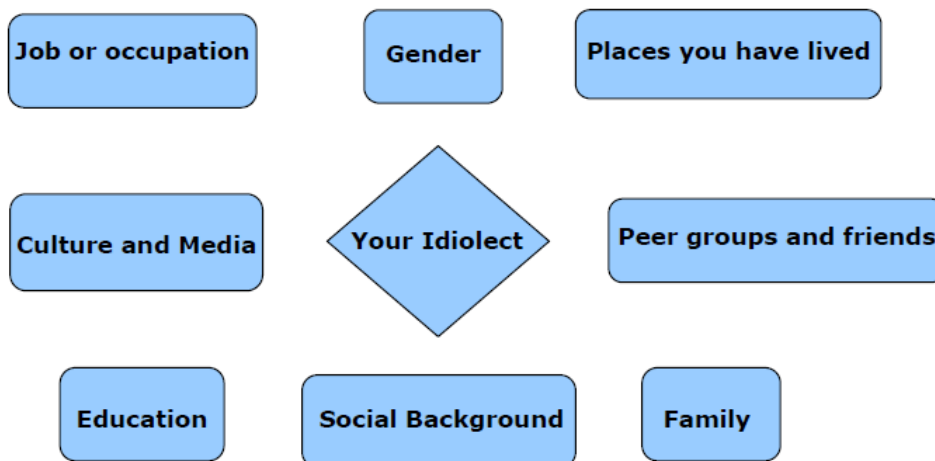


English Language

Transition Activity

You and your language: idiolect

In your daily life, as you read magazines, texts and websites or listen to the people around you talking, you rapidly become aware that we all have our own distinctive style of using language. So what has influenced and shaped this **idiolect**, this individual linguistic fingerprint which each of us reveals as soon as we open our mouths or put pen to paper?



Activity 1: Create your own idiolect diagram

For each of the possible sources of influence shown above, draw your own idiolect diagram and try to suggest the specific ways in which they have affected your personal language development. As you consider each one, think about how it might have influenced:

- your accent
- your choice of words, phrases and slang
- your ideas about what is acceptable or "good" English

Bring your diagram with you to your first English Language lesson in September.

Accent and dialect

One of the sources of influence which may have affected your idiolect is the places you have lived in your lifetime. This may be because you or members of your family have lived in a number of different regions or even countries. Alternatively, if you have lived in the same area your whole life, this will be a significant influence on your language use. For example, do you call a 'bread roll' a *cob*, *batch*, *bread cake*, *barm cake* or *scuffler*? How do you pronounce the words *cup* and *plant*? And are you *sitting* or *sat* at this computer? The UK is a rich landscape of regional accents and dialects, each evidence of our society's continuity and change, our local history and our day-to-day lives.

Accent	Dialect
The <u>pronunciation</u> characteristic of a particular region or social group	The distinctive <u>vocabulary</u> and <u>grammar</u> of a particular geographical region

Sounds Familiar?

The **British Library** has an ongoing project, studying the variety of different accents and dialects throughout the UK and how they have changed in the 20th and 21st centuries. Their website provides a fascinating insight into the diversity of spoken English, with a variety of recordings, case studies and activities to explore. Click on this link to find out more:

[British Library - Sounds Familiar?](#)

By exploring the section on **Regional Voices**, **Changing Voices** and **Case Studies** you should start to get an idea of the many ways we can research and analyse the English Language (we hope you will also discover how interesting this can be!). If you like, you can analyse your own accent in the **Your Voices** section.

Activity 2: Researching Lexical Variation

Lexis

The collective term for the words or vocabulary of a language or text

Exactly what makes language in your area different from other parts of the UK? To find out, select **two** of the Lexical Variation research activities from the Activities section. Click on the link to find out more:

[Lexical Variation Activities](#)

You can pick the two activities which interest you the most and make a note of your findings. Record your discoveries on one A4 sheet of paper in an appropriate format (bullet points, spider diagram, table etc.) and bring it in to your first English Language lesson.

We hope you have fun exploring idiolect, accent and dialect over the holidays and look forward to hearing about your research in September!