

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that there are different ways to speak every language?

People who come from different places or have different backgrounds might say the same word in a different way. They might also use different words for the same thing. We call each of these different varieties of speaking a language a dialect.

Everyone speaks a dialect.

Here's an example to show you.

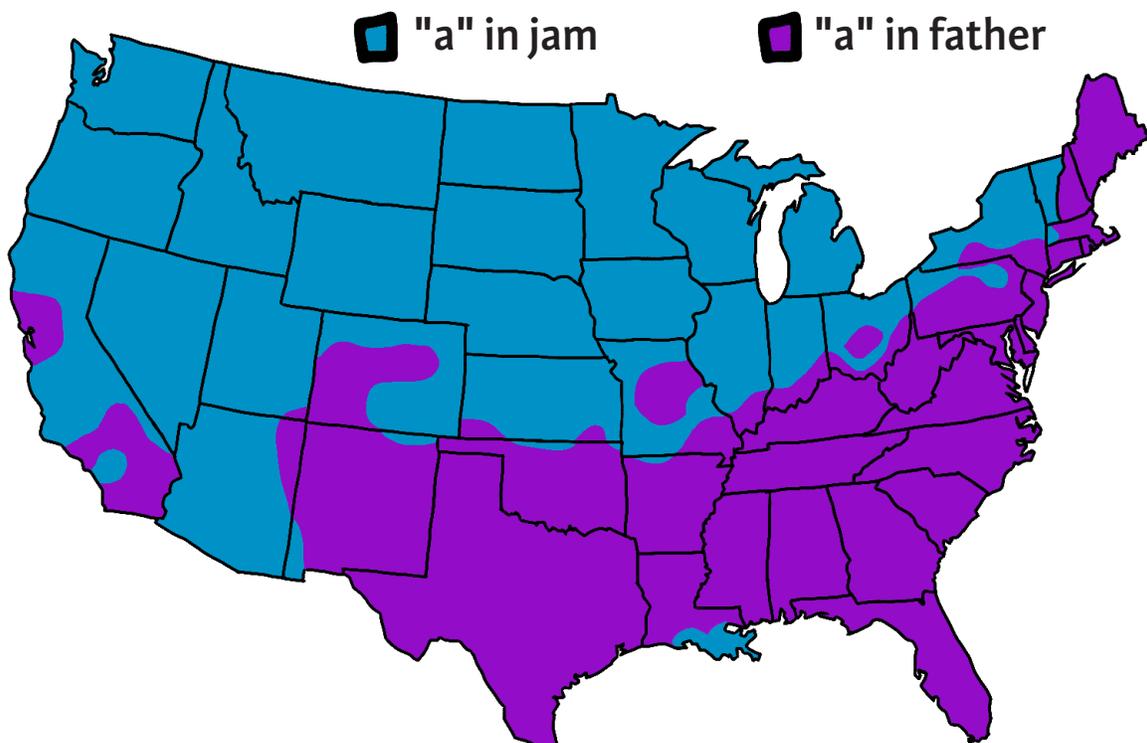
How do you pronounce the second syllable of the word “pa-jam-as”?

Do you pronounce it like the “a” in “father” or the “a” in “jam”?

Try saying the word out loud and see which it sounds more like when you say it.

The reason you say the word one way or another is because of where you grew up and who you grew up with.

The map below shows where in the United States each pronunciation is generally used. Try drawing a star where you live and see if the color over it matches with how you pronounce the second syllable in “pajamas.”

