

Cambridge Academic English

An integrated skills course for EAP

Video Worksheet



Advanced

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Video Worksheet C1

Advanced

These worksheets contain listening comprehension tasks which accompany Professor David Crystal's lecture, *The Stories of English*. This lecture can be found at www.cambridge.org/elt/lectureC1

Answer sheets, a worksheet on Lecture skills and more lectures can be found at www.cambridge.org/elt/lectures

Preparing for lectures

1.1 The lecture is about the different varieties of English. Before you watch the first extract, think about the following questions.

- a What do you know about the history of the English language? What are its origins? How did it become such a widely-spoken international language?
- b Have you spent any time in an English speaking country, or with people who speak English as a first language? If so, how different was the English they spoke to the English you learned at school?
- c Do you ever have any difficulties in understanding native speakers of English? If so, how do you deal with these difficulties?

C1 Extract 1 (starts at 0:42 and ends at 1:20)

1.2 Watch the first extract and make notes on the following questions. Listen carefully to the lecturer's tone of voice and choice of language.

- a What does the lecturer say he will be talking about?
- b What has been the focus of most studies of the history of the English language published over the past one hundred years?
- c What does the lecturer's tone and language tell you about what he thinks of history's representation of the 'story of English'?



Study tip

During your studies you will attend many lectures and take a great deal of notes. However, you will not need to write down all of the information that you hear in the lecture. It is common for lecturers to make the same point in a number of different ways, and to include different examples that help to illustrate a single point. This helps students absorb the important content, and allows you some time to rest between the key points of the lecture.

1.3 Watch the extract again. If you were attending this lecture as part of your studies, which details would you exclude from your notes?

Listening and taking notes

Extract 2 (starts at 06:06 and ends at 10:25)

2.1a If you sometimes find it difficult to understand native speakers of English, it may be because their *accent* and/or *dialect* is different to the ones you first heard or were used to at school. Listen to Professor Crystal talking about dialect and complete the notes using words in the box.

belong evolutionary grammar and vocabulary identity
pronunciation spelling threat variation

THE STORIES OF ENGLISH

2 stories & 2 forces → intelligibility
driving language: → 1 _____

Definition of dialect: 2 _____
accent: 3 _____; value of accent & dialect is
essentially 4 _____

Early human race, recognise voice = 5 _____ to your tribe;
don't recognise = 6 _____

Always been 7 _____ in dialect, EVIDENCE = 8 _____

b Listen again and check your answers.

Extract 3 (starts at 17:09 and ends at 20:57)

3.1 In this extract, Professor Crystal discusses some examples from Shakespeare. Before you watch the extract, answer the following questions.

- Have you seen or read any of Shakespeare's plays, either in English or in your first language?
- What do you know about the language that Shakespeare used?

3.2 Watch the extract and take notes to help you answer the following questions.

a Complete the notes using no more than three words for each answer.

In 1 _____, Edgar puts on a West Country accent in order to
2 _____. In Henry V the Englishman, Irishman, Welshman and Scotsman are
presented with a stereotyped kind of 3 _____. Osrick in Hamlet does not have
a regional dialect, it is more of a 4 _____ or 5 _____
dialect. Shakespeare's rural characters do not have a local dialect, and it is surprising that Silvius is
such a 6 _____ shepherd.

b Match the characters with the information given in the lecture.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1 Oswald | a uses accents to show unity. |
| 2 Llewellyn | b pretends to be something that he is not. |
| 3 Shakespeare | c speaks like Romeo. |
| 4 Osrick | d uses an expression that you would never hear. |
| 5 Silvius | e has a fight with Edgar. |
| 6 A shepherd | f is in love with Phoebe. |

c Answer the questions, and watch the extract again to check your answers.

- 1 According to the lecturer, what is the 'remarkable difference between Shakespeare and all the literature of the century in which he started to write'?
- 2 What does the lecturer mean when he refers to the Welsh *idiom*?
- 3 What does the lecturer mean when he describes the four dialects in the play *King Lear* as 'a sympathetic portrayal'?
- 4 When does Shakespeare make jokes about people's dialects?
- 5 What does the lecturer mean when he says, "...says this *shepherd*? This is Romeo talking."?

 **Extract 4 (starts at 22:05 and ends at 27:49)**

4.1 Watch the extract and answer the questions.

- a What is special about the novel *Castle Rackrent*, by Maria Edgeworth?
- b Alongside their inclusion in literature, what helped reinforce the position of regional dialects during the nineteenth century?

4.2 Watch the extract again and decide if these statements are true or false.

- a The rehabilitation of dialect began in nineteenth century.
- b The prescriptivists did not approve of dialects.
- c The term 'whillaluh' is an Irish expression used in relation to a person's death.
- d In literature, dialects are generally used as a way of making jokes about the kind of people that speak them.
- e The lecturer refers to an academic who published texts about dialect based on the work of William Barnes, the Dorsetshire poet.

 **Extract 5 (starts at 33:25 and ends at 35:52)**

5.1 a The following topics are all included in the final extract of the lecture that you are going to watch. What do you think the speaker will say about them in relation to accents and dialects? Make brief notes on your ideas. If you are working with a partner, discuss your ideas together.

- a the BBC
- b London
- c Liverpool's local dialect, 'Scouse'
- d internet chat rooms and social networking sites
- e Twitter

b Watch the extract and make notes on what the speaker says about the five topics.

Follow-up

6.1 Do you agree with Professor Crystal's ideas about the evolutionary purpose of accent and dialect? Use the internet to research this and other theories people have about the development of accents and dialects. Write a short article (about 250 words) arguing for or against Professor Crystal's theory.

A simple Google (<http://www.google.com>) search for theories of accent and dialect development returns many useful hits. More detailed statistical information on different languages can be found in Wolfram Alpha's words and linguistics database: www.wolframalpha.com/examples/WordsAndLinguistics.html Wolfram Alpha is an excellent source of authoritative information, although at first it might be a little more complicated to use than Google.

- 6.2** Use the internet to research interesting examples of non-standard English. Try to find examples of different ways in which different people say the same thing. Prepare a short talk giving examples of contemporary English usage.
- 6.3 a** Choose one of the characters from Shakespeare and find examples of their speech. How different is this from the English we speak today? Are you able to understand the general meaning? If you are working with a partner, discuss these questions together.
- b** Use the internet to help you translate some of the examples of speech that you have found into modern English.