

# Level 4 English Semester 2

Teacher: **Emily Platzer**

EPI : N4 English Emily Platzer (S2) **Key: N4Thekey**

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### ASSIDUITÉ :

L'assiduité est obligatoire.

Au-delà de 3 absences (même justifiées), l'étudiant·e est noté·e ABI (= défaillant·e) et ne peut valider son semestre.

### ABSENCE(S) UN JOUR DE DEVOIR :

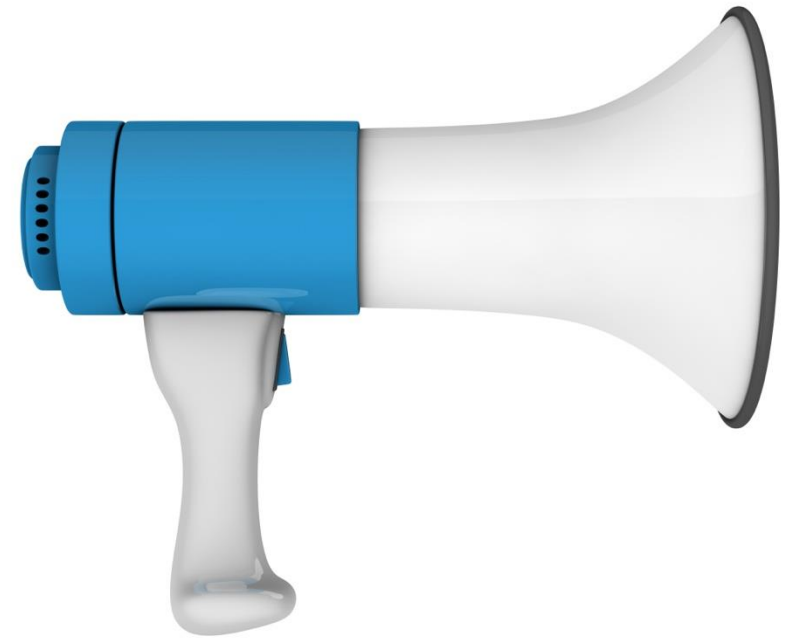
Toute absence un jour de DS doit être signalée dans un délai de 48h afin de permettre l'organisation d'un rattrapage. Celui-ci est obligatoire.

Une absence lors du devoir final n'est pas rattrapable.

### PONCTUALITÉ :

Il est impératif d'arriver à l'heure afin de ne pas perturber le déroulement du cours.

Si vous avez trop de retard, votre enseignant·e est autorisé·e à ne pas vous accepter en cours.



If you have a handicap status which influences your assesment requirments or in class learning please notify me (in person at the end of the lesson or by mail).

M. Fabrice Doriac, Délégué Handicap: [handicap.ddl@univ-paris1.fr](mailto:handicap.ddl@univ-paris1.fr).

## Exam schedule

In class assessments (50%)		
	Percentage of final grade	Date
Mid term (written exam)	25%	<b>Week 5</b> Wednesday: 25/02/2026 Friday: 27/02/2026
Oral (in groups)	25%	<b>Week 11</b> Wednesday: 15/04/2026 Friday: 17/04/2026
Final exam (50%)		
Written exam 1h20 1. Comprehension and vocabulary 2. Grammar 3. Written expression		<b>Week 12</b> Wednesday: 22/04/2026 Friday: 24/04/2026

## Nouns, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions- Use of Articles

- Adjective order and adverb placement in the sentence
- Countable and uncountable nouns and irregular plural nouns
- Prepositions of place, time, movement. Adverbs of frequency
- Use of "such" and "so"
- Use of quantifiers (all, every, each, both)
- Expression of possession and specific uses of the genitive
- Degrees of complex comparison

[Epigram Grammar Link](#)



Adjectifs / Adverbes	Articles	Comparatifs et superlatifs	Compter et quantifier
Confusions fréquentes	Constructions syntaxiques - généralités et particularités	Discours indirect	Futur et conditionnel - will, be going to, would et autres formes
Modaux	Noms	Particules et prépositions	Passif

# The role of biography: Does this impact how we view visual art?

Lesson	Resources and activities	Grammar revision
1: <b>Bedlam</b> <i>The artist and the asylum</i>	Art pop quiz, Still life: describe and analyse visual artwork, artist focus: Richard Dadd. Exploring different biographical sources, Tate online resources.	Articles: The, a, an and zero article
2: <b>Mystery object</b> <i>Pre–Raphaelite Brotherhood</i>	Write a short text describing an object from an artwork without telling us its name. Artist focus: Elizabeth Siddal.	Order of adjectives and adverb placement in a phrase
3 <b>Show and tell</b> <i>William Blake Songs of Innocent and Experience</i>	Oral presentation practice; describe a personal object. William Blake poetry analysis.	Countable and uncountable nouns
4 <b>The Other Side</b> <i>Exploring magic and the occult in visual art</i>	A journey Into Women Art and the Spirit World. Extracts from Jennifer Higgle's book. Reading tarot cards.	Prepositions of place, time and movement, adverbs of frequency
5 <b>Midterm exam</b>		

