

# 11 Different Ways to Say 'Toilet' in English

## Language Focus 10 words, Level: Intermediate - Advanced

Everyone has to go to the toilet, yet it can be hard to know which term for “toilet” is the right one to use. This is especially true when you are in a foreign country. **Slang** or informal words for “toilet” are common and students have difficulty knowing which words are **rude** and which words are not.

Some of the words for toilet are considered polite or formal, while others are impolite and potentially **offensive**. Slang terms used for toilet can vary greatly from country to country. It is important to understand that a term that is **appropriate** in Ireland or the United Kingdom, may not be understood in the United States, and also a term that is used in Canada might not make sense in Australia.

*Let's start with formal ways to say toilet.....*

### **Bathroom (UK, Ireland, US, Australia)**

Perhaps the most common way to say 'toilet' in the United States is to say 'bathroom'. A bathroom usually refers to a room with a bath in it, but when Americans refer to a bathroom they usually mean a room with only a toilet and **washbasin**. In all English speaking countries, if you ask “*where is the bathroom?*”, you will be shown to a toilet.

### **Washroom (US)**

'Washroom' is another formal word that most English speakers will understand. It is mostly used in the USA.

### **Restroom (US)**

'Restroom' is a safe term to use in the United States and won't offend anyone. When traveling on **motorways**, signs may appear announcing “rest stops”. These rest stops will have toilets. In other English speaking countries, however, some people may be confused by restroom, and could even point you towards a bedroom, or somewhere else where you can rest.

### **Men's Room, Ladies' Room, Little Boys' Room” or “Little Girls' Room (UK, Ireland, US, Australia)**

It is common to use the terms 'Men's Room', 'Ladies' Room' when asking for the toilet. Sometimes native English speakers will use the terms 'Little Boys' Room' or 'Little Girls' Room', however these terms are often considered rather **childish**.

**Ladies and Gents (UK, Ireland, Australia)**

Ladies and gents are common term for men's and women's toilets. These are perfectly polite terms.

**The Loo (UK, Ireland)**

In the United Kingdom, "the loo" is a common term for toilet. 'The loo' is generally a safe term to use and likely won't **offend** anyone.

**Lavatory (UK)**

'Lavatory' is a good option for people looking for a very formal word to use in very formal **occasions**. In the United Kingdom, some people will **shorten** lavatory to just 'lav' and when they do it becomes quite informal.

*Informal and slang ways to say toilet***Bog (UK, Ireland)**

'Bog' is another other common term in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It is not rude but is considered informal.

**Jacks (Ireland)**

In Ireland, the 'jacks' is a very common way to refer to a toilet. If you are having a drink in an ordinary pub it is ok to use but if you are in a fancy restaurant it is considered rude.

**The John (US)**

Some people in the United States will also use the term 'the John'. This is quite informal. While it is generally okay to use this term among friends, if said at the wrong time, it might offend people.

**Dunny**

The word 'dunny' is used in Australia and New Zealand to refer to toilet.

## *Language Focus* : **Vocabulary + Expressions**

**slang** - (noun) very informal language

- *Some types of **slang** are rude or offensive.*

**rude** - (adjective) impolite or bad-mannered

- *John thought the woman who pushed to the front of the queue was extremely **rude**.*

**offensive** - (adjective) causing someone to be upset or annoyed, also means aggressive

- *Mary found the customer's bad manners **offensive**.*

**appropriate** - (adjective) suitable, proper

- *When you are going hiking in the mountains you should wear **appropriate** shoes.*

**washbasin** - (noun) a sink or hand basin for washing hands and face

- *Frank always washes his hands in the **washbasin** after using the toilet.*

**motorways** - (noun) a large two way road where traffic can travel long distances quickly

- *The speed limit on **motorways** is 120 kilometers per hour.*

**childish** - (adjective) silly and immature

- *Don't be so **childish**!*

**To offend sb** - to make someone upset or angry

- *John's work colleague was **offended** he wasn't invited to John's wedding.*

**occasions** - (noun) a time when an event takes place

- *Weddings are very special **occasions***

**shorten** - (verb) to make shorter

- *People often **shorten** the word "advertising" to "ad".*

## Language Focus: Exercises

### Mix and Match Exercises

Match the toilet name to the country where it is used.

The Loo  
The Restroom  
The Dunny  
The Jacks  
The John

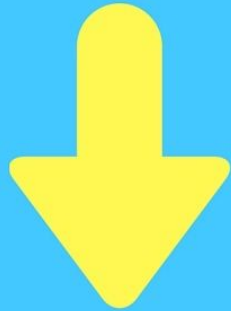
Ireland  
USA  
UK  
Australia  
USA

### Complete the sentences: EXERCISES

Complete these sentences with a **highlighted** word or phrase from the article.

1. Rappers often use ..... language in their rap songs. (*causing upset or anger*)
2. Mary is a very kind person but she is very ..... . (*silly and immature*)
3. Sarah brushed her teeth at the public ..... in the airport. (*sink*)
4. Speaking loudly on the phone on public transport is not ..... behaviour. (*proper, suitable*)
5. Smoking cigarettes ..... your life. (*makes shorter*)
6. Young people often use new ..... expressions that older people don't understand. (*informal*)
7. On many ..... I have been caught in the rain without an umbrella. (*times*)
8. It is ..... to chew food with your mouth open. (*impolite*)

**A**



**N**



**S**

**W**



**E**



**R**

**S**

# ANSWERS SHEET

## Mix and Match Exercises: **ANSWERS**

Match the the toilet name to the country where it is used.

The Loo (UK)

The Restroom (USA)

The Dunny (AUSTRALIA)

The Jacks (IRELAND)

The John (USA)

## Complete the sentences: **ANSWERS**

1. Rappers often use **offensive** language in their rap songs. (*causing upset or anger*)
2. Mary is a very kind person but she is very **childish**. (*silly and immature*)
3. Sarah brushed her teeth at the public **washbasin** in the airport. (*sink*)
4. Speaking loudly on the phone on public transport is not **appropriate** behaviour. (*proper, suitable*)
5. Smoking cigarettes **shortens** your life. (*makes shorter*)
6. Young people often use new **slang** expressions that older people don't understand. (*informal*)
7. On many **occasions** I have been caught in the rain without an umbrella. (*times*)
8. It is **rude** to chew food with your mouth open. (*impolite*)