



# How to Spell

## English Language Usage

### Standard English VS Non-Standard English Workbook

by

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Please print this workbook if you can, and please take the time to do the exercises, it'll be great for you.

In this **workbook** and video we're going to:



In this video  
we're going to:

- look at what **Standard English** is and the history behind it;
- know the importance of **Standard English** and other **varieties, dialects** and **accents** of English;
- know what **Received Pronunciation** is;
- learn the differences between **Standard English & Non-Standard grammar**, and the issues and implications of this for you.



## Quiz

Do you know the answers to these?

1. What is **Standard English**?
2. What are **varieties of English**?
3. What is an **accent**?
4. What is **Received Pronunciation**? (RP)
5. Why is it important to know the difference between **Non-Standard English** and **Standard English**?
6. If I speak with an **accent** does it mean I'm not speaking "properly"?

Answer these throughout the video and we'll discuss them at the end.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

## What is Standard & Non-Standard English?

- **Standard and Non-Standard English** are dialects and varieties of English, that means,
- they have their own **words, expressions** and **grammar** which can be different from each other.
- **Standard English** is about a standardised grammar used in grammar books. (**formal**)
- **Non-Standard English** = American dialects, Jamaican, Cockney, Scottish, Australian, Scouse, Geordie, East Midlands, etc. (**informal**)

## Dialects and Varieties of English

- Dialects and varieties of English are how we use words and grammar. Dialects are about where we come from, about cultural history, regional differences, identity and pride.
- There are so many dialects in the UK and throughout the English speaking world.

- Ey up me duck! I'm just goin to pub, d'you wanna come?

East Midlands  
dialect

(= Hi, how are you? I'm just going to the pub, do you want to come?)

Standard English  
dialect

## What is Standard English?

- it's seen has the most important variety because it's used in **grammar** books.

## Standard English

- is the variety of English that is normally used in writing, and is the variety taught to non-native learners;
- is associated with the education system in all English speaking countries and used in grammar books, newspapers, reports, business, academia etc;
- we use Standard English in formal speaking & writing;
- Standard English is spoken by about 10% of the population.

## Standard English

- doesn't have a regional base or accent;
- socially we identify it with 'educated' people;
- it has nothing to do with pronunciation and accents. **It only refers to the grammar;**
- people can use Standard English and speak it with a regional and national accent.



## Non-Standard English

- about 90% of people speak Non-Standard English.
- In 1972 American linguist William Labov argued that: “Non-standard forms are just as expressive and wonderful as standard. They have their own rules and are in no way inferior.”

**Accents = how we say and pronounce words**



**Standard English = standardised grammar**

Let's look at accents, pronunciation and Received Pronunciation.

Accents are how we say and pronounce words.

In the UK most people think Standard English is an accent and think people with accents are not talking 'proper' English. But as we've seen this is just not true. Standard English is about a standardised grammar and nothing to do with how we pronounce words or accents.

We have a huge variety of English accents in the world and can speak Standard English with an accent.

## Received Pronunciation

- There is standardised accent associated with Standard English and that's Received Pronunciation (RP);
- This accent is used in dictionaries and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

## International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

ɪ READ	ɪ SIT	ʊ BOOK	uː TOO	ɪə HERE	eɪ DAY	John & Sarah Free Materials 1996	
e MEN	ə AMERICA	ɜː WORD	ɔː SORT	ʊə TOUR	ɔɪ BOY	əʊ GO	
æ CAT	ʌ BUT	ɑː PART	ɒ NOT	eə WEAR	aɪ MY	aʊ HOW	
p PIG	b BED	t TIME	d DO	tʃ CHURCH	dʒ JUDGE	k KILO	g GO
f FIVE	v VERY	θ THINK	ð THE	s SIX	z ZOO	ʃ SHORT	ʒ CASUAL
m MILK	n NO	ŋ SING	h HELLO	l LIVE	r READ	w WINDOW	j YES

There are tables of the Phonetic Alphabet in the front & back of good dictionaries.