# The role of biography: Does this impact how we view visual art?

Lesson	Resources and activities	Grammar revision
<b>6: Accents</b> <i>Regional accents and dialects St. Ives Cornwall, modernism in wartime. Barbra Hepworth, Ben Nicholson and Alfred Wallis.</i>	Cockney rhyming slang: Pathé short film. Pearly kings and Queens. Accent bias Britian, audio resources; identifying regional accents. “The outsider artist”	Irregular plural nouns
<b>7: Performance</b> <i>The Abramovic method and Yoko Ono.</i>	Exploring artists manifesto and performance works. Documentary and film extracts. Note taking, writing an artist biography.	Use of such and so
<b>8: Author</b> <i>Problematic artists and artworks and the contemporary lens</i>	Post secret and a room from a bridge. Oral debates: Group practice. Oral debates: Group practice.	Use of quantifiers: all, every, each, both
<b>9: Identity</b> <i>Artist focus: Faith Ringgold and Chris Ofili.</i>	Quilt making, activism and identity. Considering the social, political and racial identity of the artist. American and British vocabulary differences.	Use of possessive and genitive

# The role of biography: Does this impact how we view visual art?

Lesson	Resources and activities	Grammar revision
10: <b>The death of an Artist</b> <i>Ana Mendieta</i>	Feminism and ecology. Podcast: The death of an artist. Prepare for oral: Formation of 8 groups.	Complex degrees of comparison
11: <b>Oral: What makes an artwork controversial?</b>	Oral exam: Each group presents artwork and participates in a debate. <b>Comedian</b> , <i>Maurizio Cattelan</i> . <b>My bed</b> , <i>Tracy Emin</i> . <b>Ophelia</b> , <i>John William Waterhouse</i> , <b>Candy Cigarette</b> , <i>Sally Mann</i> .	Grammar recap and revision sheet
12: <b>Final exam</b>		

1. Irregular plural nouns
2. Accents Regional accents and dialects
3. Cockney rhyming slang
4. Accent bias Britian, audio samples
5. St. Ives Cornwall, modernism in wartime.  
Barbra Hepworth, Ben Nicholson and Alfred Wallis.
6. Debate practice

## Regular plural nouns RULES

*Regular: add 's'*

Cats

Hats

Flowers

Trees

Chairs

Kids

Houses

*Regular ending in 'ch,' 'sh', 'x', 's' add 'es'*

Brushes

Boxes

Addresses

Lunches

Dishes

Buses

Classes

## Regular plural nouns EXAMPLES

Several black cats crossed the road.

The park is full of trees.

The addresses were written in the notebook.

There are a lot of dishes to wash.

Two buses arrived at the same time.

## **Irregular plural nouns EXAMPLES**

nouns that become plural in a way other than adding 's' or 'es'

### **Examples:**

Person- People

Man- Men

Woman- Women

Child- Children

Factory- Factories

Tooth- Teeth

Fish- Fish

Wife- Wives

Story- Stories

Country- Countries

Baby- Babies

City- Cities

Life- Lives

Wolf- Wolves

## **Irregular plural nouns RULES**

Common patterns include:

- Vowel changes (man → men)
- -f to -ves (leaf → leaves)
- Foreign word endings (-us → -i)
- Unchanged plurals (sheep → sheep)
- Special cases (child → children)

# List of irregular nouns

## Changing -f or -fe to -ves

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
leaf	leaves	half	halves
knife	knives	life	lives
loaf	loaves	self	selves
shelf	shelves	thief	thieves
wife	wives	wolf	wolves
calf	calves	scarf	scarves

## Changing -us to -i

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
alumnus	alumni	cactus	cacti
fungus	fungi	nucleus	nuclei
radius	radii	stimulus	stimuli
focus	foci	octopus	octopi
bacillus	bacilli	virus	viruses

## Changing -is to -es

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
analysis	analyses	thesis	theses
diagnosis	diagnoses	hypothesis	hypotheses
crisis	crises	synopsis	synopses
metamorphosis	metamorphoses	parenthesis	parentheses
prognosis	prognoses	nemesis	nemeses

## Changing -um to -a

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
datum	data	medium	media
criterion	criteria	curriculum	curricula
spectrum	spectra	stratum	strata
bacterium	bacteria	memorandum	memoranda
consortium	consortia	symposium	symposia
millennium	millennia	referendum	referenda

# Irregular nouns revision sheet

## Greek Origin Words with No Change

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
series	series	species	species
deer	deer	sheep	sheep
fish	fish	salmon	salmon
swine	swine	grouse	grouse
aircraft	aircraft	craft	craft

## Special Transformations

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
person	people	child	children
man	men	woman	women
mouse	mice	foot	feet
tooth	teeth	goose	geese
louse	lice	ox	oxen

## Other Special Cases

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
moose	moose	buffalo	buffalo
shrimp	shrimp	salmon	salmon
hippopotamus	hippopotamus	mongoose	mongoose

## Unique Transformations

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
phenomenon	phenomena	die	dice
brother	brethren	index	indices
matrix	matrices	vortex	vortices
vertex	vertices	helix	helices
antenna	antennae	larva	larvae
stigma	stigmata	schema	schemata

Practice: Change the nouns to their correct plural form.

