

# Systems compared: the US and the UK

In US universities, many of the words for people and places are the same as those used in the UK (see Unit 18), but there are some differences.

## A Terms with different meanings in US and UK university systems

US example	meaning/comment	UK example	meaning/comment
Are you <b>faculty</b> or student?	If you are <i>faculty</i> , you are a member of the academic staff.	The <b>faculty</b> will have to come to a decision on this.	<i>Faculty</i> refers to a group of departments (see Unit 18) with similar interests.
The grading <b>rubric</b> for term papers has been revised.	A <i>rubric</i> is a set of criteria or guidelines which tells how an assignment will be graded or scored.	Some students misread the exam <b>rubric</b> and didn't answer enough questions.	Instructions on an exam paper or in a textbook as to <i>how</i> a task must be done.
I went to <b>college</b> in St Louis. I attended Washington <b>University</b> . I took some fascinating courses at <b>college</b> .	The word <i>college</i> in American English refers broadly to the undergraduate experience, whether it is at a two-year community college, a four-year college, or a large state university in the US. A specific institution can be a college (granting undergraduate degrees only) or a university (granting undergraduate and graduate degrees).	She went to <b>university</b> in Scotland. She graduated from <b>university</b> in 1996.	In British English, <i>university</i> refers to the undergraduate experience. In both American and British English, no article is used before <i>college</i> or <i>university</i> in these examples.
Her brother went to <b>school</b> at Harvard.	<i>School</i> is often used to mean <i>university</i> . A common question is 'Where did you go to school?' meaning 'Where did you go to college?'	I went to <b>school</b> in London, then I went to university in Bristol.	Refers to primary or secondary education; <i>school</i> can also refer to a university department which covers several different teaching areas (e.g. School of English and Journalism).

## B Different US terms

I wonder who should be on my PhD committee<sup>1</sup>. My advisor<sup>2</sup> suggested Dr Fry and Dr Roe. I have a lot of studying to do. I have my comps<sup>3</sup> in two weeks. Let's meet in Harley Commons<sup>4</sup> at 7.30 pm, and we can study for tomorrow's quiz<sup>5</sup>, OK? It was tough being a freshman<sup>6</sup> because I wasn't used to such difficult finals<sup>7</sup>, but life got a bit easier when I became a sophomore<sup>8</sup>. It was easy enough as a junior<sup>9</sup>, but then it got tough again when I was a senior<sup>10</sup>.

As a graduate student<sup>11</sup>, I get to attend seminars with some of the top people in my field. The fraternity<sup>12</sup> and sorority<sup>13</sup> houses are all round the edge of the campus.

<sup>1</sup> a group of teachers who advise a PhD student <sup>2</sup> equivalent of the UK *supervisor* (see Unit 18) <sup>3</sup> short for *comprehensive examinations*, subject-area tests required of graduate students in some areas of studies <sup>4</sup> area where students can meet socially and eat in dining halls <sup>5</sup> short test on areas which have been taught <sup>6</sup> new, first-year undergraduate (also used in the UK) <sup>7</sup> final examinations at the end of the semester <sup>8</sup> second-year student, from the Greek *sophos*, wise, and *moros*, dull <sup>9</sup> third-year student <sup>10</sup> fourth-year student <sup>11</sup> student with a bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS) who is enrolled in a master's degree programme, equivalent of *postgraduate* student in the UK <sup>12</sup> a social organisation for male students <sup>13</sup> a social organisation for female students