**plumber** /'plʌmə(r)/ *n* [C] person whose job is to fit and repair water pipes

**plumbing** /'plʌmɪŋ/ *n* [U] **1** system of water pipes, tanks, etc in a building **2** work of a plumber

**plume** /plu:m/ *n* [C] **1** cloud of sth that rises into the air **2** large feather

**plummet** /'plʌmɪt/ *v* [I] fall suddenly and quickly from a high level: *House prices have ~ed.*

**plump** /plʌmp/ *adj* having a soft, round body; slightly fat • **plump** *v* [T] ~ (up) make sth larger, softer and rounder: *~ up the pillows* [PV] **plump for sb/sth** (*informal*) choose sb/sth ▶ **plumpness** *n* [U]

**plunder** /'plʌndə(r)/ *v* [I,T] steal things from a place, esp during a war • **plunder** *n* [U] **1** act of plundering **2** things that have been stolen, esp during a war

**plunge** /plʌndʒ/ *v* [I,T] (cause sb/sth to) move suddenly forwards and/or downwards: *The car ~d into the river.* ◊ *He ~d his hands into his pockets.* • **plunge** *n* [C, usu sing] sudden movement downwards or away from sth; decrease [IDM] **take the plunge** (*informal*) finally decide to do sth important or difficult ▶ **plunger** *n* [C] part of a piece of equipment that can be pushed down

**pluperfect** /'plu:'ps:fɪkt/ *n* (*gram*) = THE PAST PERFECT (PAST<sup>1</sup>)

**plural** /'plʊərəl/ *n* [usu sing] *adj*

**o-w p.m.** /'pi:'em/ *abbr* after 12 o'clock noon

**pneumatic** /nju:'mæɪtɪk/ *adj* **1** filled with air: *a ~ tyre* **2** worked by air under pressure: *a ~ drill* ▶ **pneumatically** /-kli/ *adv*

**pneumonia** /nju:'mɔ:niə/ *n* [U] serious illness affecting the lungs

**PO** /'pi:'əʊ/ *abbr* **1** = POST OFFICE (POST<sup>1</sup>) **2** = POSTAL ORDER (POSTAL) • **P.O. box** (also **post office box**) *n* [C] used as a kind of address, so that mail can be sent to a post office where it is kept until it is collected

**poach** /pəʊtʃ/ *v* **1** [T] cook fish or an egg without its shell in water that is boiling gently **2** [I,T] illegally hunt animals, birds or fish on sb else's property **3** [I] take from sb/sth dishonestly; steal sth ▶ **poacher** *n* [C] person who illegally hunts animals, birds or fish on sb else's property

**o-w pocket** /'pɒkɪt/ *n* [C] **1** small bag sewn into a piece of clothing so that you can carry things in it **2** small bag or container fastened to sth so that you can put things in it, eg in a car door or handbag **3** [usu sing] amount of money that you have to spend: *He had no intention of paying out of his own ~.* **4** small separate group or area [IDM] **in/out of pocket** (*esp GB*) having gained/lost money as a result of sth • **pocket** *v* [T] **1** put sth into your pocket **2** keep or take

To check the standard pronunciation of a word look in a good dictionary at the side of the word- IPA in slashes.  
But you need to know IPA!!!! Examples in IPA tables in dictionaries.

# Received Pronunciation

- In Britain RP is a purely social accent and usually associated with 'posh' people = the middle and upper classes.
- It's used by only 2-6% of the population.

## accents and dialects

- According to Meryl Wilkins in her book on pronunciation: *'There is an assumption that one accent (RP) is superior to others... and that it is 'bad' to have an accent.'* She says that it's important you don't lose confidence and pride in the way you speak.



Standard English



“The one”

“The prestige dialect”

“Superior”

“The correct variety”



It's important to look at how SE came about because most people assume it is superior linguistically and grammatically over other dialects. That it is 'the one' and that it's *always* been the correct variety.

But Standard English became the 'prestige dialect' due to the power base of wealth, academia and politics in London.