Example: I've had a terrible day! The dentist extracted two of my (*tooth*) teeth.

Several (*woman*) \_\_\_\_\_ were waiting at the bar.

In London, during the Victorian era many (*child*) \_\_\_\_\_ worked in (*factory*) \_\_\_\_\_

In autumn the (*leaf*) \_\_\_\_\_ fall from the (*tree*) \_\_\_\_\_

These are the two best (*knife*) \_\_\_\_\_ in the kitchen for cutting (*fish*) \_\_\_\_\_

There is a family of (*mouse*) \_\_\_\_\_ living under the (*floorboard*) \_\_\_\_\_

A flock of (*sheep*) \_\_\_\_\_ are grazing on the mountain side.

I'm a terrible dancer! I've got two left (*foot*) \_\_\_\_\_

## Regional accents and dialects

How would you define an 'accent'?

Do you have examples of English accents that you would recognise?

Are these accents associated to stereotypes?

Have you ever heard of 'glottophobia'? Can you guess what it is?

British Accent	Region
RP (Received Pronunciation)	London & South East England
Cockney	London
Scouse	Liverpool (North West England)
Geordie	Newcastle (North East England)
Brummie	Birmingham (West Midlands)
West Country English	South West England
Scottish	Scotland
Welsh	Wales
Northern Irish	Northern Ireland



## The Times view on regional speech: Accentuate the Positive

Every English speaker has an accent. And almost all have an accent recognisably specific to a particular region. The main exception is what's sometimes known as Received Pronunciation, or RP. This is in fact spoken by very few people (linguists estimate the numbers at between 1 and 2 per cent of the UK population) but it has an unmerited reputation for being "correct" pronunciation.

This misconception is quite recent in the history of the language and owes much to a misguided campaign by Lord Reith, the first director-general of the BBC, to inculcate a standardised pronunciation across the English-speaking world. To that end, BBC announcers from the 1920s onwards spoke alike. And the insinuation that other accents were somehow substandard took hold.

The dispiriting evidence of accent prejudice has long been documented by linguistic researchers and is confirmed in a report by the Sutton Trust, which champions social mobility. It finds a stubborn persistence of prejudice in society and the workplace against some accents, notably those from Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and India, while RP and Scottish and French accents are most favoured.

There is no linguistic reason for regarding any of these accents as more "proper", or even mellifluous, than any other. And it does real harm to shame people for the way they speak. Sir Peter Lampl, founder of the Sutton Trust, told *The Times* how he was bullied for his Yorkshire accent when he moved to Surrey at the age of 11.

Accent prejudice is not about aesthetics. It is snobbery. It impresses upon intelligent and articulate people, often at an impressionable age, that they must amend the way they speak in order to have their abilities recognised. And it is long past time that the quixotic notion of proper pronunciation was consigned to history.

### Comprehension questions:

1. What is 'glottophobia'?

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2. Describe what is meant by the acronym RP:

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3. Who was Lord Reith?

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4. What does 'mellifluous' mean?

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# Cockney [Video link](#)

## COCKNEY SLANG (1943)



### Cockney Rhyming slang

M/S pearly king sitting on his barrow spouting cockney rhyming slang. Joe Noble's diagrams explain what each phrase stands for, such as apples and pears for stairs. M/S of a 'trouble and strife' - wife, we hear the cockney for her hat, hair, face, eyes and wink. Various other diagrams explain further phrases, for example pig's ear means beer.

**Cockney** is a dialect of the English language, mainly spoken in London and its environs, particularly by Londoners with working-class and lower-middle-class roots. The term *Cockney* is also used as a demonym for a person from the East End, or, traditionally, born within earshot of Bow Bells. Estuary English is an intermediate accent between Cockney and Received Pronunciation, also widely spoken in and around London, as well as in wider South Eastern England.<sup>[7][8][9]</sup> In multicultural areas of London, the Cockney dialect is, to an extent, being replaced by Multicultural London English—a new form of speech with significant Cockney influence.

**Pearly Kings and Queens**, known as **pearlies**, are an organised charitable tradition of working-class culture in London, England.

The practice of wearing clothes decorated with mother-of-pearl buttons is first associated with Henry Croft (1861–1930), an orphan street sweeper who collected money for charity. At the time, London costermongers (street traders) were in the habit of wearing trousers decorated at the seams with pearl buttons that had been found by market traders. In the late 1870s, Croft adapted this to create a sequin suit to draw attention to himself and aid his fund-raising activities. In 1911 an organised pearly society was formed in Finchley, north London.

