

Weather and dialect – teacher’s notes

Discussion: accent

Can you ‘do’ different accents (eg. Coronation Street/Eastenders/American)? What is the difference between accent and dialect?

Discussion/Dialect grammars

The examples focus on dialect words, but more important for teaching purposes are dialect grammars, eg. ‘We was talking’ for ‘We were talking’. Pupils must recognise how the grammar of their native dialects differs from that of Standard English. The teaching required in this respect will differ from one part of the country to another, and should arise from a consideration of pupils’ and others’ dialect variations.

Discussion/Dialect

Share the page with pupils and discuss where speakers come from/what they mean, etc.

Dialect words in examples:

Parky (S E England) = cold

Slattery (Yorks)/Dreech (Scotland) = wet and miserable

Gey (Scotland)/some (Cornwall) = quite, rather

Scrammed (S England) = frozen

Buldering (SW England) = thundery

Gormless (Lancs) = stupid

Brolly (N England) = umbrella

The dialect words for icicles at the top of the page and hoar-frost at the bottom of the page are from across the British Isles. There are also many regional weather sayings such as this one from Yorkshire: ‘Burr far, storm nar.’ (Burr = ring round moon)

Dialect words/Spoken English

Interest in our own native dialect and how it differs from Standard English is an excellent introduction to the study of language. Pupils may know dialect words from their own area/ethnic group; or they may be able to collect them from adults. Opportunity for interviewing/taping.

Non-chronological writing

Pupils might compile a ‘dialect dictionary’.

Discussion/Language awareness

Standard English is merely a dialect of the English language (originally the dialect of the educated classes in S E England), and of no greater or lesser worth than other dialects. It has, however, been adopted as the dialect in which written English is to be presented. It is also used for speech in formal situations.

What does ‘Standard’ mean? Why do you think we have a ‘standard’ form of English? What might happen if everyone wrote in their own dialects? When might you need to speak in Standard English? (When might you speak in your own dialect?)

Accent

The accent which is usually associated with Standard English is known as Received Pronunciation (RP), but nowadays any accent is accepted with Standard English.

Can you read aloud the newsreader's speech in accents other than RP? Do you know any Standard English speakers with regional/ethnic accents? (Perhaps some of their teachers?)

Poem/Language

The poem is best read in a Afro-Caribbean accent, if possible. The title of the poem is a Caribbean proverb. What does it mean? What might it mean in a wider sense? If the poet were writing his poem in Standard English, how would he put it – which words or phrases would change and how? Which do you think fits the poem best – Standard English or the Black English dialect? Why?