SE could have been in a Yorkshire dialect if these power bases had been in Yorkshire.





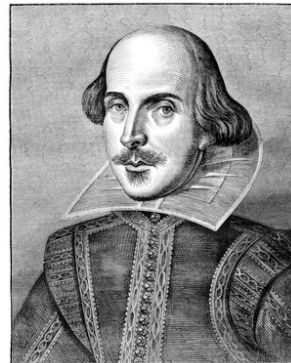
## A Brief History of Standard English

### The Middle Ages (1066 - 1485)

- Britain was multilingual: Latin, French and English co-existed
  - There were hundreds of regional accents and dialects.
- ↓
- Remember - dialects are the way we use grammar and words.



- Spelling was flexible. Everyone spelled how they wanted.
- There was no inferiority associated with dialects even in Shakespeare's time (1564 -1616).



- English was eventually standardised in grammar books and manuals written by scholars in Oxford, Cambridge and London.
- Find out more about how English and spelling developed in my ebook *The Reasons Why English Spelling is so Weird and Wonderful*. Check it out on my website:

[www.howtospell.co.uk](http://www.howtospell.co.uk)



## The Eighteenth Century

- Standard English was the dialect of the 'educated' classes and 'polite society'.
- Manuals were written - "Speak Properly!"
- Accents and dialects were a way of showing class distinctions;
- Class divisions in British society got wider along with urban and rural dialects;
- Writers were advising the 'provincials' to adopt the London accent. This accent was named Received Pronunciation (RP)



This 18th century snobbery about Standard English, dialects and accents is still with us today in the UK.

Which moves us to today's issues with Standard English.

## the issues



For many young native speakers they see Standard English as the oppressor dialect. “Why should I write and speak like that? I don't wanna.”

They're partly right why should they change the way they speak which is part of their identity. BUT BUT BUT everyone needs to understand the importance of Standard English and know the difference between using Standard and Non-Standard English.



# Standard English

- According to David Crystal: You need to learn Standard English grammar forms, especially when you write, if you want to be a part of the wider community.

**According to Wheeler and Swords:**  
knowing the differences between  
Standard and Non-Standard means you'll  
be able to choose the appropriate  
language, grammar and words, which  
means you can 'code switch' between  
dialects easily and confidently.



- A good grasp of Standard English will give you an advantage in exams, interviews, work, business, academia, etc.





- Having a good knowledge of Standard English will empower you to be able choose the right language, grammar and words.
- You won't be intimidated when people say: 'You can't say that', or 'That's not English', or 'Your accent isn't proper'.

Meryl Wilkins in her spelling book: [Improve Your Spelling in English](#), she says: "You need to actively notice not only spelling patterns but also formal and informal phrases and grammatical patterns."



According to linguist Peter Hudson there are really only a few differences between Standard and Non-Standard English.

Great! Let's learn some of the important ones.

# Standard English vs Non-Standard

- Let's look at the differences between Standard and Non-Standard grammar in some common sentences and phrases.

## What are the Standard versions of these Non-Standard varieties?

1. I done it yesterday.

2. I ain't got one.

3. Where was you last week?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

- Need more help?
- Go to next page and see the words that need changing.

Check out the words in red. Change them to Standard English.

1. I **done** it yesterday.

2. I **ain't** got one.

3. Where **was** you last week?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Answers

1. I done it yesterday. He done it. She done it. X

\*We should use have and has with done to make *present perfect tense*.

I've done it = I have done it.

He's done it = He has done it

She's done it = She has done it.

They've done it/ We've done it/You've done.

Don't use *yesterday* with present perfect.

If you use *yesterday* it has to go with *past simple* finished time.

I did it yesterday. (past simple)

She did it. He did. You did it. They did it.

We did it.

You can combine them – “I've done it. I did it yesterday.”

Have you done it? When did you do it?

## 2. I ain't got one. X

You'll also hear. She ain't/He ain't/They ain't etc.

