HOFMAN & C. J. FLAMHOLTZ *Amer. Eskimo* i. 24 American Eskimos are fun dogs to own. Their keen intelligence, and extraordinary desire to please make them adept at learning tricks of all kinds.

2001 *J. WATERMAN Arctic Crossing* III. 235 The compact American Eskimo lapdog is the antithesis of the fractious Eskimo husky.

**American gooseberry mildew** *n.* Hort. a mildew, *Sphaerotheca mors-uvae*, which chiefly affects gooseberry and blackcurrant bushes, causing a white powdery coating on young shoots and a brown felty covering on fruit and leaves.

1899 G. MASSEE *Text-bk. Plant Dis.* 97 American Gooseberry Mildew... The finer varieties of imported gooseberries have for several years suffered severely in the United States from the effects of a minute fungous parasite.

1942 R. BUSH *Soft Fruit Growing* ix. 82 American gooseberry mildew is the brave New World's gift to the gooseberry grower.

2006 *Daily Tel.* (Nexis) 4 Nov. (Gardening section) 2 Choose varieties that are resistant to American gooseberry mildew if you don't want to have to spray against this disease.

**American marmot** *n.* now *rare* the woodchuck or groundhog, *Marmota monax*, a heavily built marmot which is widespread in North America.

1797 *Encycl. Brit.* XII. 463/1 The monax, or American marmot... The bobac, or Polish marmot... The empetra, or Canadian marmot.

1857 F. GERHARD *Illinois as it Is* 250 We have besides, the red, gray, black, and mottled, together with the flying squirrel,...the American marmot...and two species of rabbits.

1941 *Murrelet* 22 16 The amount of blood in the American marmot (*Marmota monax monax*) differs with the time of year as well as with the degree of dormancy.

2005 *Telegram & Gaz.* (Mass.) (Nexis) 2 Feb. 81 Groundhog. Woodchuck. American marmot. They're all the same animal, and it's an animal that hibernates early and sleeps deeply.

**American marmalade** *n.* see *MARMALADE* *n.* 2.

**American moss** *n.* the dried stems of Spanish moss, *Tillandsia*
usneoides, esp. as used in upholstery and craftwork.

1852  *Times* 16 Nov. 12/1 (advt.)  American moss mattresses: a superior article.
1882  J. SMITH *Dict. Econ. Plants* 277  American or New Orleans Moss.
1975  *Florence (S. Carolina) Morning News* 23 Nov. 10 c/1  Spanish moss is often used commercially, particularly in England, to stuff mattresses and upholstery. The English call it ‘American moss’.
2003  *Akron (Ohio) Beacon* (Nexis) 28 June E1  Reindeer moss..is not a true moss, nor are club moss and American moss.

**American olive**  *n.* (more fully American olive tree) the devil-wood, *Osmanthus americanus* (family Oleaceae).

1772  C. MILNE *Inst. Bot.* II. 239  Olea... Flowers proceed singly from the arm-pits of the leaves. In American olive they are disposed in short clusters.
1866  *Land We Love* (Charlotte, N. Carolina) May 78  American Olive..is a very fine evergreen, producing clusters of small white flowers.
1923  E.W. BERRY *Tree Ancestors* xxi. 225  The devil-wood (Osmanthus) of our Gulf States, sometimes called the American olive, is also a member of this family [sc. Oleaceae].
2004  D. GELBERT *Canine Hiker's Bible* 74  The..Osmanthus Trail, named for the American olive tree that grows abundantly on the fringes of the dark lagoon along the trail.

† **American ox**  *n.* *Obs.* rare the American bison or buffalo, *Bison bison*.

1744  A. DOBBS *Acct. Countries adjoining Hudson's Bay* 41  The American Oxen, or Beeves, have a large Bunch upon their Backs.
1851  G. VASEY *Deliniations Ox Tribe* 61  The different species of the Ox kind may be readily distinguished from the Gayal by the following marks;..the American Ox, by the gibbosity on its back.

**American saddlebred**  *adj.* and *n.* (also with capital initial in the second element)  *(a)* *adj.* designating a saddle horse of a breed developed in Kentucky in the 19th cent., which may have either three or five gaits; *(b)* *n.* a horse of this type.

1903  *19th Ann. Rep. Bureau Animal Industry* 1902 (U.S. Dept. Agric.) 75  The history of cavalry service shows no parallel to the continuous fast movement of the cavalry under Morgan and Forest, and this service was rendered chiefly by the American saddle-bred horse.
1913  M. W. HARPER *Managem. & Breeding Horses* ix. 114  The American Saddlebred stallion is rather popular for crossing on common mares to improve the gaits.
1976  *Horse & Hound* 10 Dec. 73/1 (advt.)  2 beautiful colts to mature 15 hands 2 in by American saddlebred Goldmount Bourbon Genius.
Marina rounds the corner of the barn on a handsome American saddlebred horse.

Horsemanship added in the bloodlines of Thoroughbreds, Standardbreds, Morgans, and American Saddlebreds to produce the Tennessee Walking Horse.

**American saddle horse** *n.* (also with capital initials in the second and third elements) an American saddlebred horse.

In quot. 1835 perhaps denoting a generic riding-horse in the United States.

She speaks as ill of the filth of London hackney-coaches as of the paces of American saddle-horses.

American saddle horses at $95 to $150; common saddle horses at $50 to $80.

Quarter Horses have a much higher incidence of clinical navicular disease than larger-footed American Saddle Horses.

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**American sensitive plant** *n.* *Obs.* any of several American leguminous plants having leaflets that fold together when touched.

American Sensitive. *Æschynomene Americana.*

Slow American Sensitive Plant.

Another species is *Cassia nictitans*, with very small yellow flowers and beautiful pinnate leaves, which remain folded at night; it shrinks back from the touch, for which reason it is called the American sensitive plant.

Collars curling off from the obnoxious glowing cheek, like the leaves of the American sensitive plant.

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