

Black English

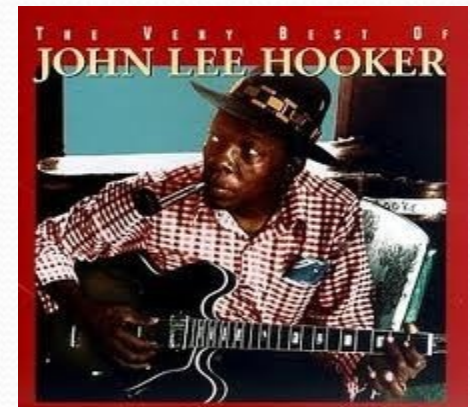
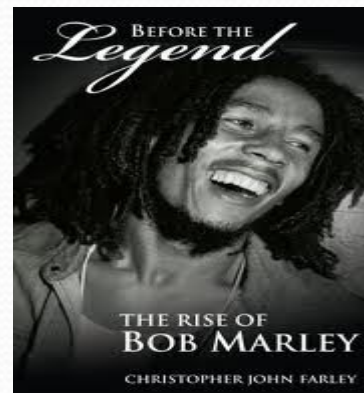
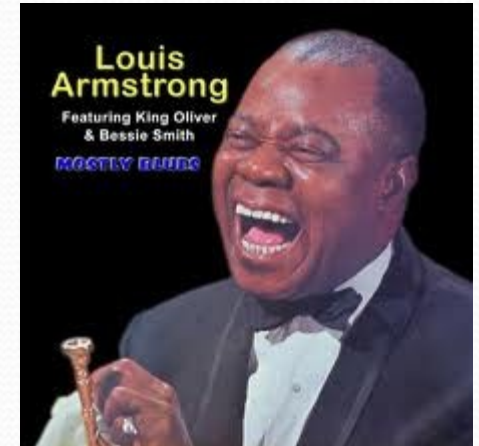
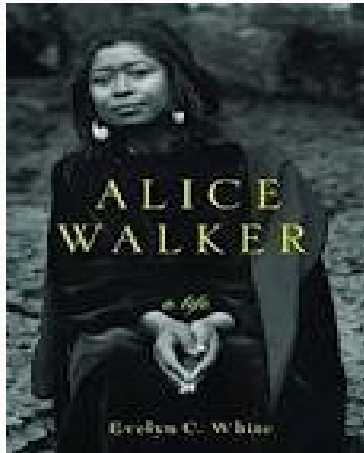
Rami Ibrahim

Black English (BE)

This dialect (actually a group of closely related dialects) is spoken by a large section of African Americans; it is usually referred to as Black English (BE), Negro English, Black English Vernacular (BEV) or Nonstandard Negro English.



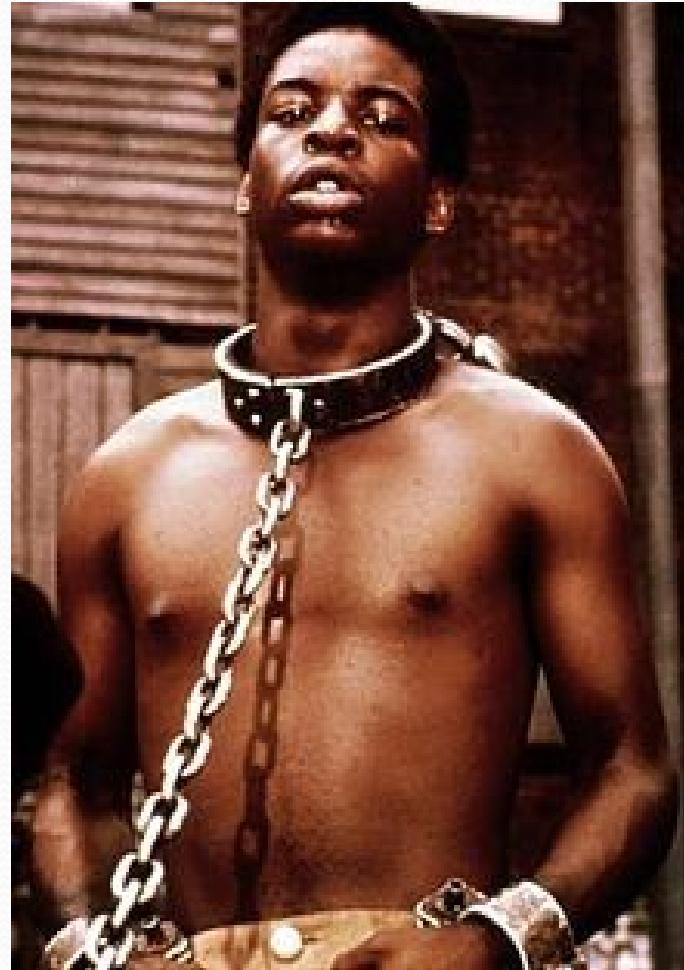
Black American Celebrities



Kunta Kinte

The outline of his life story was the basis for the novel

Roots: The Saga of an American Family by American author **Alex Haley**, and the television miniseries *Roots*, based on the book.



