



Speaking American: How Y'all, Youse, and You Guys Talk: A Visual Guide

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From the creator of the *New York Times* dialect quiz that ignited conversations about how and why we say the words we say, a stunning and delightful exploration of American language

Did you know that your answers to just a handful of questions can reveal where you grew up? In December 2013, Josh Katz released an interactive dialect quiz in the *New York Times* that became the most viewed page in the paper's history. Now a graphics editor, Katz harnessed the overwhelming response to that quiz to create *Speaking American*, an extraordinary and beautiful tour through the American vernacular.

How do you pronounce "pecan"? What do you call a long sandwich with varieties of meats and cheeses? Do you cut the grass or mow the lawn?

The answers to these questions—and the distinctions they reveal about who says what and where they say it—are not just the ultimate in cocktail party fodder; they are also windows into the history of our nation, our regions, and our language. On page after page, readers will be fascinated and charmed by these stunning maps of how Americans speak as they gain new insights into our language and ourselves.

For fans of *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* and *How the States Got Their Shapes*, *Speaking American* is an irresistible feast of American regional speech.

Speaking American: How Y'all, Youse, and You Guys Talk: A Visual Guide Details

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Jody says

I highly recommend reading with someone from another part of the country in your vicinity so that you can stop and ask them to pronounce words and name things. An interesting, quick read. I also found that a few things that I thought were universal are pretty uniquely Michigan.

Alec Lurie says

Really, really interesting read for any language nerd! I'm not giving 5 stars only because I wish they would've put more timeline maps and etymological origins in the text, rather than statistics. The percentages of dialectical trends are interesting, but the maps and histories really made the book worth reading.

lizzy says

it was really fun to learn about other dialects and also be called out for my own southern way of speaking lmao. it's funny to see these differences visually and i'm glad i got to read it and will prob look through it time and time again.

Heather Sears says

I love the nuance of language and words so this book was so fascinating to me. I feel like I should own a copy as it would make a great book to sit around with friends and talk about. I highly recommend reading it if you have any interest in language at all, very fun read.

orangerful says

This book is great to have on hand at a gathering with friends and family. We "read" it together in between the Thanksgiving meal and dessert.

You might remember taking the dialect quiz that Josh Katz posted online back in 2013. These are the more interesting results, presented with percentages and fun maps.

If you're worried about a family gathering this year and what to talk about, buy this book and take it with you! It will give you a good solid hour of "safe" discussion.

Ambur Taft says

This book was fun - the whole family read it together and we had a great time reading all the fun facts and discussing the difference in how we think we say certain things and how other people hear us say these things.

Elizabeth says

Really fun book! I loved the maps, while they didn't always match what I know from where I live, It was really interesting to see how, even within the same country, people use different words for different things.

(This is the first Non-Fiction book I've ever reviewed, I know this review is awful)

Cook Memorial Public Library says

A 2016 staff favorite recommended by Cyndi.

Check our catalog: <https://encore.cooklib.org/iii/encore...>

Elisabeth says

3.5 stars. This is a quick, fun read, a coffee-table type book that uses maps to demonstrate how different regions of America pronounce common words and use different expressions to describe the same things. If you've ever been curious to know how words like "been" and "aunt" are pronounced in different regions, or which Americans say "mow the lawn" as opposed to "cut the grass," or "skillet" instead of "frying-pan," you'll have fun looking through this.

Emily says

I think I remember when the author's regional pronunciation quiz was circulating on facebook in 2013; I recall being touched to realize that (thanks to me) my half-Russian boy who has lived in Queens his whole life says "pecan" just like the grandfather he barely remembers who was born in Little Rock. My son and I had great fun paging through this together, but for such a physically large volume it went by awfully fast. I would have given it four stars had it been longer.

Randal White says

I'm a Drivers Ed teacher. I teach in Washington, where some of my students poke fun of my Wisconsin accent and sayings. One student brought me this book, thinking I could use it. It's a GOLD MINE! Any

teacher who at times finds keeping teenagers engaged in learning will find this a fantastic resource. I find that there's no better way to encourage class participation and to break down walls than when you give students a chance to band together and laugh with each other. All it takes is to open up this book to any random page and show them the way people in other states talk. Water fountain vs bubbler. Coke vs soda. And on and on.

I also host foreign exchange students. They love reading this! And I take it along on exchange student get togethers and read it to them. They crack up!

Try it and you will be amazed! I wish that I could find more books like this!

Akemi G. says

This is a fun book about the pronunciation and vocabulary variations in American English. While mass media keeps erasing regional variations, distinct differences still exist! -- and as someone who studied linguistics a little, I like it.

Some examples:

- * Is "aunt" a homophone of "ant" for you? How about "route" and "root"?
- * Do you pronounce "quarter" with the W sound?
- * You've probably heard the discussion about "soda" vs "pop." But do you know "cocola"? (No, it's not cocoa, it's soda.)

It also leaves me with a few questions:

- * My Tennessee friend taught me that "y'all" is NOT the plural form of "you," but singular--the plural form is "y'all 'n y'all".
- * I think "sweet tea" is a southern term, and in the north (or at least in Ohio where I lived) it was called "sweetened tea." Like, when you order iced tea at a restaurant, the waitperson would ask, "Sweetened or unsweetened?" in Ohio, but in Tennessee, sweet tea is the default unless you specifically ask for unsweetened tea.

And here is a tip. When you are in Pacific NW, you don't just say "salmon" at the store. Nor "king salmon" or "red salmon." We respect the indigenous population and say "chinook" "sockeye" etc.

Panda Incognito says

The statistics are well-presented and easy to understand, and the writing voice throughout is surprisingly wry and amusing. I absolutely loved this book, and I'm so glad that I came across it at the library. I highly recommend it to those who are interested in language and regional differences.

Kristine says

This one was just plain fun, particularly if you're a data nerd. There's a wide variety of information explored and laid out in well done infographics. Having grown up in almost every corner of the US, I'm particularly drawn to these types of information because it's fun to see where I developed specific speech patterns.

Lisa Vegan says

This is a fun and attractive and informative book. It has enough information not part of the internet quiz(zes) to make it worth reading. I liked how it was organized. I love the study of linguistics, and of language use and how it's different in different places, in different sub-cultures, and over time, so this book's contents are my cup of tea.

Yes, as usual, I'm mostly west coast, California, San Francisco, but I was gratified to see that with several words & phrases my time spent on the east coast and elsewhere in the U.S. did stick.

This would be a fun book for a group of friends (perhaps college or work friends) to read together and make comparisons. It would make for an enjoyable conversation/party game.
