

EN 433: Modern Grammar
Dr. Potter

FINAL EXAMINATION

A. Short-Answer Questions (answer any **five** of these seven questions).

1. In the sentence “We was poor in them days,” what grammatical rule(s) is/are broken (from the viewpoint of Received Standard English)? Does this variation affect the usefulness or meaning of these phrases, and if so how?
2. Here are two lists of words from Old English. Words in the first list are given with their modern cognates (words descended from them with the same or nearly the same meaning); the words in the second list have not survived into modern English. Pick one word from each list and say why, in your opinion, it did or did not survive.
 1. *hamora* (hammer); *nama* (name); *heafonum* (heaven); *fæder* (father); *todæg* (today).
 2. *atheling* (prince or nobleman); *aesc* (spear); *thegn* (household retainer); *rice* (kingdom).
3. What grammatical principle did Winston Churchill deliberately follow, albeit in a manner which renders the principle absurd, when he reportedly declared “That is the sort of usage up with which I will not put!”
4. Recite the following phrases out loud as though you were using them in a casual conversation. Do you find that you are using a consonantal "r" or more like the semvowel /r/ when you speak these phrases? Is your usage consistent in each phrase? Why/why not?

the red volkswagen
get out of the car!
hand me that tar paper
it's not so far away
Richard is absent
5. If a restaurant wants to hire only wait staff with Irish accents for an Irish-themed pub, do you think this is a reasonable and legitimate job qualification? Why/why not?
6. In Chaucer’s day, double and even triple negatives (e.g. “*nas nat noone*”) were common, and there weren’t no negative stigma attached to none of ‘em. The same was true for the era of Shakespeare or Milton; the “rule” against double negation is less than two hundred years old. Do you think that we could ever return to this more positive attitude about multiple negation? Why/why not?
7. Here is a list of a few strong verbs in Modern English. Which of these do you feel will be the first to revert to the weak past tense (adding *-ed*), and why? Have you heard it already conjugated as a weak verb? How long do you think it might take to change fully? ***Speak, write, swim, fly, run, read, take, spin, sneak, eat.***

B. Long-answer question:

1. Pick any **three** of these contemporary coinages, make an inference as to the words after which they were modelled, define them, and indicate the social context in which you think they would most likely be used (is the word standard? "non-standard"? Associated with a particular social activity or group? Positive? Negative? Ambiguous?) ***underbussed, shelfie, mansplain, clicktivism, multicrastinate, storegasm, floordrobe, Brexit, post-truth, 404, ghosting, unpresidented, glunge.***

AUDIO DAILY DOUBLE

2. Listen to this **audio** excerpt. Identify at least two phonological features in this excerpt that you feel differ from Received Standard Pronunciation, transcribe them phonetically, and identify the difference in sound which underlies your reaction. Are there any other features -- tone, lexical items, speed, rhythm, accentuation/stress that seem anomalous? What reaction do you have to this speaker's phonology? What assumptions or judgements do you make about the speaker's cultural identity, profession, or level of education, and why?