*Ain't is very informal.*

ain't = haven't got/hasn't got or don't have/ doesn't have

I haven't got one

She hasn't got one.

He hasn't got

They/You/We haven't got

(We use 'have got/ has got' more in speaking especially in British English.)

*don't have* and *doesn't have* are more formal.

I don't have one.

He/She doesn't have one.

You/They/We don't have...

(It can also mean 'isn't/aren't'. I ain't happy (I'm not happy). He ain't rich (He isn't rich.)

3. Where was you last week? X

Where were you last week? Or

Where was she last week?

were you/we/they..?

was I/ was she/ was he/ was it..?

You were / You weren't

We were / We weren't

They were / They weren't

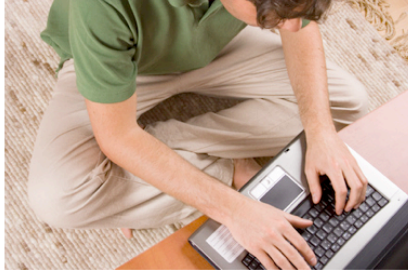
I was / I wasn't

He was / He wasn't

She was / She wasn't

It was / It wasn't





## Change these to Standard English

1. I done it!
2. Come quick!
3. Can you bring them books?
4. She don't want it.
5. They was late for the meetin.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Check the words in red, did you get correct them?

1. I **done** it!
2. Come **quick**!
3. Can you bring **them** books?
4. She **don't** want it.
5. They **was** late for the **meetin**.

## Answers

1. Revision from the previous test. Did you remember the have/has?

1. I ~~done~~ it! = I did it or I've done it.

I've done it. She's done it. He's done it.

I did it. He did it. She did it.



2. Come ~~quick~~!

Come quickly!



adverbs describe verbs

### More adverbs

Drive slowly.

Think carefully.

Speak slowly.

Talk fast.

3. Can you bring ~~them~~ books?

Can you bring those books?

Can you bring these books?



4. She ~~don't~~ want it.

=

She doesn't want it.

I don't/you don't/they don't/we don't

She doesn't

He doesn't

It doesn't

5. They ~~was~~ late for the **meetin'**.

They were late for the meeting.

You were/we were/ they were

I **was**/ she **was**/ he **was**/ it **was**.





## Double negatives

- You can't have two 'negative' words in the same sentence.

You **don't** know **nothing**. x

You **don't** know **anything**.

You know **nothing**.

- **Negative** words include: **no, not, never, nothing, nowhere, no one, don't, didn't, doesn't, haven't, hasn't, won't**, etc.
- For Standard English you only need one negative word in a sentence.

Change these sentences to Standard English by changing one of the negatives.

1. I ain't got no problems.
2. I don't want none.
3. They didn't break nothing.
4. We don't want nothing.
5. The man doesn't have no car.
6. There isn't no point in going out because I ain't got no umbrella.
7. My phone didn't do nothing when I turned it on.

There's more than one answer.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

Check out the words in red. Did you change one of them or both?

1. I **ain't** got **no** problems.
2. I **don't** want **none**.
3. They **didn't** break **nothing**.
4. We **don't** want **nothing**.
5. The man **doesn't** have **no** car.
6. There **isn't no** point in going out because I **ain't** got **no** umbrella.
7. My phone **didn't** do **nothing** when I turned it on.

## Answers

1. I **ain't** got **no** problems.

=

I **haven't** got **any** problems

**or** I've got **no** problems

**or**

I **don't have any** problems.

**or** I have **no** problems.

\*We use **any** in negatives & questions -

Have you got **any money**?

I **don't** have **any children**.

It doesn't mean **anything/a thing**.

2. I **don't** want **none**.

=

I **don't** want **any**.

or I **don't** want **anything**.

or I **don't** want a thing.

or I **don't** want one

or I want **none / nothing**.

Do you remember when we use  
**any?**

In negatives and questions

Be careful – if you're talking about/writing about lots of things (plurals) use **any**.