## Pearly Kings and Queens



## Accents in Britain

A nation defined by the way it speaks

George Bernard Shaw famously wrote: "it is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him". This quote is a testament to the power of accents to position us in the social world by communicating information about our background, our upbringing and the communities we belong to.

In the Accent Bias Britain project, we focus primarily on people's reactions to 5 accents commonly spoken in England today, which differ in terms of region, class, and ethnicity: Received Pronunciation, Estuary English, Multicultural London English, General Northern English, and Urban West Yorkshire English.

We provide brief descriptions of each of these accents below. If you're interested in learning more information on accents in the UK, you can consult the British Library's Accents and Dialects Archive.

# What is Accent Bias?

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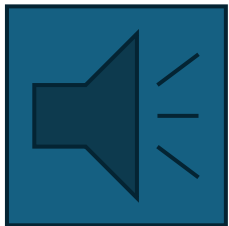
[Website link](#)

Accent is perhaps the most recognisable sign of social and ethnic background in the UK today. But what impact does someone's accent have on their opportunities and life outcomes? Are people biased, positively or negatively, towards different accents? More specifically, could accent bias affect someone's judgement in a professional setting?

The **Accent Bias in Britain** project examines current attitudes to accents in Britain, and investigates whether unconscious accent bias plays a role in how job candidates are evaluated.



Read the descriptions of five different regional accents. Listen to the audio, can you identify the accent ?



## Is accent bias a problem?

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Unequal outcomes for minority groups in professional hiring has been widely reported. Yet the role played by the best-known signal of class and ethnic difference in the UK – accent – has until now remained largely unexplored.

Research in the United States has shown that accent bias can lead to unequal access to employment, housing, and education. Despite the legendary history of accent and class in British society, equivalent research on its impact on life outcomes for different social groups is very limited.

The issue of whether accent bias exists, and when it can cross the line into actual discrimination, urgently requires proper investigation.

## **Received Pronunciation (RP)**

“Received Pronunciation”, “Queen’s English”, “BBC English” or “Southern Standard British English” are all labels that refer to the accent of English in England that is associated with people from the upper- and upper-middle-classes.

There is a great deal of debate about where Received Pronunciation (RP) originated, though all agree that RP was widespread among students at fee-paying public schools and universities by the end of the 19th century. The prevalence of RP has declined since then, and it is currently said to be the native accent for only about 3% of the UK population.

Nevertheless, RP remains the national standard and has traditionally been considered by many to be the most prestigious accent of British English.

### **Versions of RP**

While many think of RP as one accent, there are in fact different versions of RP that correspond to different social categories.

Conservative RP is generally associated with older generations and the aristocracy. Mainstream RP is the most common version heard today, and is used, for example, by many presenters on the BBC. Contemporary RP is used by younger upper-middle-class speakers, and shares certain similarities with Estuary English. And while it is often claimed that RP is not tied to any specific region of the UK, it is more heavily associated with the southeast of England as a result of its historical origins.

### **Characteristics of RP**

You can hear an example of contemporary RP in the sound clip. There, you can hear that in RP the ‘r’ sound in words like worked, part-time or order is not pronounced, so the words sound more like “wuhked”, “paht-time” and “awdah”. This is a feature that RP shares with all accents in the southeast of England.

Likewise, the vowel in the word craft is the broad ‘ah’ sound (like in the word father) and not the short ‘a’ (like in the word cat). This is another feature that RP shares with accents throughout the southeast. Finally, the vowels in the words one and submit are different from the vowels in the words good and would. Again, this is a feature of accents throughout southeast England.

In many ways, contemporary RP can be defined as an accent that only contains features that are common to the entire southeast, and lacks the more distinctive elements of other local accents (like Estuary English and Multicultural London English).

## **Estuary English (EE)**

Estuary English is the name given to an accent of English spoken in the Home Counties region in the southeast of England (named after the Thames estuary).

While its exact origins are unclear, EE is a relatively recent accent. The first mentions of EE are in the 1980s, when the accent was spoken mainly in the outer London boroughs and in the neighbouring counties of Kent and Essex. Since then it has spread, and is now heard in much of the southeast. Some linguists have suggested that EE will take over as the southern standard accent in England.

A modern, hybrid accent

EE is generally described as being somewhere between upper-class RP and Cockney, the traditional working-class accent in London. Linguists have claimed that EE may have arisen both from RP speakers trying to sound less “posh” and from Cockney speakers abandoning some of their more stigmatised accent features. The result is an accent that sits somewhere in the middle, and that sounds noticeably southeastern but without the more stigmatised class connotations.

