# British politicians embrace Americanisms despite St George’s Day English pride



At a recent St George’s Day gathering held at Downing Street, Keir Starmer hosted a reception featuring traditional English fare such as pork pies, Pimm’s, and Eccles cakes. The event was marked by an emphasis on English customs and heritage. However, despite this overt display of Englishness, discussions have arisen regarding the use of Americanisms among British politicians, particularly within the parliamentary and political class.

The Daily Mail reports that British politicians frequently adopt American expressions, which some perceive as incongruous with their efforts to project English identity. For instance, the Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer is noted for using phrases such as “calling out” to express disapproval, a term described as an Americanism supplanting more traditional British terms like “deplored” or “denounced.” The article remarks on the prevalence of baseball metaphors replacing cricket terminology within parliamentary discourse, including phrases like “first base,” “stepping up to the plate,” and “hitting it out of the park,” rather than traditional British sporting references such as “sticky wickets” or “whacking things for six.”

The adoption of American terms extends beyond sports metaphors. Terms like “24/7” have reportedly replaced “all day,” while words like “groovy” and “outage” have entered common political parlance, the latter supplanting the previously used “power cuts.” The article notes that Americanisms have increased by nearly 40 per cent in parliamentary debates over the past 25 years. Examples include “reaching out” to describe engagement or empathy, which some view as carrying a “plastic, insincere quality.”

The trend towards Americanised language is traced back to political figures such as Tony Blair, David Cameron, Boris Johnson, Theresa May, and Dominic Raab. David Cameron, despite being an Eton alumnus, reportedly used twice as many American expressions as his predecessors. This was attributed in part to attempts by Eton-educated politicians to adapt and blend in, sometimes adopting American pronunciations, such as the Wall Street style pronunciation of “leverage.” The influence extends to communications advisers, such as Boris Johnson’s former spin doctor Isaac Levido, an Australian with experience in US Republican campaigns.

The article cites the example of former Health Secretary Matt Hancock, who was known for adopting a transatlantic accent to appear “hands-on” during Downing Street pandemic briefings, a style which later came under scrutiny for its incongruity with his personal conduct.

The increased use of American English in British politics has also led to what some perceive as awkward or unnecessary linguistic borrowings, including phrases such as “double down” instead of “accentuate” or “reinforce,” and “back-to-back” rather than “successive.” Conservatives and Labour MPs alike have been noted for employing these terms. Examples of Americanisms include “normalcy,” “thrown in the trash can,” “train station” replacing “railway station,” and verbal constructions such as “build out” or “fess up.”

The adoption of prepositional phrases like “up-lift,” “up-tick,” and “up-surge” in place of simpler British terms has become commonplace in Westminster debates. The habitual use of “so” to start sentences, inflections reminiscent of Californian speech patterns, and the use of nouns such as “invite” and “quote” in lieu of “invitation” and “quotation,” have also been observed. The pluralisation of “behaviour” and the substitution of “different to” rather than “different from” have further raised questions about the state of linguistic pride within Britain.

A Chinese observer, the daughter-in-law of the article’s author, expressed bemusement at the British tendency to favour such Americanisms, commenting, “You have a great language. Why do you not cherish it?”

In summary, while British political figures continue to display symbols of national identity at events such as St George’s Day celebrations, there remains an ongoing adoption of American linguistic styles and expressions in political discourse, reflecting complex cultural and communicative influences within the UK’s political landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbC66EUqNbI> - This video supports the claim that Keir Starmer hosted a St George’s Day reception at Downing Street, highlighting English customs and heritage. However, it does not address the issue of Americanisms in British politics.
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-remarks-at-st-georges-day-reception-22-april-2025> - This official UK government link provides remarks from a recent St George’s Day reception, emphasizing the celebration of English identity without discussing linguistic influences.
3. <https://www.gbnews.com/politics/st-georges-day-keir-starmer-terrified-talk-how-good-to-be-british> - This article critiques Starmer’s approach to celebrating English identity on St George’s Day but does not directly address the use of Americanisms in British politics.
4. <https://order-order.com/2025/04/23/starmer-uses-no10-st-georges-day-reception-to-swipe-at-reform> - This article describes Keir Starmer’s St George’s Day event and remarks on political engagements, although it does not focus on American linguistic influences.
5. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_English_influence_on_British_English> - This link is not provided in the search results but is suggested based on prior knowledge. It could support the discussion on American English influences in British English. Actual content may vary based on Wikipedia updates.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jan/04/tories-accused-of-using-american-style-slogans-and-rhetoric> - This link is not directly from the search results but could be relevant based on prior knowledge. It discusses British politicians using American-style rhetoric, a topic related to the trend of Americanisms in UK politics.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14651373/QUENTIN-LETTS-Theres-uptick-groovy-Americanisms-going-forward-you-toss-trash-can.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data