If you're talking about/writing about one thing (singular) use **a/an/one**.

Do you have **any**?

Do you have **any** problems?

Do you have **any** pens?

Do you have **a** problem?

Do you have **a** pen?

Do you have **one**?

3. They **didn't** break **nothing**.

=

They **didn't** break **anything**.

or

They **didn't** break a thing.

or

They broke **nothing**.

4. We don't want nothing.

=

We don't want anything.

We don't want a thing.

or

We want nothing.



5. The man **doesn't** have **no** car.

=

The man **doesn't** have **a** car.

The man **hasn't got** a car.

or

The man has **no** car.

The man's got **no** car.

6. There **isn't no** point in going out because I **ain't got no** umbrella.

=

There **is no** point in going out because I **haven't got an** umbrella.

or

There's **no** point in going out because I **don't have an** umbrella.

There **isn't any** point in going out because I've got **no** umbrella.

7. My phone **didn't** do **nothing** when I turned it on.

=

My phone **didn't** do **anything** when I turned it on.

or

My phone **didn't** do a thing...

or

My phone did **nothing**...



**contractions/ short forms**

What do these Non-Standard short form/contractions mean?

## contractions

1. ain't
2. innit
3. gonna
4. wanna
5. gotta
6. lotta
7. luv
8. lil'
9. yeah
10. sorta
11. c'mon
12. 'cos

\* These are used more and more in informal texts, emails etc which is fine. But some people use them in formal writing!!!! Do not use them in formal writing.

Do not think you are clever and witty to add them in essays, application forms, supporting statements, formal letters etc. They'll make you look like you don't know the difference between Standard and Non, and worse, that you don't care!

Mastering English is about understanding when and where to use words and grammar in the right situation.

## Answers

### contractions

1. ain't = have not/has not, isn't, am not,
2. innit = isn't it
3. gonna = going to
4. wanna = want to
5. gotta = have got /have to
6. lotta = lot of/ a lot of
7. luv = love
8. lil' = little
9. yeah = yes
10. sorta = sort of
11. c'mon = come on
12. 'cos = because

## What are these in Standard English?

1. I'm gonna miss you.
2. I wanna ask you a question.
3. Gimme a minute to think about it
4. I gotta lotta problems at the mo  
'cos I ain't got a job.

These are all common Non-Standard English sentences you'll hear informally with family, friends, colleagues etc.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you change them? Here's some help.

Change the words in red to Standard English.

1. I'm **gonna** miss you.
2. I **wanna** ask you a question.
3. **Gimme** a minute to think about it
4. I **gotta lotta** problems at the **mo**  
**'cos** I **ain't** got a job.



## Answers

1. I'm **gonna** miss you.  
I'm going to miss you.
2. I **wanna** ask you a question.  
I want to ask you a question.
3. **Gimme** a minute to think about it!  
Give me a minute to think about it!
4. I **gotta lotta** problems at the **mo cos** I **ain't** got a job.  
I have/ I've got a lot of/ lots of problems at the moment because I don't have/ haven't got a job.

4. choices choices!!!

You can use informal or formal or a combination of both depending on situation etc.

(formal) I have a lot of problems at the moment because I don't have a job.

(informal) I've got lots of problems at the mo 'cause I haven't got a job.

(combination) I've got a lot of problems at the mo because I don't have a job.

I have lots of problems at the moment 'cause I haven't got a job.

Remember the quiz at the beginning?  
Do you know the answers?



## Quiz

Do you now know the answers to these?

1. What is **Standard English**?
2. What are **varieties of English**?
3. What is an **accent**?
4. What is **Received Pronunciation**? (RP)
5. Why is it important to know the difference between **Non-Standard English** and **Standard English**?
6. If I speak with an **accent** does it mean I'm not speaking "properly"?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

## Quiz Answers

1. Standard English is the standardised variety of English used in grammar books and writing and is taught to non native learners.

It is the variety associated with the education system in all English speaking countries.

