
Appalachian Englishes in the Twenty-First Century

Educational Materials

Chapter 2

Phonological Possibilities in Appalachian Englishes

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Exercise 1

In small groups, discuss how accurate are media portrayals of Appalachian accents? What features are used by non-Appalachian actors to ‘sound Appalachian’? Are there some features that are used and others that aren’t? Which? You may want to look up an actor’s background on [IMDB](#) or [Wikipedia](#) to see where they are from and where they grew up. Clips from each of these can usually be found on [YouTube](#).

Some examples of media portrayals of Appalachian Englishes:

- [*Justified*](#)
- [*Coal Miner’s Daughter*](#)
- [*Hatfields and McCoys*](#)
- [*Cold Mountain*](#)
- [*October Sky*](#)

Portrayals of authentic Appalachian speech for comparison

- [*Mountain Talk*](#) from the North Carolina Language and Life Project
- [*Appalachian English Website*](#) at the University of South Carolina
- [*West Virginia Dialect Project*](#) at West Virginia University
- Many videos and clips from the [*Appalachian Media Institute*](#)

Exercise 2

Find some written portrayals of Appalachian speech that do not use phonetic symbols, either at the library or on the internet (some examples are below). How have the writers attempted to depict the

sounds? Read it aloud. Does it seem to capture the way that Appalachian speakers talk (compare to the authentic portrayals from Exercise 1)? What is missing? What is captured well? Are certain features caricatured?

Written examples:

Barney Google and Snuffy Smith at [Comics Kingdom](#)

Bloodroot by Amy Greene excerpt from [Penguin Random House](#)

Clay's Quilt by Silas House excerpt from [Reading Group Guides](#)

In the Tennessee Mountains by Mary Noalles Murphree (Charles Egbert Craddock)
[available from UNC](#)

Exercise 3

Propose a hypothetical research project to collect phonetic/phonological data from a cohort of Appalachian English speakers. Consider the following questions:

-How would you recruit speakers?

-What data would you collect? Word lists (and which words)? Conversation? Narratives? Something else? Compare and contrast each data type, and others you might consider. Why use that technique? What does it provide for you?

-How would you record your speakers? In a lab? At their home? Somewhere else? What would be the benefits and drawbacks of each location?