

# British English

## What It Really Means...

Read the sentences below and think of situations when someone might say the following.

### Anglo-EU Translation Guide

What the British say	What the British mean	What others understand
I hear what you say	I disagree and do not want to discuss it further	He accepts my point of view
With the greatest respect...	I think you are an idiot	He is listening to me
That's not bad	That's good	That's poor
That is a very brave proposal	You are insane	He thinks I have courage
Quite good	A bit disappointing	Quite good
I would suggest...	Do it or be prepared to justify yourself	Think about the idea, but do what you like
Oh, incidentally/ by the way	The primary purpose of our discussion is...	That is not very important
I was a bit disappointed that	I am annoyed that	It doesn't really matter
Very interesting	That is clearly nonsense	They are impressed
I'll bear it in mind	I've forgotten it already	They will probably do it
I'm sure it's my fault	It's your fault	Why do they think it was their fault?
You must come for dinner	It's not an invitation, I'm just being polite	I will get an invitation soon
I almost agree	I don't agree at all	He's not far from agreement
I only have a few minor comments	Please re-write completely	He has found a few typos
Could we consider some other options	I don't like your idea	They have not yet decided

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### Teacher's Notes

You may want to introduce the topic of British English by writing up on board and asking students to discuss the following questions:

1. Do people always say what they think?
2. Do people ever say what they think?
3. Can you think of examples of what you might say when you don't want to say what you think?
4. Do you think people from some countries are more straightforward than from some others? Think about Japan, Italy, Germany, Britain, France, Poland.
5. How do you know what people from other countries mean if they do not say it?

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