

'Varieties' and 'dialects'

All natural languages seem to be made up of **varieties** or **dialects**, that is, forms of the language peculiar to particular places or to particular social classes. English is no exception. Whether you refer to these kinds of language as dialects or varieties is really up to you. However, some scholars prefer 'varieties' because the word 'dialect' has become associated with lack of education and/or intelligence. This is an unfortunate and essentially untrue association.

Differences between varieties and standard English

Varieties of a language can differ in three ways: in **accent** (that is, in pronunciation), in **grammar** (that is, in word form and word order) and in **vocabulary** (that is, in the set of words that is used). Some varieties only differ from others in accent; others differ in all three categories.