

Fall 2020

English 101: Whose English? The Diverse History of the English Language  
American Regional English

The point of this exercise is to increase your awareness of the diversity within the dialects of American English. For the purpose of the following questions, you'll achieve that awareness mainly by spending some time with the online version of the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (aka *DARE*), looking up a number of words either no longer used or used in only certain regions within the United States. The first question, however, deals with grammatical diversity.

#### Question 1

In our survey of Old English grammar, we covered the difference between weak and strong verbs, respectively verbs that take an inflectional ending to form their past tense (as in *talk*, *talked*) and verbs that change their root vowels to form their past tense (as in *sing*, *sang*). Looking into the "Verb Forms" section under the tab titled *Dare Survey* in the website, identify two US regions where local speech made strong verbs behave like weak verbs. A nonexistent example would be a US region where one says *swimmed* for *swam*.

Question 2:

Consult the *Dictionary of American Regional English* online to look up words in this list, and then fill in the blanks with the words to complete the sentences. Be careful: some of the words listed here are familiar to you, though probably not in the sense that would correctly complete the sentence where they fit.

silver button	arigato	rotten	hair combed
hell-bent for election	princeton	road apple	kiss-me-quick
toot	stretch the blanket	hair brand	spa
nose open	Uncle Arthur	squeeze the apple	Old Hanna
iron man	pogonip	stretch the blanket	

- 1) In Georgia, one jolt to your vehicle from a chuckhole or \_\_\_\_\_ can cause pretty serious damage to the whole suspension system.
- 2) Long gone the days when you could buy a burger for only one \_\_\_\_\_ in New York
- 3) The Pacific War between Japan and the US surprisingly left Hawaiian speakers with a number of new words added to their American English lexicon, for which one can only say \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) I really can't stay. It is 1:30 a.m., and I have a Kansan father. I am gonna get my \_\_\_\_\_ pretty good for being this late already.
- 5) Fairly short, parted, and combed to the side, his \_\_\_\_\_ looked hilariously old-fashioned. He still thinks we're in Ohio or something!
- 6) No, I wouldn't do it. Even in early Michigan spring, believe it or not, the ice gets too \_\_\_\_\_ to travel on. You'll probably drown.
- 7) Yes, I'd highly recommend a lobster roll before you leave Boston. And there is a nice local \_\_\_\_\_ down the road.
- 8) Speaker A: How is your \_\_\_\_\_? Speaker B: Well, I quit dancing because it hobbles me, and I retired to my Montana home.
- 9) You can watch Western movies all you want. Only with practice can you \_\_\_\_\_ like a proper cowboy.
- 10) When people in Nevada see a heavy fog in which particles of snow seem to be flying up over the mountains, they know there will be \_\_\_\_\_ in the morning.

### Question 3

Choose the most fitting answer from the three choices listed under each question:

- 1) If you're feeling like a boiled owl during the day,
  - a) You're a worn-out night owl
  - b) You've had too much to drink last night
  - c) You've just quit smoking cold turkey
  
- 2) If two people bucked for a few minutes, what did they do?
  - a. made out
  - b. bickered
  - c. bumped into each other
  
- 3) You've been hoodooed if you've been
  - a. down on your luck
  - b. holed up for the last couple of days
  - c. fired from your job
  
- 4) Why should a blind-pigger be arrested?
  - a. because he/she slaughters baby pigs
  - b. because he/she runs the red light
  - c. because he/he sells alcohol to minors
  
- 5) If someone answers, "I ain't got no idea about no miles. I just grease my wagon two or three times before I'm home resting," then he was asked
  - a. about the distance he travels daily to get home from work
  - b. whether he's been performing regular maintenance on his wagon
  - c. about how much he would charge to give someone a ride somewhere
  
- 6) If you wouldn't know someone from Adam's off-fox, that person is
  - a. sly as a wild fox
  - b. a stranger to you
  - c. a bachelor
  
- 7) Why would someone honeyfuggle other people?
  - a. to get them in sticky situations with no way out
  - b. to shower them with affection
  - c. to curry favor with them

- 8) What happens when someone gets a little polly on?
  - a. He or she puts their hair up in a bun
  - b. He or she begins to show the effects of the liquor
  - c. Both meanings are possible depending on the context
  
- 9) Folks in the Mississippi Delta—what do they with a toboggan?
  - a. They ride it.
  - b. They wear it.
  - c. They mow the lawn with it.
  
- 10) If a group of horses went hell-bent for election, that probably means
  - a. they were taken to a slaughterhouse
  - b. they grazed
  - c. somebody fired a shotgun, and they got scared