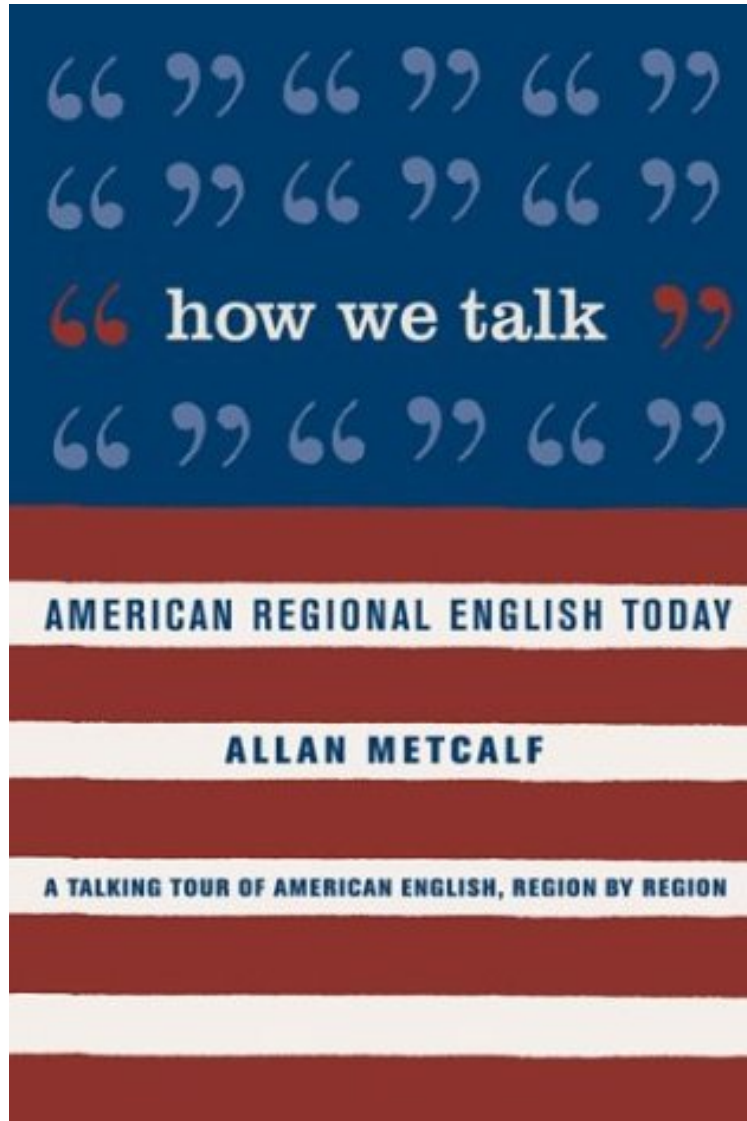


(Download pdf ebook) How We Talk: American Regional English Today

How We Talk: American Regional English Today

Allan Metcalf

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Allan Metcalf : How We Talk: American Regional English Today before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How We Talk: American Regional English Today:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Easy Introduction to Regional/Ethnic Dialects.By Steven DaedalusA pleasant, informative, sometimes amusing read for the non-specialist. It's only 200 pages long with many sidebars and perhaps too few maps. Chapters include The North, The South, The West, and American Ethnicns. Nobody will have to

