

# Introduction: Accents & dialects in England (3)

- **Southern dialects:** Southwestern – rhotic (e.g. [a:r̥m]), South-eastern non-rhotic (e.g. [a:m])
- **Central dialects:** Central-western (e.g. Manchester, Liverpool, Derby and Birmingham – velar nasal plus [sɪŋg]), Central-eastern (e.g. Nottingham, Leicester, Lincoln and Peterborough – no velar nasal plus [sɪŋ])
- **Northern dialects:** Upper-northern – monophthongization [e:] of the diphthong [eɪ] (e.g. [me:d] for *made*), Central/Lower-northern – monophthongization is absent

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FyyT2jmVPAk>

# RP – Received Pronunciation

- It was associated with the standard. Today it is considered posh and elitist (death of RP) – it's a social accent (upper/middle-upper class)
- Spoken by the 3-5% of the English population. It's a regionless dialect today (in the past it wasn't, see following point), but not accentless
- 'Received' by whom? Everything started in London in the XIV century... Merchants and upper classes spoke an East Midland dialect, lower classes spoke Cockney. With the increasing importance of London, Oxford and Cambridge (the Golden Triangle), this dialect became the most widespread
- The label Received Pronunciation was coined by Daniel Jones
- The advent of BBC (whose founder, John Reith, was keen on RP) in 1926 contributed to its spreading as 'correct' variety of English
- Queen Elizabeth speaks a kind of RP (U-RP) which has been changing since she ascended the throne

# RP – Received Pronunciation

- Wells (1982) distinguishes between 'conservative' and 'advanced' RP (according to age)
- Wells (1992) revises his distinction: Mainstream or General RP, Upper Crust RP (or U-RP), Adoptive RP and Near/Quasi RP (according to social class and origin)
- Fabricius (2002) distinguishes between Native RP and Construct RP (according to origin)

# Mainstream RP vowel sounds

1. The diphthongs /ɔə/ and /ʊə/ of conservative/U-RP have disappeared = [ɔ:] (e.g. no distinction between the vowel sounds of *pore*, *sure* and *paw*)
2. Smoothing: triphthongs /aiə/ and /aʊə/ are monophthongised [ɑ:] (e.g. *tower*, *hour*, etc.)
3. Words with /u:/ now tend to be pronounced with [u] or [ʊ] (i.e. fronting), except before <l> (e.g. *boot* /bʊt/, but *fool* /fu:l/)
4. /ou/ as in *boat* is pronounced [əʊ] in advanced/mainstream RP (it's [ɔʊ] in conservative/U-RP)
5. /eə/ as in *pear* is now often realised as /e:/ or /æ:/ by young people
6. Yod-dropping is present in advanced/mainstream RP after word-initial /l/ (e.g. *lute* [lu:t] instead of [lju:t])
7. /ʊ/ tends to be unrounded [ʏ]

# Mainstream RP: Consonants

1. Dark [ɫ] in syllabic and final position
2. Distinction between voiceless /ɱ/ (also indicated as /hw/) and voiced /w/:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AB\\_XVMFujnc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AB_XVMFujnc)
3. Glottal stop [ʔ] only when the /t/ sound is at the end of a syllable and before another consonant (e.g. football as ['fʊʔbɔ:t])
4. Non-rhotic accent with intrusive and linking /r/

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4S\\_b4OrMXw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4S_b4OrMXw)

# U-RP



1. The vowel /æ/ is often realized as [eæ] or [ɛæ] (e.g. man = [mɛæn] instead of [mæn])
  2. Some diphthongs are pronounced a bit backwards (e.g. price, mouth, etc., are quite like [prɔɪs] and [mɒʊθ] instead of [praɪs] and [maʊθ] )
  3. The vowel /ʌ/ is often realized lowering the larynx and opening the pharynx (e.g. cup)
  4. The diphthongs /ɪə, eə, ʊə/ are much more open → [ɪɑ, eɑ, ʊɑ] (e.g. here = [hɪɑ])
  5. The vowel /ɜ:/ is quite like [ɑ:] (so *bird* and *bard* are pronounced the same)
  6. The diphthong /əʊ/ is often [oʊ] (e.g. don't = [daʊnt] instead of [dəʊnt] as in Mainstream RP)
  7. The final /ɪ/ sometimes becomes [ɛ:] (e.g. happy = [hæpeɛ:] instead of [hæpeɪ]), especially when such words are stressed
  8. Smoothing (monophthongisation) as in 'do it' [daɪt]
  9. /ɒ/ often becomes [ɔ:] (off → [ɔ:f] instead of [ɒf])
  10. /p, t, k/ are always pronounced (e.g. Christmas)
  11. Pre-consonant /t/ is assimilated to the following sound. This happens before /m, b, p/ where /t/ becomes /p/ (e.g. that book = [ðætə<sup>p</sup>bʊk]), before /k, g/ where /t/ becomes /k/ (e.g. credit card = ['kredɪt<sup>k</sup>kɑ:d]) and before /r/ where /t/ is palatised and becomes /tʃ/ (e.g. true = [tru:] vs [tʃru:])
  12. Sometimes /r/ is retroflex (tip of your tongue up and back: [ɻ]). This is also typical of North American English – for pronunciation see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voiced\\_retroflex\\_approximant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voiced_retroflex_approximant)). In other accents of England the standard /r/ sound is the postalveolar [ɹ] (for pronunciation see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voiced\\_alveolar\\_and\\_postalveolar\\_approximants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voiced_alveolar_and_postalveolar_approximants))
- There are other two characteristics which U-RP shares with lower classes' varieties:
1. [ɪŋ] instead of /ɪŋ/ typical of mainstream RP (e.g. going = [gouɪŋ] instead of [gəʊɪŋ])
  2. [mɪ] and [me] as weak forms of <my> (e.g. My mum is sometimes [mɪ mʌm] or [me mʌm])

# U-RP: prosodic and rhythmic characteristics

- Prolonged steady state of a consonant sound (e.g. [frɔɪt:fəlɛ:])
- Shortening of the stressed vowel and consequent lengthening of the final vowel sound (e.g. water), contrary to mainstream RP (['wɔ:tə:] instead of ['wɔ:tə])
- Plumminess (as if they had a plum in their mouth)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHgrDDwXkTA&t=3s>