Today, there is a continuum of accents that could all be labelled as EE, including speakers on the more RP-end (e.g., Russell Brand) and on the more Cockney-end (e.g., David Beckham).

## **Characteristics of EE**

In the audio clip, you can hear some characteristic EE features. The speaker pronounces the vowel in the words time and night so that it sounds close to the vowel in the word boy. This is a remnant of the traditional Cockney pronunciation. In the word while, the ‘l’ at the end of the word is pronounced like a ‘w’, a feature called l-vocalisation that is becoming increasingly common in London.

Another common EE feature is TH-fronting, as when the speaker pronounces the ‘th’ sound at the start of the word things with an ‘f’ sound (fings). You can also hear that the speaker glottals many of his ‘t’ sounds, so that the word started sounds something like “star’ed”.

## **Multicultural London English (MLE)**

Multicultural London English is a label for a new accent of English that originated in East London (especially Tower Hamlets and Hackney) and is now spreading throughout the London region. The accent is generally associated with young, working-class people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Linguists believe that MLE developed over the past 30 years as a result of close contact between speakers from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in multiethnic parts of London. In many respects, MLE has replaced Cockney as the local accent in the East End of London, especially among young people.

An accent born and bred in London

While MLE is stereotypically associated with ethnic minority individuals, it is spoken by people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The key determinant appears to be people who have multiethnic friendship groups, and so come into contact with many different languages and ethnic varieties of English. MLE is also associated with elements of local London urban culture, especially including the Grime music scene.

While there has been some debate over how exactly MLE emerged, some of the linguistic features found in MLE are associated with different groups (e.g. Afro-Caribbean, white working-class, British Asian), which further supports the idea that MLE emerged as a result of language and dialect contact.

## **Characteristics of MLE**

You can hear a number of MLE features in the audio clip. The speaker pronounces the 'th' sound in the words the and that with a 'd', which is called DH-stopping, whereas in the word things, he pronounces it like an 'f'.

You can also hear that the vowel in the words noticed and lower are pronounced closer to the vowel in the word thought than in other varieties of London English. We also hear l-vocalisation in the word while (like we heard in EE) and t-glottaling in the word noticed.

Finally, you can hear that the vowel in the word 'night' is pronounced almost like a long-ah ("naht"). This is a distinctive feature of the MLE accent.

## **General Northern English (GNE)**

General Northern English (GNE) functions as a 'regional standard' accent in the North of England, and is used there mainly by middle-class speakers. While it is still recognisably northern, speakers of GNE can be very hard to locate geographically more precisely than this.

### **A new Northern accent**

Compared to some of the longer-established accents in the UK, such as RP and UWYE, GNE seems to be a relatively recent variety of English. While it's not completely clear what the origins of GNE are, it seems to be related to a general levelling of urban and rural accents across the north towards a less localisable form. This process is not unique to the north of England. There is evidence that it is occurring all over the UK.

GNE actually sounds fairly similar to southern standard accents, but includes some features which are found in other northern accents of English. It might be said that for northern English speakers, GNE fulfils a role similar to that of RP.

## **Characteristics of GNE**

Listen to this short audio clip to hear an example of the GNE accent. As you can hear in the clip, the speaker pronounces the vowel in the words one and submit similar to the vowel in good and book. This is because, unlike southern varieties, northern English accents did not participate in the so-called 'FOOT-STRUT split', which made pairs of words like book and buck sound different in the south, but not in the north.

Another feature is the GNE vowel in the word craft, which is pronounced with the same vowel as in man. This is the result of another historical vowel split, which made the 'BATH' class of words (bath, grass, graph, etc.) distinct from the 'TRAP' set in southern England.

Hence, gas and glass rhyme in the north, but not in the south.

## **Urban West Yorkshire English (UWYE)**

As the name suggests, Urban West Yorkshire English is an accent that can be heard in urban centres of the county of West Yorkshire, in particular Leeds and Bradford. UWYE has its origins in traditional forms of Yorkshire English, but has developed features which distinguish it from the speech patterns of people from other parts of the Yorkshire region.

An urban accent with increasing influence

As people moved from the countryside into the cities to take up jobs in industry following the Industrial Revolution, the numbers of UWYE speakers grew significantly. Today it is still generally associated with working-class speakers.

Owing to the influence of the cities on the areas surrounding them, the accent has spread outward to some of the smaller towns and rural districts that are close to the large urban centres. High levels of contact between these locations often also result from the fact that urban people move out of the cities in search of affordable housing or a more relaxed lifestyle.

## **Characteristics of UWYE**

Listen to this short clip to hear an example of the UWYE accent. As you can hear, the speaker pronounces the vowel in the words noticed and lower using a pronunciation that is closer to the vowel in thought, and without making the vowel quality change by moving his tongue midway through it.

