



## 1 Dialectal differences

2 Structurally, the English language is fairly homogeneous all over the  
3 world, but there are marked differences in pronunciation between its  
4 many dialects. It is interesting to note that some of the most striking  
5 of these differences occur in the small island of Britain, a fact for  
6 which there is, of course, a perfectly logical historical explanation.  
7 Visitors from the United States of America, where only three main  
8 dialects are recognized, are often taken aback when they hear the  
9 widely differing British accents.

10 During the Second World War, a number of British and American  
11 mechanics who were stationed in a certain country in the Near East,  
12 were living together in a local boarding house. One day at tea-time an  
13 American who hailed from Kansas was sitting opposite a  
14 Yorkshireman who had a strong local accent and two Londoners, one  
15 of whom spoke in the Received Pronunciation while the other had a  
16 marked Cockney accent. After listening for some time to the  
17 conversation of these three, the Kansan suddenly burst in with: "Say, I  
18 can't figure out how you Britishers understand one another."

The source of the text reproduced above is unknown. It was inherited from colleagues some time in the early 1990s.  
I would be grateful to receive any information about the source of this text.