



Curriculum subject: English Language

Level: Key Stage 5, Undergraduate (English Language/Linguistics)

Topic: Grammatical variation

Article

[Grammatical variation across the UK](#)

Activities

- 1) How do you usually form the past tense of the verb 'to be'? Do you or your friends ever use non-standard forms? If so, can you observe any pattern? Make a list of non-standard past tenses that you hear during the course of an average day at school/at home/among friends.
- 2) Make a list of non-standard grammatical constructions you come across while listening to the radio or watching a television programme. Programmes that feature members of the public – radio phone-ins or 'reality' television shows – are ideally suited for this activity. Try and categorise each construction according to the following criteria:
 - Do you and your friends use it or not?
 - Do you associate it with older or younger speakers?
 - Do you think it is peculiar to certain regions?
- 3) Listen to a selection of recordings on this site (between five and ten from different parts of the UK) and make a list of non-standard grammatical constructions. Try and categorise each construction according to the following criteria:
 - Do you and your friends use it or not?
 - Do you associate it with older or younger speakers?
 - Do you think it is peculiar to certain regions?
- 4) Look at the list (below) of 'unmediated' recordings featured on this site. Listen to a couple of recordings - one from near where you live and another in a different part of the country – and list any non-standard grammatical constructions. Try and categorise each construction according to the following criteria:



- Do you and your friends use it or not?
- Do you associate it with older or younger speakers?
- Do you think it is peculiar to certain regions?

England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Whitehaven	Uig	Bangor	Londonderry
Middlesbrough	Portsoy	Resolven	Downpatrick
Bradford	New Cumnock		
Salford			
Boston			
Bristol			
Castle Bromwich			
Peckham			
Southall			

Research task

Keep a diary of non-standard grammatical constructions you hear in your community – at school, at home, when socialising with friends. You could analyse your findings in a number of ways as follows:

- Which constructions occur with the greatest frequency?
- Which constructions appear to be age-specific?
- Which constructions do you feel are peculiar to your area?
- Which constructions never occur in formal situations?