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Preface

Ever since I discovered that $3 + 4 = 7$ I have always been obsessed by the magic number seven. It's a fascinating number, bigger than 5 and not quite 10. When rolling two standard six-sided dice, seven has the highest probability of being rolled. The word English has seven letters. In this light-hearted look at vocabulary and curiosities for English learners, everything is in handy bites of seven—an easy number to learn and remember.

Use the **power of seven** to help you learn practical English words, phrases, proverbs and more—anytime you have seven minutes to spare!

Good luck!

Josef Essberger, Founder
EnglishClub.com

1: Seven Colours of the Rainbow

Have you ever seen a rainbow? Sometimes when the sun is shining and it is rainy somewhere at the same time, you can see a rainbow. It's a huge arch of colours in the sky. That arch is caused by the light from the sun being broken up by water droplets in the atmosphere. The sun's light is "white", but the water droplets break it up into **the seven colours of the rainbow**, always in this order:

RED

ORANGE

YELLOW

GREEN

BLUE

INDIGO

VIOLET

There is an easy way to remember them (a mnemonic):

- Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain

These colours are the visible part of the sun's radiation. But there are many other parts that are not visible to the human eye. For example:

- immediately below red is "infraRED"
- immediately beyond violet is "ultraVIOLET" (UV)

[Learn more about colours](#)

2: Seven Prefixes

A **prefix** is placed at the beginning of a word to modify or change its meaning. Here are **seven common prefixes** in English, together with their basic meaning and some examples.

counter-

meaning: opposition, opposite direction

example: counter-attack, counteract

extra-

meaning: outside, beyond

example: extracurricular, extramarital

hemi-

meaning: half

example: hemisphere

inter-

meaning: between, among

example: interact, interchange

non-

meaning: absence, negation

example: non-smoker, nonsense

post-

meaning: after in time or order

example: postpone, postcolonial

re-

meaning: again

example: repaint, reappraise, reawake

[More prefixes with meanings and examples](#)

3: Seven British and American Spellings

Some British English (BrE) and American English (AmE) words have the same meaning and pronunciation but different spellings. If you are not sure about a spelling, it's best to look it up in a British or American dictionary as appropriate. Here are **seven common differences**, with examples.

1. **ogue/og**

BrE: analogue, catalogue, dialogue

AmE: analog, catalog, dialog

2. **our/or**

BrE: colour, favourite, honour

AmE: color, favorite, honor

3. **ence/ense**

BrE: defence, offence, pretence

AmE: defense, offense, pretense

4. **s/z**

BrE: analyse, criticise, organisation (but z is also used)

AmE: analyze, criticize, organization

5. **l/l**

BrE: enrolment, fulfil, skilful

AmE: enrollment, fulfill, skillful

6. **re/er**

BrE: centre, theatre, metre

AmE: center, theater, meter

7. **miscellaneous**

BrE: jewellery, programme, practise, pyjamas

AmE: jewelry, program, practice, pajamas

Note that in British English:

- “program” is used when talking about computers
- “practise” is a verb and “practice” is a noun

[Different meanings in British and American](#)

5: Seven Informal Contractions

WANNA know what GONNA means? LEMME show you.

Have you seen words like **gonna** or **wanna** and wondered what they mean? Perhaps you've looked in a dictionary and been unable to find them. That's because these words are informal contractions or short forms of other words that people use when speaking informally. They are not exactly slang, but they are a little like slang. In fact, if you look in a big dictionary, you will usually find them. Here are **seven common informal contractions**, with example sentences.

1. **gimme** = give me

Gimme your money.

Don't gimme that rubbish.

Can you gimme a hand?

2. **gonna** = going to

Nothing's gonna change my love for you.

I'm not gonna tell you.

What are you gonna do?

3a. **gotta** = (have) got a

I've gotta gun.

She hasn't gotta penny.

Have you gotta car?

3b. **gotta** = (have) got to

I gotta go now.

We haven't gotta do that.

Have they gotta work?

4. **init** = isn't it

That's smart, init?

Init strange?

5. **kinda** = kind of

She's kinda cute.

Are you kinda mad at me?

6. **lemme** = let me

Lemme go!

He didn't lemme see it.

7a. **wanna** = want to

I wanna go home.

I don't wanna go.
Do you wanna watch TV?

7b. **wanna** = want a
I wanna coffee.
I don't wanna thing from you.
Do you wanna beer?

Please remember that these are informal contractions. That means that we do not use them in "correct" speech, and we almost never use them in writing. We use them only when speaking fast and informally, for example with friends. Also, the sentences above may be a little artificial because when we use a contraction like "wanna", we probably also use other contractions in the same sentence, as follows:

Do you want a beer?
Do you wanna beer?
D'you wanna beer?
D'ya wanna beer?
Ya wanna beer?
Wanna beer?

[Informal contractions with music](#)