

Aboriginal English sounds

Consonants are the letters of the alphabet that are not the vowels (A E I O U)

Aboriginal English typically has many softer sounds. Some sounds in the English language did not exist in any traditional Aboriginal language. In the Wiradjuri language, for example, there are no 'th' sounds, 'k' sounds, 'p' sounds, or 't' sounds. Sometimes an 'h' is added onto a word that begins with a vowel, such as 'H'angry'

Your task:

Consider these Aboriginal English sentences.

- 1) "Dat boliceman, 'e so-o-li-id dat fulla."
- 2) "You going over to park?" ('p' slightly softened, but not enough to write it as a 'b')
- 3) "We going dere firs over wes'."
- 4) "An then we wen' out further."
- 5) "Wos wid you den?"
- 6) "Look a' dese two 'ere then."
- 7) "Dey growly dem fullas at da foo'ball."
- 8) "H'alright den tell me where den cuz!"
- 9) "I'll 'ave a liddle bit."
- 10) "We bin goin' dere every weekend watchin' dat team 'ay."

Code-switch these sentences into Standard Australian English.

1)
2)
3)
4)
5)
6)
7)
8)
9)
10)

Quantification

"Boil 'im up first," Nanna said in her quiet way. "Boil 'im up real good. Long time." (p.19)

Quantification comes from the word 'quantity'.

It relates to the concepts of how much and how many.

In Aboriginal English, the word to show quantity is expressed in the way the quantity word is said. We can see this mainly in the lengthening of the word.

Example:

Aboriginal English: It was hu-u-u-g-e.

Standard Australian English: It was huge.

Measurement of time and space is typically not exact in Aboriginal English, and this has become a real feature of the dialect.

Your task:

Pronounce the following in Aboriginal English

Note: (Sometimes a soft 'th' sound will be said, but often it is softened to a 'd' sound).

- 1) "We been fishin' ere for 'e-ea-ps long cuz."
- 2) "Dis car I saw yesterday had 'u-u-ge muffler, y'know, exhaust on back."
- 3) "She been walking a-a-ll over tha place."
- 4) "Dat other teacher, he been at dis school fo-or-e-ever."
- 5) "You bin gone a l-o-o-o-ng time."
- 6) "Wot's da name at the re-e-e-eal tall fulla?"
- 7) "They no-oi-s-sy dat class 'unc."

Now write the Standard Australian English equivalent of each sentence:

1)
2)
3)
4)
5)
6)
7)

Auxiliary verbs

An auxiliary verb helps to give a verb meaning for its place in time.
It is a helping verb.

'Have' and 'has' are common auxiliary verbs that are not used, or rarely used in Aboriginal English.

Other auxiliary verbs are:

had, having, am, is, are, was, were,
should, will, would, can, could, may,
might, must, ought, need, do.

Examples of Aboriginal English sentences that do not contain an auxiliary verb:

- 1) "We chosen our team already."
- 2) "We choosed our team already."
- 3) "He knowed the answer."
- 4) "She holded the phone for you all dis time."
- 5) "They fighted since they bin married."
- 5) "We been gone since when youse walked to the shop there."
- 6) "I taken a picture already."

Your task:

Complete this table.

Present tense	Past tense	Present participle	Past participle
see	saw	seeing	has seen
go	went	going	has gone
travel			
call			
break			
choose			
begin			
fight			
blow			
bite			
forget			
drive			
give			
hold			
fall			

Articles

There are two types of articles: definite, the word 'the', and indefinite, the words 'a' and 'an'.

Indefinite article = a, an

Definite article = the

When writing, it is important to use the correct article, so that the meaning is clear to the reader.

Example:

The phone rings but her mum lets the answering machine take a message.

A phone rings but her mum lets the answering machine take a message.

The book is talking about **the** phone in Nancy's house, not **a** phone which could belong to anyone, anywhere.

Aboriginal English has very little use for articles.

In Aboriginal English it is very common to hear sentences like "You got pen?". The Standard Australian English sentence would be, "Have you got a pen?". The auxiliary verb 'have' is missing, but so is the article 'a'. If the question was, "Have you got the pen?", it would mean something else. It is a specific pen that has been borrowed.

Aboriginal English	Standard Australian English
"'E watched race back 'ome dere."	
"'Ole team played no good on weekend."	
"Dat your name in paper?"	
"Whad's score dere?"	
"'Ose bag on floor in changeroom?"	
"We never saw class go to no library."	
"You got money for e'scursion?"	
"What you got in pocket on dat side?"	
"We is going to shop."	
'We need book today?"	