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## Linguistic Text Analysis of *To Kill a Mockingbird*

*Possible solution, though be open to discussion and other explanations that may also be pertinent*

### Examples from *To Kill a Mockingbird*:

"What you want, Lula?" she asked in a tone I had never heard. [Calpurnia]  
 "I wants to know why you bringin' white chillun to a n\*\*\*\* church." [Lula]  
 "They's my comp'ny," said Calpurnia.  
 Again I thought her voice was strange: she was talking like the rest of them. [Scout, narr.]  
 "Yeah, an' I reckon you's comp'ny at the Finch house durin' the week." [Lula]

"Well, I run around the house to get in, but he ran out the front door just ahead of me. I sawed who he was, all right. I was too distracted about Mayella to run after 'im. I run in the house and she was lyin' on the floor squallin'—"  
 [Bob Ewell]

"Then what did you do?" [prosecutor]

"Why I run for Tate quick as I could. I knowed who it was, all right, lived down yonder in that n\*\*\*\*-nest, passed the house every day. Jedge, I've asked this county for fifteen years to clean out that nest down yonder, they're dangerous to live around 'sides devaluin' my prop- erty—"  
 [Bob Ewell]

**What would the passages be like in Standard English? Make a list of features that are different from Standard English, and state how they would be said in Standard English. Group together (write in the same cell) examples that show the same patterns. Comment on the difference.**

**An example is done for you.**

Nonstandard feature	Standard English	Comparison
"I wants to know"	I want to know	In Lula's speech, the verb 'want' has -s for the first person singular (pronoun "I"), which is not present in Standard English. (Standard English has -s only for 3rd person singular <i>he/she/it wants</i> )
"What you want?"	What do you want?	"Do" is not used in questions (African American English). In SE, "do" is used to form questions
"Why you bringin'..."	"Why you are bringing"	The auxiliary verb "are" is not used with the verb 'bringing'; in SE "are" is used
Chillun' an' (I reckon) durin' (the week)	Children and I reckon during the week	Different pronunciation of 'children' Final -d is dropped from 'and' in AAE Final -g is dropped from 'during' in AAE

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They's my comp'ny  You's comp'ny	They are my company  You are company	AAE uses 's (is) for 3rd person plural (they), while SE uses 'are'  AAe uses 's (is) for 2nd person singular (you), while SE uses 'are'  In AAE a vowel from the middle of the word is deleted (company)
I run around the house  I run in the house...  I run for Tate	I ran around the house  I ran in the house  I ran for Tate	Bob Ewell uses 'run' for past tense, and SE uses 'ran'; he also uses 'ran' s in 'he ran out the front door'; this could be seen as an inconsistency in his language use, or variation within his speech
I sawed who he was I knowed who it was	I saw who he was I knew who it was	Past tense for the verb 'see' is 'saw', and for 'know' is knew; Bob also uses the past tense -ed, even though these are irregular verbs
to run after 'im	to run after him	Pronunciation difference; initial consonant h- deleted from 'him'
she was lyin' on the floor squallin'—"  devaluin'	she was lying on the floor, squalling  devaluing	Final consonants are dropped
Jedge	Judge	Different pronunciation
'sides	besides	Sounds dropped at the beginning (1st syllable is dropped)

1. Why do you think the author wrote the passages the way she did?

*A: For authenticity, etc. [this can tie in with an article about accents, where more working class accents make one sound more authentic and trustworthy; students can be assigned this article in advance, and you may choose to edit it for brevity*

<http://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20170523-does-your-accent-make-you-sound-smarter> )

2. How many different ways of speaking English can you identify in these passages? Are the patterns you notice in Lula's and Calpurnia's speech the same as those in Bob Ewell's speech? Are they the same as in the narrator's voice? Give some examples as evidence to support your answer.

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*A: There is the way Cal and Lula speak (African American English), the way that the narrator and the prosecutor speak (Standard English?), and the way Bob Ewell speaks (perhaps Southern English, but this is somewhat different from the way that Scout and Jem and Cal speak with each other when they use Southern English. Bob Ewell's speech is more inconsistent--could be because Lee was trying to make him sound less educated??*

2. Based on your analysis of the features, can you predict how Lula and Calpurnia would say:  
"They're dangerous": They's dangerous (because AAE uses 's instead of 'are' for 'they'  
"Then what did you do?" Then what you did? (Or maybe Then what you do?) -- because 'do' is not used in question formation in AAE)