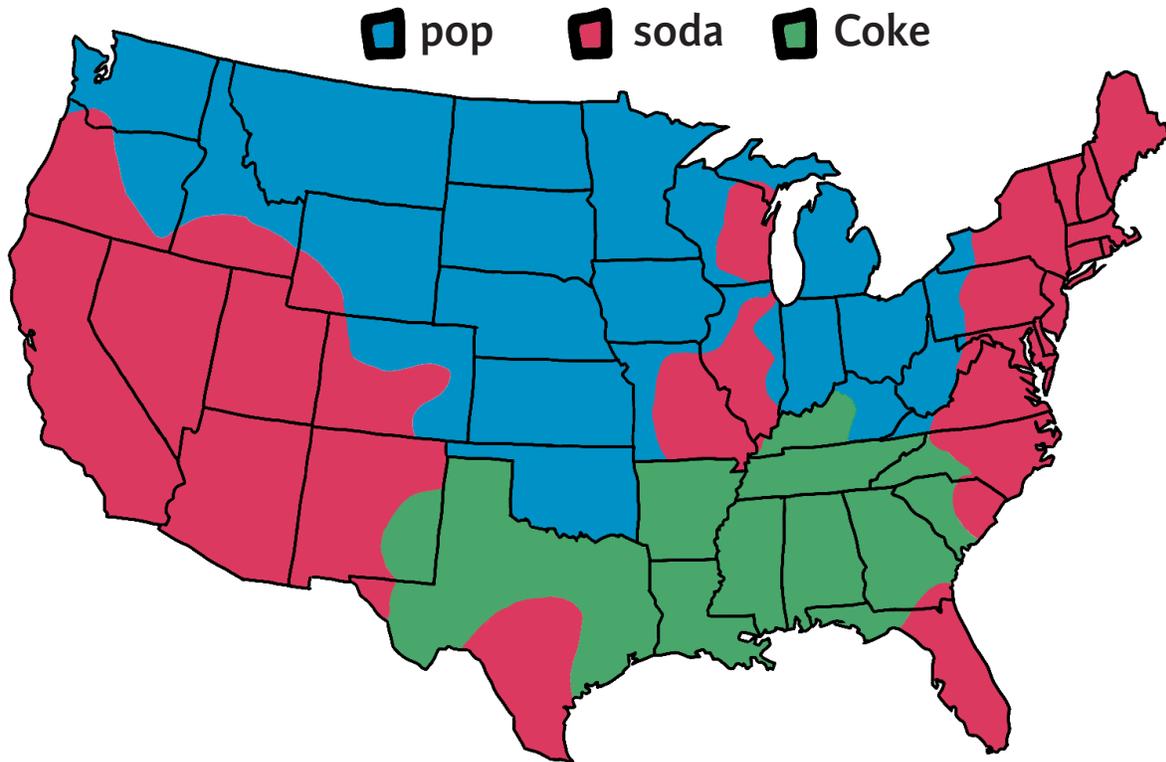


How about another example?

What word do you use for a sweet, carbonated drink like the one in the drawing below?



Different dialects use the words “pop,” “soda,” or “Coke” to refer to this kind of drink.



In the map above, you can see where people tend to use each word by looking at where each color is: blue for "pop", pink for "soda," and green for "Coke". People in the northern United States tend to use “pop” while people in the East and West tend to use “soda” and in the South tend to use “Coke.”

SYNONYMS

Synonyms are two different words that have the same or a similar meaning.

“small” and “little”

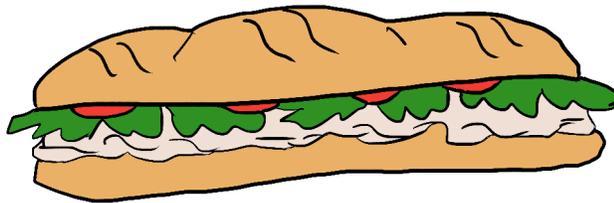
“big” and “large”

“brave” and “courageous”

“wet” and “soggy”

Words that are used in different dialects to refer to the same thing are synonyms of each other.

For instance what would you call a sandwich like the one below?



All of the following words can be used to refer to this type of sandwich. Try circling the ones you don't know in red, the ones you have heard but don't use in green, and the ones you use in blue.

Sub
hero
Italian sandwich

grinder
poor boy
baguette

hoagie
bomber
sarney

How about the type of shoes shown below?



All of the following words can be used to refer to this type of shoe. Try circling the ones you don't know in red, the ones you have heard but don't use in green, and the ones you use in blue.

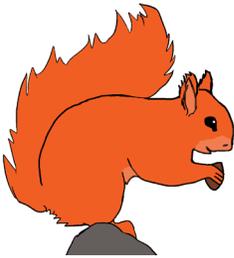
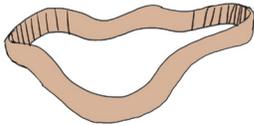
Sneakers
jumpers
runners

gym shoes
tennis shoes
trainers

sand shoes
running shoes

Can you draw a line from each picture to the word that it matches?

Each word on the right is from a dialect and refers to one picture on the left. Try drawing a line to match each word to what picture you think it refers to. You'll find the answers on the next page.



