

# Food and dialect – teacher’s notes

## **Discussion: accent**

Share the page with pupils, discussing what the dialect speeches mean/where they come from.

Dialect words in examples:

Jam butty (Lancs)

Jeely piece (Scotland)

Jam sarnie (SE England)

(all mean ‘jam sandwich’)

directly (West Country) = soon

hudding (West Country) = shelling

The dialect words for types of food shown round the page are from across the British Isles. Another rich vein is dialect words for sweets (eg bullets, cooshies, goodies, pops, spice, sucks, sweeties) or dialect sayings, eg from Yorkshire: ‘See all, eat all, say nowt: Hear all, sup all, pay nowt.’

## **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**

Get pupils to compile a ‘dialect dictionary’.

## **Discussion: accent**

Can pupils ‘do’ different accents? What’s the difference between accent and dialect?

## **Discussion/Dialect grammars**

We have focussed in the examples 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. For example, in the North Country Grace ‘all t’ stuff what’s on this table’: can pupils recognise the non-standard form? 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.

## **Poem/Language**

The poem is best read in a Afro-Caribbean accent, if possible. If the poet was saying the same thing in Standard English, how would he put it? Which do you think fits the poem best – Standard English or the Black English dialect? Why?

## **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?)