

The United States

Just as there are varieties of English in Britain, so there are different varieties of English in North America. In the United States, distinctive Eastern varieties are found in New England and New York City; Southern varieties are found in the lowland South; and in the rest of the country people speak varieties which are usually referred to as **General American**. Within these varieties socially prestigious accents have emerged, and mass schooling has meant that people who use non-standard vocabulary and grammar are considered to be ill-educated. However, there is no single prestigious accent like Received Pronunciation in England. Some people, though, call General American accents **Network English**, because it is used on TV and radio stations which cover the whole of the country.

Canada

Canadian English is another of the major varieties of English in North America, and is itself made up of other varieties. Most Canadian English-speakers in the western provinces of the country speak a language which is very like General American, but in the eastern parts of the country, especially in Newfoundland, people speak a variety which is very like old-fashioned forms of English spoken in Western England.

Black English

Another variety which has received a lot of attention is **Black English**, sometimes known as **Black English Vernacular**. Many scholars believe that there are special features in the speech of Black Americans which come from their African origins. Some of these features have been borrowed into other varieties of English. For instance words such as **yam** 'juke(-box)', **dig** 'understand' and **okay** seem to have come from African languages spoken by Black people before they were brought to America as slaves. The study of this form of language is sometimes called **Ebonics**.