Gumband

Airish

Meehonkey

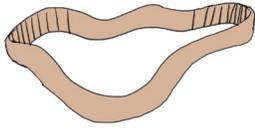
Boomer

Quamish

Juvenber

ANSWERS

Gumband



PITTSBURGH

Gumband is used by some people in the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

A *gumband* is a rubber band.

Boomer



APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN TALK

Boomer and *airish* are both used by some people who live in the Appalachian Mountains.

A *boomer* is a red squirrel.

Airish means a little bit chilly or windy.

Airish



Juvementer



THE LUMBEE TRIBE

Juvementer is a term used by the Lumbee tribe in North Carolina.

A *juvementer* is a slingshot.

Quamish



OCRACOKE

Quamish and *meehonkey* are both terms used on the island of Ocracoke in North Carolina.

Quamish means to feel uneasy, particularly in the stomach.

Meehonkey is an island version of the game hide and seek.

Meehonkey



The International Phonetic Alphabet

Linguists are people that study language. Linguists use the International Phonetic Alphabet or IPA to help them know how a word would sound without having to hear the sound. You can think of it as a code to write sounds down in text. Each symbol stands for a specific sound.

For instance “a” refers to the “a” sound in “father,” but

“æ” would refer to the “a” sound in “jam”

Let's start with the symbols for consonant sounds that appear in English.

Consonants are mostly similar from dialect to dialect.

p	"p" sound in <u>p</u> ill or <u>p</u> ull or potato
b	"b" sound in <u>b</u> ill or <u>b</u> ow or <u>b</u> alloon
t	"t" sound in <u>t</u> ill or <u>t</u> own or <u>t</u> urtle
d	"d" sound in <u>d</u> ill or <u>d</u> own or <u>d</u> inosaur
k	"k" sound in <u>k</u> ilt or <u>k</u> ite or <u>c</u> arrot
g	"g" sound in <u>g</u> ill or <u>g</u> oat or grow
dʒ	"j" sound in <u>J</u> ill or <u>g</u> ym or <u>j</u> ob
tʃ	"ch" sound in <u>ch</u> ill or <u>ch</u> ild or <u>in</u> ch
w	"w" sound in <u>w</u> ore or <u>w</u> ater or <u>w</u> oman
v	"v" sound in <u>v</u> ery or <u>v</u> olt or <u>v</u> acation
ð	"th" sound in <u>th</u> y or <u>th</u> ese
θ	"th" sound in <u>th</u> igh or <u>th</u> ing

z	"z" sound in <u>z</u> oo or <u>z</u> ebra or <u>z</u> eal
l	"l" sound in <u>l</u> ot or <u>l</u> ion or <u>l</u> ittle
r	"r" sound in <u>r</u> ot or <u>r</u> ed or <u>r</u> ead
j	"y" sound in <u>y</u> ell or <u>y</u> oung or year
f	"f" sound in <u>f</u> eel or <u>f</u> ood or <u>ph</u> antom
s	"s" sound in <u>s</u> eal or <u>s</u> ilent or <u>st</u> ill
h	"h" sound in <u>h</u> eel or <u>h</u> air or <u>h</u> ope
m	"m" sound in <u>h</u> um or <u>m</u> oney or <u>m</u> oo
n	"n" sound in <u>ki</u> n or <u>n</u> one or <u>no</u> on
ŋ	"ng" sound in <u>ki</u> ng or <u>lun</u> g or <u>si</u> tting
ʃ	"sh" sound in <u>sh</u> ore or <u>me</u> sh or <u>sh</u> ow
ʒ	"s" sound in <u>mea</u> sure or <u>vi</u> sion or <u>usu</u> ally

Now let's look at vowel sounds. Vowels differ the most from dialect to dialect. It can be hard to find words that everyone pronounces the same in every dialect. Instead, linguists look at the place in the mouth that each vowel is pronounced to determine what symbol to use.

Front vowels are pronounced closer to the lips. Back vowels are pronounced closer to the throat.

Front Vowels:

i	"ee" sound in tree or knee or green
ɪ	"i" sound in kid or fit or lift
e	"a" sound in fate or late or may
ɛ	"e" sound in bet or bed
æ	"a" sound in jam or bat

Back Vowels:

u	"oo" sound in hoop or moo or zoom
ʊ	"u" sound in put or "ou" in could or "oo" in look
o	"o" in home or code or "oa" in load
ɔ	"awe" in cawed or "ou" in thought
a	"a" in father or "o" in cot

The symbol below is for a vowel called a "schwa." This vowel is pronounced in the center of the mouth.

