CORRECT ENGLISH By State
Exercise #1

Many people believe that English is spoken more correctly in some areas of the United States than in others. Noted linguist Dennis R. Preston has studied this phenomenon for years. Use the 50-state map above if you’d like to participate in an exercise similar to one used by Dr. Preston in his studies to discover what speech you like best!

Using a scale of 1-10, rate a state’s correctness by writing a score on the line next to that state’s abbreviation. For the purposes of this exercise CORRECT ENGLISH is defined as the variety or varieties of American English that sound(s) the most acceptable to you.

1 = The least Correct English.
10 = The most Correct English

You can use all the other numbers between 1 and 10, and you can repeat a number as many times as you like. When you have finished, turn the page to view how your scores compare to respondents participating in Dr. Preston’s research studies.

Note: PLEASANT ENGLISH — which is explored in Exercise #2 — is defined as kind of American English that sounds appealing to you. But appealing can be different from correct. An appealing accent may sound charming to you, but you may not consider it good English! For this reason your scores for CORRECT ENGLISH in Exercise #1 or PLEASANT ENGLISH in Exercise #2 may be the same, or they can be different.
COMPARE YOUR CORRECT ENGLISH RESULTS

These three maps show how people from Southeastern Michigan, Southernmost Indiana, and the South (principally Alabama and Georgia) rated areas for the CORRECTNESS of their English. When you compare your own maps to these, remember that the maps shown here reflect average scores taken from a larger number of respondents, so you will not find extreme scores at either end of the scale, but, for example, many people in Michigan must have given their own state a “10” for “correctness,” since, as the “Michigan Correct” map shows, the average score was in the 8-8.99 range.
Many people believe that English is spoken more pleasantly in some areas of the United States than in others. Noted linguist Dennis R. Preston has studied this phenomenon for years. Use the 50-State Map above if you’d like to participate in an exercise similar to one used by Dr. Preston in his studies to discover what speech you like best!

Using a scale of 1-10, rate a state’s pleasantness by writing a score on the line next to that state’s abbreviation. (example: NY ___ enter your score on this line) For the purposes of this exercise PLEASANT ENGLISH is defined as the variety or varieties of American English that sound(s) appealing to you.

1 = The least Pleasant English.
10 = The most Pleasant English

You can use all the other numbers between 1 and 10, and you can repeat a number as many times as you like. When you have finished, turn the page to view how your scores compare to respondents participating in Dr. Preston’s research studies.

Note: CORRECT ENGLISH — which is explored in Exercise #1 —is defined as the kind of American English that sounds the most acceptable to you. But acceptable can be different from appealing. An appealing (pleasant) accent may sound charming to you, but you may not consider it good English! For this reason your scores for CORRECT ENGLISH in Exercise #1 or PLEASANT ENGLISH in Exercise #2 may be the same, or they can be different.
COMPARE YOUR PLEASANT ENGLISH RESULTS

These three maps show how people from Southeastern Michigan, Southernmost Indiana, and the South (principally Alabama and Georgia) rated areas for the PLEASANTNESS of their English. When you compare your own maps to these, remember that the maps shown here reflect average scores taken from a larger number of respondents, so you will not find extreme scores at either end of the scale, but, for example, many southerners must have found Alabama speech very pleasant (giving the state up to a “10” for “pleasantness”) since the average score for Alabama in the “South Pleasant” map was in the 8-8.99 range.