**It has nothing to do with accent.** You can speak Standard English in any accent you want - it's just the correct use of grammar that makes it Standard English. Only 10% of people speak pure Standard English.

## 2. What are varieties of English?

2. Varieties of English = Scouse (Liverpool), Geordie (Newcastle), Cockney (London), American English, Australian, Jamaican, East Midlands...

Many people think that these varieties are incorrect ways of speaking, but they're not - they're just different.

These varieties have their own ways of pronouncing words, their own special vocabulary and their own grammatical rules.

3. Accent - how we pronounce/  
say words. You can speak Standard  
English in any accent you want.

Accents and dialects are about  
where we come from, about cultural  
history, regional differences and  
pride.

4. Received Pronunciation? (RP) is thought to be the 'prestige accent.' This accent tells us about a person's social class and educational background. It is the accent taught to English learners. It has nothing to do with speaking Standard English or "good" English.

Only 2% of the population speak pure RP. Within RP there are sub-accent - Sloane Ranger, BBC and the 'plummy' voice of the older generation.

5. It's important to use Standard English in formal writing like essays, business letters, personal statements and job applications and in speaking, especially in interviews.

You will be judged if you use Non-Standard English in these situations and also if you use formal Standard English in an email to a friend.

So make sure you remind yourself of the purpose of why your writing and speaking something and the audience - who you're talking /writing to.

6. Accents are an interesting part of our language in Britain and throughout the English speaking world. They are usually about the area people grew up in.

If I have an accent I can still speak in 'correct' Standard English.

I can speak in a RP accent and still use Non-Standard English.



- That's it. I hope you've learned something.
- Remember you to have to use language, words, Standard and Non-Standard that are appropriate to the situation and purpose.
- Don't use formal English with your friends or you'll sound strange and forced.
- And the same for using informal in interview and business.

# Acknowledgements

- I'd like to thank the following people for their work on Standard English and Non-Standard:
- Peter Trudgill from the University of Lausanne
- Meryl Wilkins: Teaching Pronunciation to Bilingual Residents in Britain
- Richard Hudson: **The Language Teacher and descriptive versus prescriptive norms: The educational context**
- David Crystal: Discover Grammar
- Rebecca Wheeler and Rachel Swords: Code-switching: Teaching Standard English in Urban Classrooms
- [http://teflpedia.com/Non-standard\\_English](http://teflpedia.com/Non-standard_English)
- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1837\\_aae/page33.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1837_aae/page33.shtml)

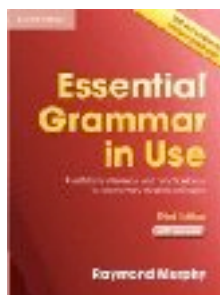
[http://teflpedia.com/Non-standard\\_English](http://teflpedia.com/Non-standard_English)

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1837\\_aae/page33.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1837_aae/page33.shtml)

<http://www.howtospell.co.uk>

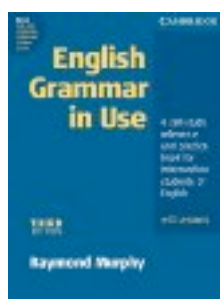
## Recommended grammar books

Essential Grammar in Use Elementary and Intermediate. Teachers use these books all the times and the red one (elementary) is 'essential' for learning grammar.



[Essential Grammar in Use with Answer...](#)

Raymond Murphy



[English Grammar In Use with Answers](#)

Raymond Murphy

## Grammar websites

<http://www.usingenglish.com/quizzes>

<http://www.esolcourses.com>

<http://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/grammar-exercises.html>

<http://www.englishbanana.com>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish>

(Flatmates drama series is great for your listening and language skills)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise> (great website for literacy and Maths)

<http://www.adelescorner.org/>

<http://www.eslcafe.com/quiz>

## Howtospell



- Thank you for listening and buying this video.
- Any comments or questions let me know at [info@howtospell.co.uk](mailto:info@howtospell.co.uk)
- For more grammar info look in the workbook at the books and websites I recommend.

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