ə	"u" sound in hut or cud or "a" in woman
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These vowels have two symbols together because they are a special type of vowel called a diphthong. Diphthongs aren't pronounced in just one place in the mouth. Instead, diphthongs are pronounced when two vowels are combined. The tongue moves from one place in the mouth to another while you are pronouncing the sound.

aɪ	Moves from the middle of the mouth to the front	Usually represented by the "ie" in tie, the "uy" in buy or the "i" in tide
ɔɪ	Moves from the back to the front	Usually represented by "oy" in toy or "oy" in boy
aʊ	Moves from the middle to the back	Usually represented by "ow" in how or "ou" in house

Go to the back of the packet and you will find your own personal IPA table. Follow the instructions at the top of the page. Then you can use that table as guide for any translations you do.

Let's try using IPA to write out how to pronounce a word.

How would we write "cat" in IPA?

First, we need to figure out which symbol is for the sound that "c" refers to when we pronounce "cat." In this case we would use the "k" symbol because it refers to the sound that occurs at the beginning of the word "cat" but also words like "kick" or "kiwi."

k

Now we need the next sound in "cat." Different people might say this vowel sound in different ways, so use whatever symbol fits how you say the word. In my case, I pronounce "cat" with the "æ" like in "jam."

kæ

Then we finish with the symbol for the sound at the end of "cat" in this case, the symbol for the sound and the letter in the English alphabet are the same, but that's not always the case.

So we now have "cat" written in IPA:

kæt

Let's try to do the same for the word "elephant." Write what you think "elephant" would be in IPA on the blank below.

Let's see how you did. For "elephant," I got:

ɛlɛfænt

How did you do? The "ph" might have been a little tricky. In this case, even though there are two letters, it refers to only one sound "f". This happens because we often pronounce words differently than how we spell them in writing, so keep that in mind for future words!

Now that we know the basics of how IPA works, try writing your name in IPA.

IPA helps linguists show the different ways that people can pronounce the same word depending on what dialect the person speaks.

For example, some people say these two words the same and some say them differently:

cot

caught

Do you say them the same or differently? Try writing each out in IPA.

How about these two?

pin

pen

Or these three?