This feature is called GOAT monophthonging, and it is one of the features that sometimes makes listeners say that Yorkshire vowels sound 'flat' (though it's not just a northern habit; a similar thing can be heard in our MLE audio clip). You can hear a similar 'flattening' of the 'a' sound in the word able (FACE monophthonging). The 'l' in able sounds 'dark' or 'muddy', which is typical at the ends of words for most speakers of British English. However, in UWYE we also get dark 'l' at the beginnings of words, which you can hear in the word lower. The 'dark' quality is produced by raising the back of the tongue towards the soft palate, giving it a slightly more /w/-like quality.

The speaker in the clip also demonstrates his lack of a TRAP-BATH distinction in his pronunciation of craft, which has the same vowel that he would use in crash. Like the GNE speaker, he also uses the same vowel in the words one and submit as he would use in good or book (i.e. he has no FOOT-STRUT split).



## The Cornish Dialect Translator

'AVEE?' - Have you? 'HUMMIN' - Stinking  
'AVEEDUNUN' - Have you done 'YAW' - You  
'AWRIGHT N AREE' - Are you OK 'PISKY' - Pixie  
'MAID' - Girl 'ZED' - Said 'SQUALL' - Cry  
'ULLONAMINIT' - Wait a minute 'EZ' - Yes  
'HURTED' - Hurt 'PROPER' - Satisfactory  
'TIZZARDLEE ON?' - You can not be serious?  
'ILLY' - Steep 'GIS-ON!' - Don't talk rubbish  
'FARIZA?' - How far is it? 'SNO' - You know  
'PIZEN DAWN' - Heavy rain 'IZZA' - Is it  
'MIND' - Remember 'STEEVED' - Frozen  
'PARTY' - Young woman 'OGGY' - Pastry  
'PANT' - Panic 'CUMOZ ON NOW' - Let's go  
'AUGHT' - Nothing 'CRAKE' - To complain  
'BULLHORNS' - Snails 'CHACKING' - Thirsty  
'TIGHT' - Mean 'EZYAU' - I agree with you  
'PARD' - Friend 'DUMMENTS' - Twilight  
'FITTY' - Proper 'MYGAR' - My Goodness  
'DRECKLY' - Soon 'TEASY' - Bad tempered  
'CHEEL' - Child 'SNOT' - Snob 'IDN' - Is not  
'NICEYS' - Sweet 'OWAREE' - How are you  
'WERZETOO EN?' - Where is he or she  
'BISKY' - Biscuit 'BAD' - Ill 'WISHT' - Weak



MARK ROTHKO (CENTRE RIGHT) WITH PETER LANYON (TOP LEFT), TERRY FROST (RIGHT) AT A LUNCH AT PAUL FEILER'S HOUSE, KERRIS, 1959.

# St Ives Cornwall

## St Ives: How did it become an artist's town?

The small Cornish town of St Ives perhaps seems an unlikely site for a major art gallery. However, its artistic connections date back to Victorian times, when artists visited to paint, attracted by the town's special quality of light, cheap rents and a new railway link increasing access.

Many artists are associated with St Ives and West Cornwall, its rich history and its vivid artistic life. St Ives has attracted painters for more than a century; amongst its early visitors were Joseph Mallord William Turner, James Abbott McNeill Whistler and Walter Sickert.

In 1928, on a visit to St Ives, the British painters Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood discovered the work of retired mariner Alfred Wallis, whose untutored paintings of town and seascapes had a profound influence on the development of their work.

In 1939, with the outbreak of war, Nicholson returned to settle in St Ives with his second wife, the sculptor Barbara Hepworth. They were joined by their friend, the Russian Constructivist artist Naum Gabo, establishing in West Cornwall an important artistic outpost. These artists shared an intellectual and aesthetic outlook that was essentially European, but the work they produced in St Ives was nevertheless often deeply influenced by the physical forms and quality of light of their local surroundings.

The potter Bernard Leach, had been working in St Ives since 1920. The ceramic tradition which he pioneered, with the Japanese potter Shoji Hamada, adds a further dimension to St Ives' international standing. The Leach Pottery is among the most respected and influential studio potteries in the world.

After the Second World War, the emergence of a younger generation of artists, including Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Peter Lanyon, John Wells, Terry Frost, Bryan Wynter, Patrick Heron and Roger Hilton, had a decisive effect on the development of painting in Britain in the second half of the twentieth century. Many of the artists whose names are now linked

Barbara Hepworth



with St Ives first chose to work in West Cornwall, as it was now recognised as an important international centre of abstract art.

The St Ives-born painter Peter Lanyon created a distinctive fusion of landscape and abstract elements, advocating that art could be both technically audacious and rooted in the local environment. The work of Lanyon and other artists working in St Ives attracted visits from internationally renowned, such as the American abstract painter Mark Rothko.