struggle through it because all the technical stuff is avoided in favor of ordinary language. The "long i" sound in a word like "rice" is described as "ah-ee" up North and "ah" down South. If Metcalf were using the phonological alphabet of a linguist, each speech sound would be represented by an alphabetic-like symbol that you'd have to memorize. New Yorkers wouldn't say something like "dawg", as they do here, but rather something like "dg." I don't have the proper symbols on my keyboard but you get the point. This is easy to read and understand whereas, say, "The Dictionary of American Regional English," a comprehensive survey for specialists, is not. At the same time, the somewhat casual approach of "How We Talk" sometimes lends it a slapdash quality. There are some overgeneralizations and a few errors. On page 20, "Southerners will 'chunk' rocks or wood, while Northerners will 'throw' them." Well, almost. The DARE, an original and thorough study of regional speech, locates "chunk" around Arkansas and Oklahoma. But that's minor. On the plus side, many books like this in the past have depended on a study done in 1948, which divided American speech into three major dialects, North, South, and Midlands, as if the maps were fixed and rigid. I forget the title and author of that seminal study and Metcalf doesn't provide a bibliography, and I'm too lazy to look it up myself. Metcalf at least recognizes that language is shifting, in a way that the jumbo DARE doesn't. Briefly, except for parts of the South, regionalisms are disappearing. He cites Labov's classic sociolinguistic study of New York speech in three department stores of varying -- is "esteem" the right word? The New York accent is fading pronto. So is New England's. When I lived in Hartford, I noticed that the middle-aged shopkeeper from whom I bought my New York Times on Sundays spoke with a marked New England accent. His teen-aged daughter didn't. What happens to the accent when the shopkeeper's generation dies out and the offspring start running the business? Anyway, it's a broad overview of American speech. It's aimed at an audience that knows little of the subject but is curious about it. For the REALLY curious, it may provide a springboard for further investigation. Some may want to make the leap to "The Dictionary of American Regional English." It's big; it's expensive; but it's hard to put down. You learn what a "whifflepoof" is and where the word might be found, if in fact it still exists. I've spent hours perusing it. I once caught a fish while sitting on the edge of a cliff in Samoa. The fish was known as "lae". Now I know what kind of fish it was. DARE has almost everything. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Recommended Supplier By El Chinero Amusing! 0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. OK is not OK By Big Gig Dude Found out about this book when Mo Rocca interviewed the author on CBS Sunday Morning. Google the 5 minute video. It pretty much covers the whole book. Grade school writing by a college professor.

Where are you when people go to the coast instead of the beach tote things as well as carry them wait on line instead of in line get groceries in a paper sack instead of a paper bag say things like The baby needs picked up and The car needs washed eat solid rectangular doughnuts that are also called beignets complain when something is spendy (costly) are chilled by a blue norther ask for tonic instead of soda go dahntahn to shop. Allan Metcalf answers these and many other fascinating questions in his new book, *How We Talk: American Regional English Today*. In short, delightful essays, Metcalf explains the key features that make American speech so expressive and distinct. He begins in the South, home of the most easily recognized of American dialects, and travels north to New England, then on to the Midwest and the far West, even to Alaska and Hawaii. It's all here: the northern Midwest Fargo accent, Louisiana Cajun and New Orleans Yat, dropped rs as in Bostons Hahvahd Yahd, and intrusive rs as in Warshington, especially common in Americas midlands. With additional chapters on ethnic dialects and dialects in the movies, Metcalf reveals the resplendence of one our nations greatest natural resources its endless and varied talk.

From Booklist MacMurray College English professor Metcalf offers a useful, if somewhat dry, exploration of the subtle and not-so-subtle differences in the way Americans speak the same language. Although Metcalf is not an especially lively writer, he packs his book chock-full of fascinating information. He discusses the origins of American regional dialects and explains why different parts of the country use different words to mean the same things (carry versus tote, for example) or why the same words are pronounced differently in the South as opposed to the North. For fiction writers hoping to create authentic-sounding dialogue, this book could function as an indispensable guide: Metcalf explains such nuances as the southern tendency to say ink pen, rather than simply pen, because the southern pronunciation of the word is virtually indistinguishable from pin. For anyone looking for an authoritative technical examination of American English, Metcalf's tome will fill the bill admirably. David Pitt Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved About the Author Allan Metcalf is a professor of English at MacMurray College, executive secretary of the American Dialect Society, and author of books on language and writing. His books on language include *AMERICA IN SO MANY WORDS* (with David K. Barnhart), *THE WORLD IN SO MANY WORDS*, *HOW WE TALK: AMERICAN REGIONAL ENGLISH TODAY*, *PREDICTING NEW WORDS*, and *PRESIDENTIAL VOICES*. His books on writing include *RESEARCH TO THE POINT* and *ESSENTIALS OF WRITING TO THE POINT*. He lives in Jacksonville, Illinois.