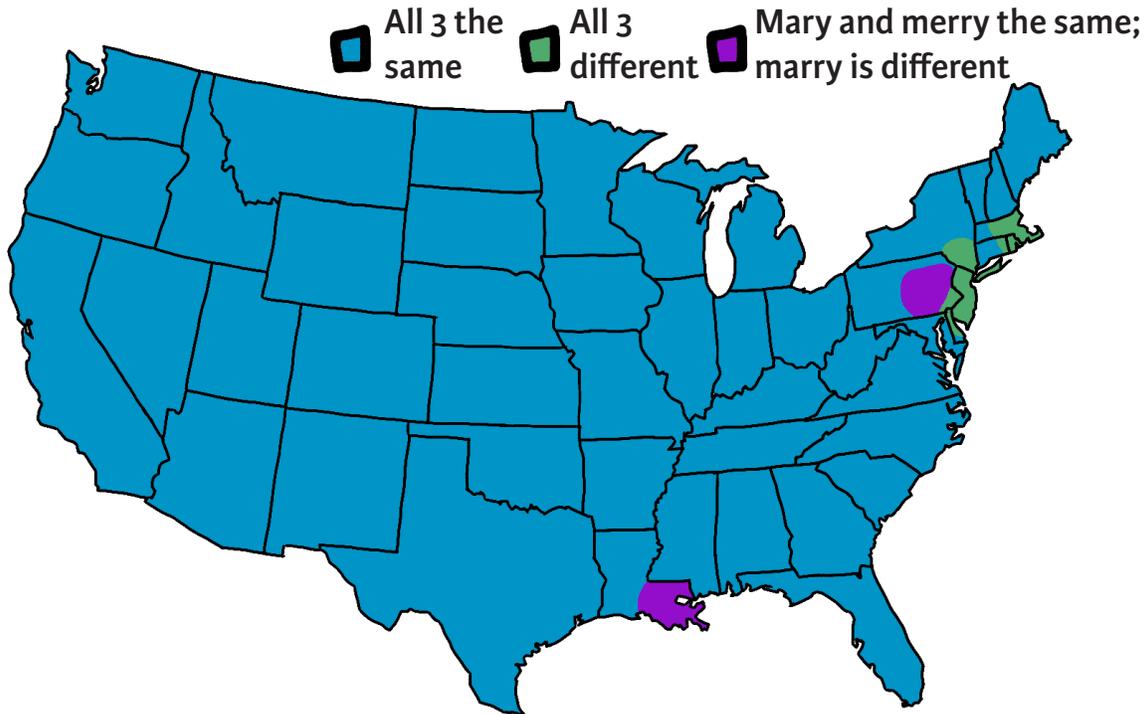
marry

Mary

merry

Whether you pronounce each set of words the same or differently depends on where you live.

For “marry,” “Mary,” and “merry,” most dialects in the United States pronounce those three words the same, but in some places like Pennsylvania or Massachusetts, people may pronounce only two of them the same or all three differently.



How about you? When you wrote them out in IPA, were they all the same or were some different?

Let's try this with one more example. Try writing these three words in IPA.

pull

pool

pole

Do you pronounce all of them same, all differently, two of them the same? Some dialects pronounce “pull” and “pole” the same, “pool” and “pull” the same, all of them the same, or all three differently. Write below which ones you say the same and which ones you say differently.

DIFFERENCES IN DIALECT

Each of these different pronunciations are examples of differences between certain dialects just like the synonyms that show how different dialects use different words to refer to the same thing. No dialect is better than any other. They each just reflect the different ways that people speak in different places. Differences in dialects can be very interesting to discover and talk about with those around you. Each person's dialect is connected to who they are, and all dialects should be appreciated. Your own dialect is an important part of your language and is a part of what makes you your own unique person.

Try writing out other words or sentences in IPA. You can write out how you pronounce a certain word and then how your family or friends pronounce it as well. After you have written out both pronunciations, look to see if they pronounce it the same or differently than you do. When linguists do this, they call it collecting **data**. Data lets linguists figure out what the differences between two dialects are. The pronunciations you write down are your very own data!

Let's try writing out a data example below.

First, write down the name of the person whose pronunciation you are writing down.

Name: _____

Then write down their pronunciation in IPA in the Data blank.

Data: _____

So on the full line you will have the person's name and their pronunciation. On the next line do the same for the next person's pronunciation.

Name: _____ Data: _____

Now compare the two IPA translations. Are they same? Different? Put a check mark next to the ones that are the same and an X next to the ones that are different. You can do the same for any dialect synonyms you find as well!

Use the blanks on the next pages to write down more of your own examples of differences in dialects.

Hint: If you need ideas for what differences to look for, try asking older relatives what words they use to say something is crooked or askew. You can also ask how people say the words "tide," "buses," or "yard." How would your friends refer to something that is cool? What words do the people around you use to address a group of people (you all?, you guys?)?

My Dialect Data Collection

Name: _____ Data: _____

My Dialect Data Collection

Name: _____ Data: _____

The International Phonetic Alphabet

This will be your personal IPA translation chart. For each consonant symbol, the keyword to help you remember what sound it stands for is next to it. For the vowel symbols, write a word next to each that contains the vowel sound that the symbol represents. Underline the portion of the word that represents the sound. Tear this page out and use it for the IPA exercises on the previous pages and for any future IPA translations you want to complete.

Consonants				Vowels			
p	<u>pill</u>	z	<u>zoo</u>	i		u	
b	<u>bill</u>	l	<u>lot</u>	ɪ		ʊ	
t	<u>till</u>	r	<u>rot</u>	e		o	
d	<u>dill</u>	j	<u>yell</u>	ɛ		ɔ	
k	<u>kilt</u>	f	<u>feel</u>	æ		a	
g	<u>gill</u>	s	<u>seal</u>				
dʒ	<u>job</u>	h	<u>heel</u>	ə			
tʃ	<u>chill</u>	m	<u>hum</u>				
w	<u>wore</u>	n	<u>kin</u>	aɪ			
v	<u>very</u>	ŋ	<u>king</u>	ɔɪ			
ð	<u>thy</u>	ʃ	<u>shore</u>	aʊ			
θ	<u>thigh</u>	ʒ	<u>measure</u>				