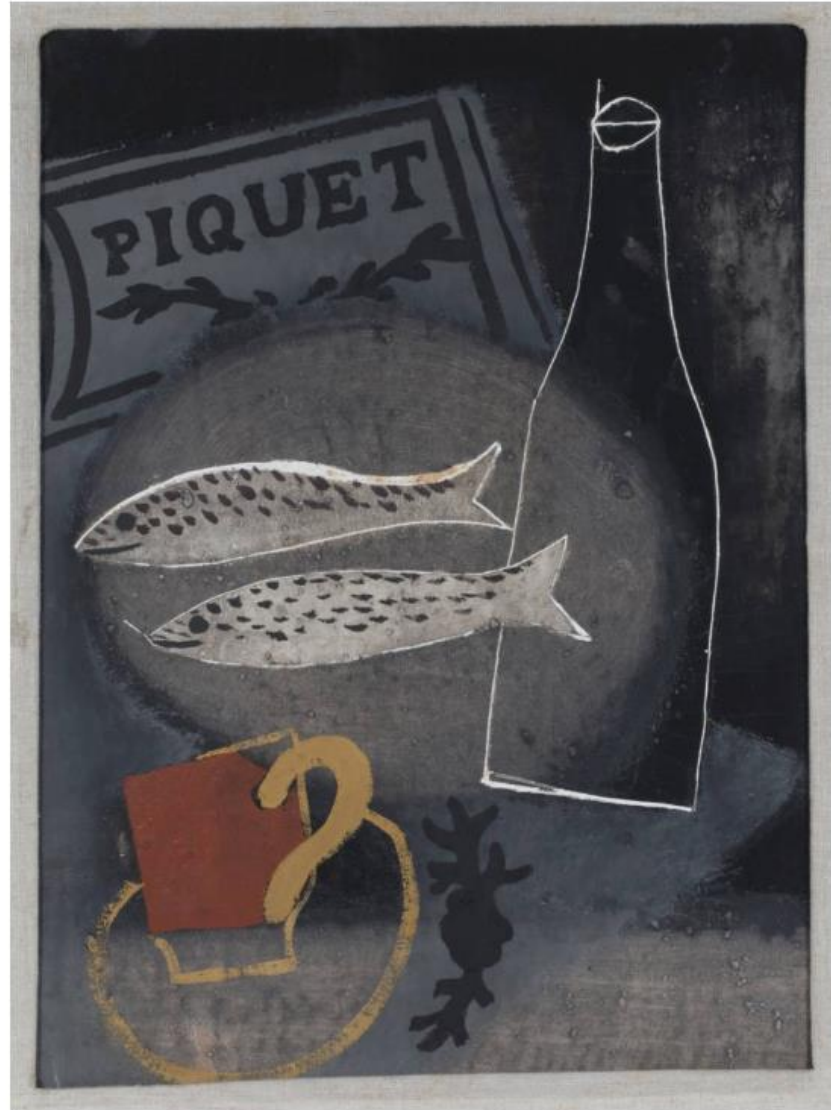
Artists such as Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Peter Lanyon, Patrick Heron and Roger Hilton were an active part of the international art world. They had solo and group exhibitions worldwide, took part in the Biennales of Venice and Sao Paulo, wrote in publications, had correspondence with scores of other artists and travelled to artists' studios, events and exhibitions around the globe.



[Link: Guardian article- further reading](#)

**Ben Nicholson and Alfred Wallis**

Outside / Insider artist



Tate video link: [Wallis](#)



While at Feock, Ben Nicholson and Wood made a day trip to St. Ives where they met the marine painter Alfred Wallis, and not long after the whole party moved to St. Ives. Wallis was entirely self-taught and depicted scenes from his memory, schooners in which he had crossed the Atlantic, or mackerel luggers he had worked on, and images of St. Ives Bay and Mount's Bay, using old ships or household paint on shaped pieces of card.

Each of the three painters responded to Wallis in their own way, but he was most significant for Ben Nicholson who saw these paintings as experiences more real than life itself, and stated that "one finds only the influences one is looking for." Attracted by the intrinsic nature of Wallis's art, Nicholson responded by making works of deceptive simplicity such as c. 1930 (Cornish port).

Ben Nicholson distributed pictures by Alfred Wallis amongst his friends and sent a Wallis painting to William Staite Murray, noting that it reminded him of one of Murray's pots. We can only speculate as to the exact link, as it is not known which picture Ben sent. Winifred gives some insight into this exchange, for she wrote of one of Murray's pots as having "the elemental depth of the sea".

'I don't use the paint artists use...' wrote Alfred Wallis, ex-seaman, ice-cream maker, rag and bone man and resident of St. Ives, Cornwall, 'mine's the real paint'. Making pictures on scraps of board, coloured paper, old calendars, blotters and boxes from yacht paint, pencils and the end of a sharp paint brush, Wallis unconsciously anticipated some of the most significant art movements of the 20th century.

