

# BLACK AMERICAN ENGLISH



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- MANY AFRICAN AMERICANS SPEAK AND USE A FORM OF ENGLISH THAT IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FROM STANDARD ENGLISH.
- EVERY LANGUAGE SYSTEM CONTAINS RULES.
- THE RULES OF BLACK AMERICAN ENGLISH [**BE**] ARE FUNCTIONAL TO THOSE WHO USE THEM.
- THESE RULES ARE **SYSTEMATIC** AND ARE APPLIED OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY.
- MORE RECENTLY, BLACK ENGLISH HAS BEEN REFERRED TO AS ENGLISH USED IN A “CASUAL REGISTER.” (Payne)

# WHAT IS BLACK ENGLISH?

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- BLACK ENGLISH IS THE LANGUAGE OF BLACK AMERICA.

***CAUTION: NOT ALL 36 MILLION AFRICAN AMERICANS CHOOSE TO SPEAK BLACK ENGLISH, ESPECIALLY THE EDUCATED MIDDLE AND UPPER INCOME BLACKS.***

- BLACK ENGLISH HAS BEEN CALLED:
  - NONSTANDARD BLACK DIALECT
  - BLACK ENGLISH VERNACULAR [BEV]
  - AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH [AAE]
  - AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH [AAVE]
  - EBONICS [USEB]
  - BLACK COMMUNICATIONS [BC]
  - BLACK POVERTY LANGUAGE
  - CASUAL REGISTER ENGLISH
  - RAP

# WHERE DOES [BE] COME FROM?

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- **BLACK ENGLISH IS A FUNCTIONAL FORM OF COMMUNICATION THAT EVOLVED FROM THE CREOLIZATION OF PLANTATION ENGLISH AND THE TRANSPORTED LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY ENSLAVED AFRICANS.**
- **BLACK ENGLISH REPRESENTS A CROSS-FERTILIZATION OF LANGUAGES NURTURED AND PASSED DOWN FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT IN AN ORAL AND AURAL TRADITIONAL CLIMATE, SINCE LAWS [BLACK CODES] MANDATED THAT ANY PERSON CAUGHT TEACHING A SLAVE TO READ OR WRITE COULD BE FINED AND PUT IN JAIL.**

# FEATURES OF BLACK ENGLISH

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- PHONOLOGY
- "SOUNDS MEAN MORE TO ME THAN PLAYING A LOT OF NOTES" – BB KING (Bluesman)
- TEACHERS WHO USE A PHONICS APPROACH TO TEACH READING SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE REPERTOIRE OF SOUNDS IN BLACK ENGLISH.
- KENNETH R. JOHNSON, WALT WOLFMAN, BARATZ, AND OTHERS HAVE PRESENTED SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS, PHONOLOGICAL AND GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES, AND FEATURES OF BLACK ENGLISH. HERE ARE SOME OF THEIR RESEARCH FINDINGS:

## A SAMPLE OF SOME OTHER PRONUNCIATION FEATURES

**[SE]**

OUT HERE

LIBRARY

SUPPOSED

SINK

FRIEND

PIN

WANT TO

GOT TO

USE TO GO

CHILDREN

OFTEN CAME

**[BE]**

OUT CHERE

LIBERRY

‘POSED

ZINK

FRIEN’

PEN

WANNA

GOTTA

USE-DA GO

CHIL’RUN

USE-TA COME

## A SAMPLE OF SOME OTHER PRONUNCIATION FEATURES

[SE]

ABOUT

BEFORE

BIRTH CERTIFICATE

FIFTY

DOESN'T HAVE ANY

OIL WELL

CORNER

SINCE

SURE

TIN

FISH

[BE]

'BOUT

'FO

BURF SUSTIFICUT

FITTY

AIN'T GOT NO

ALL WHEEL

CORNAH or CORNDA

CENTS

SHO' or SHORE

TEN

FEESH

## LEXICON (*VOCABULARY, CODES, WORDSETS*)

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BLACK ENGLISH SPEAKERS HAVE A LARGE REPERTOIRE OF SLANG WORDS UNCOMMON TO STANDARD ENGLISH. MOST OF THE SLANG WORDS WE FIND IN AMERICA WERE COINED BY JAZZ MUSICIANS AND INNER CITY RAPPERS.

AS SOON AS A SLANG WORD ENTERS THE MAINSTREAM AND IS USED BY STANDARD ENGLISH SPEAKERS, BLACK ENGLISH SPEAKERS OFTEN STOP USING THE WORD AND INVENT A NEW WORD. HOWEVER, SOME WORDS LIKE “COOL” AND “CRIB” REMAIN IN PERENNIAL USE FOR DECADES.



# CONCLUSION

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ANY PERSON WHO SPEAKS ENGLISH IN AMERICA SPEAKS A DIALECT [ACCENT] OF ENGLISH. [e.g., BOSTON TO MISSISSIPPI, BROOKLYN TO NEW ORLEANS, CALIFORNIA TO ALABAMA, OREGON TO NORTH CAROLINA....ETC.]

***E PLURIBUS UNUM (ONE COMPOSED OF MANY):*** EACH DIALECT IS IMPORTANT AND ADDS TO THE CULTURAL ENRICHMENT OF AMERICA.

WE CAN TEACH ALL CHILDREN STANDARD ENGLISH AS WELL AS ALLOW FOR CULTURAL LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES.

THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION HERE IS: **HOW DOES KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES ENABLE A TEACHER TO HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED IN SCHOOL?**

**THANK YOU**



**FOR YOUR ATTENTION**