Roots 1977 Kunta Kinte Torture Scene

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkIoDLRUtSM>

Reasons for the distinguishing features of BE

Social, educational and economic reasons

Ghetto living

Segregated schools

Spoken by a large section of non-middle-class African Americans.

BE: a victim of prejudicial ignorance and stigma

Some critics associate the use of BE with inferior genetic intelligence and cultural deprivation saying that BE is a "deficient, illogical, and incomplete" language

Martin Luther King, Jr. Versus Barack Obama

Institutional Intellectual

Organic Intellectual



Speech Comparison

Barack Obama

**Remarks at the "Let Freedom Ring" Ceremony
Commemorating the 50th
Anniversary of the March
on Washington for Jobs
and Freedom**

August 28, 2013.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytBAC3KOhhQ>

Martin Luther King

**March on Washington for
Jobs and Freedom**

August 28, 1963

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRIF4_WzU1w

Phonology of Black English

1_ Deletion of /R/ unless followed by a vowel.

court	caught
guard	god
nor	gnaw
sore	saw
poor	pa
fort	fought

2_ /L/ Deletion Rule

toll	toe
all	awe
help	hep

3_ Consonant Cluster Simplification Rule

BE simplifies consonant clusters, particularly at the end of words and when one of the two consonants is an alveolar (t, d, s, z)

Mend meant	men
Passed past	Pass (I pass the test yesterday)

Deletion is optional:

paste	peis	More likely to be deleted
chased	tʃeɪst	Not always deleted
Keats	Ki:t	More likely to be deleted
seats	Si:ts	Not always deleted

4_ Lack of distinction between /l/ and /ɛ/ before nasal consonants.

pin	pen
tin	ten

5_ Phonetic distinction between /aj/ and /aw/ has been lost.

Why
wow

wa

6_ Reduction of /oy/ to /o/ particularly before /l/

Boil
boy

bo

7_ Change of /θ/ to /f/ and /ð/ to /v/

Ruth	Ruf
Brother	br [^] vðr

Syntactic Difference between BE and SAE

1_Negation

- Use of ain't as a general negative indicator

BE	SAE
ain't	<i>am not, isn't, aren't, haven't and hasn't</i>

For some speakers of BE	SAE
Ain't	<i>don't, doesn't, or didn't (e.g., I ain't know that).</i>

Double Negatives

BE	SAE
<i>I don't know nothing about no one no more</i>	<i>I don't know anything about anyone anymore</i>

2_ Deletion of the verb "Be"

BE	SAE
He nice	He is nice/ He's nice
They mine.	They are mine/They 're mine
I gonna do it.	I am going to do/ I'm gonna do it.

3_Habitual "Be"

BE	SAE
John be happy	John is always happy.
John happy	John is happy now
He be late	He is habitually late
He late	He is late this time
Do you be tired?	Are you generally tired?
You tired?	Are you tired now?

Some Lexical terms From BE

BE	Meaning in SAE
pot liquor also <u>potlikker</u> or <u>potlickker</u>	the liquid left after meat and vegetables have been cooked, often used for broth.
Dig	Understand or appreciate
Gray or ofay dude	White man
Kitchen	curly or kinky hair at the nape of the neck
seddity	snobbish or bourgeois

Types of music developed by Black Americans.

Jazz, blues, Rap

- **What a wonderful world - LOUIS ARMSTRONG (Jazz)**
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2VCwBzGdPM&feature=related>
- **The Doors and John Lee Hooker - Roadhouse Blues**
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xzFWm9uXJo&feature=related>
- **No Woman No Cry, Bob Marley (Reggae)**
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YojirIfhyz4&feature=related>

Regularity and importance of BE

Questions for further discussion:

- Is BE an/a "illogical" or "primitive" vernacular or an Inferior version of the standard language?
- Do you think that the study of BE is important for nonlinguists?



References

Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman (1993). *An Introduction to Language*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company.