A prolific artist who made hundreds of small pictures from 1925 (when he was 70), until his death in a workhouse in 1942, Wallis was also a devout, eccentric Christian who made music on an organ of his own invention and was tormented by his 'wireless head' that could absorb messages from the devil down the chimney. The 50 examples of his work in this show reveal his confusion about an existence shaped by both absolutes and ambiguity, a theme he obsessively explored in images of an environment that is constantly threatened with turmoil and obsolescence.

With the restraint of a hard-core Minimalist, Wallis wrote 'I do not put Collers what do not Belong'. His aesthetic never developed in a conventional sense his earliest paintings are similar in tone and feeling to his later ones. But in his repetitions, he struggled with the futility of attempting to understand surroundings that revealed, in the act of description, a terrible absence of stability and reason. Skewed perspectives jostle with boiling oceans beneath an occasional signature that moves from childish scrawl to elegant, old fashioned script. In *Godrevy with Boats Sheltering* (1939), for example, boats almost capsize beneath a sky that precariously frames Wallis' name. In *Three Orange Lighthouses* of the same year, boats and lighthouses are turned upside down to penetrate a weird,

apocalyptic sea the only sanctuary, the port, is infused with a gentle, hellish glow. Often the horizon disappears as the ocean overwhelms its inconsequential travellers, as in *Schooner with Yellow Lighthouse* (1936) or *Two Boats sailing a Huge Wave* (1936), where the image is filled with such a sense of anxiety that even the water tilts nervously.

Wallis wrote that after the death of his wife he painted to 'keep himself company', but it was not women or men who would talk most eloquently to him. Like Wallace Stevens for whom 'people might share but were never an element, like earth and sky', Wallis painted the human figure as a vague unformed shape, a passenger in vehicles that function as literal metaphors, transporters of ideas and of states of minds. His jagged-edged supports mirror the splitting, tumbling and dissembling that happens within the picture plane, a crude Cubism that finds echoes in the high-Modernism of Ben Nicholson, who 'discovered' Wallis, painting with his door open and 'looking like Cézanne', on a walk with Christopher Wood in 1928. The work he bought from him was the first Wallis had ever sold. Later, Nicholson was to be vocal about the influence Wallis' work had on the development of his own visual language.

'Each man calls barbarism what is not his own practise' wrote Montaigne in the late 18th century. As an artist who fused social marginality with a formal originality, Wallis is usually described in terms of 'primitivism', 'naive' or 'outsider art', polite descriptions for a kind of classy, acceptable barbarism. The reality of any life always fractures the neat categories that history attempts to impose on it. Wallis' struggle with self-expression certainly defies Dubuffet's simplistic definition of the art brut artist as one whose work 'glows in a pure state'. Apparently, Wallis never considered his paintings as

[Article link](#)



## Debate practice:

*Groups of 7 students*

*Each group will be given a subject and preparation time*

*Form your opinion and present your arguments, you may agree or disagree!*

### 1 You be the judge: should my friend stop being so vengeful?

The prosecution: Priya

My best friend Phoebe is obsessed with revenge and it has driven a wedge between us. Phoebe says I don't understand her because she's a Scorpio. I'm not saying her actions aren't justified, but I believe that walking away with your head held high is always the better option.

The defence: Phoebe

I don't like being described as vengeful, but I do feel a sense of peace when I get my own back after someone has wronged me. It's not like I go around plotting evil acts for no reason. But if someone is unpleasant to me, I brood over it for weeks. I can't let it go, and so I have to do something to snap myself out of it by readjusting the order of the universe. Some call it revenge; I call it karmic rebalancing.

### 2 You be the judge: should my girlfriend stop scrolling on her phone while we're watching TV?

The prosecution: Edward

Fran is always looking at Instagram or Reddit, even when we're watching a film. She is a chronic scroller. She always seems to have her phone in her hand when we are watching something, or having a conversation. I find it highly annoying.

The defence: Fran

My scrolling shouldn't affect other people. I always keep my phone on mute.

### 3 You be the judge: should my flatmate stop taking things off the street to furnish our home?

The prosecution: Ruby

If something has a 'please take' sign on it, Amala can't ignore it even if it's junk. She's addicted! Why do we need other people's crap? If there is something we need, I'd like to discuss it first.

The defence: Amala

Ruby's a bit paranoid about cleanliness. Street thrifting is fun – that's how I got the sofa she loves.

#### **4 You be the judge: should my early-rising flatmate keep the noise down while I'm still in bed?**

The prosecution: Reggie

I hate talking to anyone for the first two hours of my day. I think that should be respected. Kevin says I should try getting up earlier as it would make everything easier, but why should I? Late sleepers always get a bad rep, but I'm actually just as productive as Kevin. I would really appreciate it if he stopped pressuring me to become an early riser and simply worked on being quieter. I don't think I need to change.

The defence: Kevin

Reggie is a night owl. I can hear him after midnight sometimes, but I don't say anything. At midday, the world is awake and Reggie should be too. He's 32, not a child. I don't think it's reasonable to expect me to make food silently, or tiptoe around because he's still asleep.