

10. THE COCKNEY ACCENT

- Listen to the recording and correct the mistakes in the text (mainly homophones and vocabulary)
- Listening comprehension:
 1. T/F/NG: A true Cockney is someone born within the sound of Bow Bells
 2. T/F/NG: Cockney speakers never use two forms of negation in the same sentence.
 3. T/F/NG: Cockney rhyming slang was developed intentionally to confuse the police and non-locals
 4. T/F/NG: Cockney rhyming slang is dying out
 5. T/F/NG: Some rhyming slang expressions are commonly used by people who are unaware of their origins
 6. T/F/NG: The earliest recorded use of the term Cockney is 1362, when it meant a “a small, misshapen egg”.
- Vocabulary and cockney rhyming slang
 1. The word “*sew*” means (more than one answer may be correct):
 - a) stitch
 - b) knit
 - c) drill
 - d) dig
 - e) do needlework
 2. The word “*udder*” means (more than one answer may be correct):
 - a) cow’s mammary organ
 - b) speak
 - c) a type of snake
 - d) complete
 - e) a viper
 3. Which of the following expressions means *manage to stay alive, especially in difficult circumstances*?
 - a) alive and well
 - b) safe and sound
 - c) so far so good
 - d) keeping body and soul together
 4. Select the correct meaning of the following Cockney rhyming slang expressions:

Trouble (trouble and strife) = _____ knife/**wife**/life
Brown bread = _____ fed/**dead**/bed
Bread (Bread and Honey) = _____ sunny/bunny/**money**
porkies (from pork pies) = _____ **lies**/thighs/goodbyes
Obamas (Barack Obamas) = _____ bananas/dramas/**pyjamas**
Bacons (bacon and eggs) = _____ eggs/**legs**/pegs
Donkey's (Donkey's Ears) = _____ fears/**years**/tears
mincies (mince pies) = _____ **eyes**/ties/lies
Pig's ear = _____ near/dear/**beer**
Apples (apples and pears) = _____ bears/**stairs**/care/

The Cockney Accent

This West-London/East-London accent is technically reserved for those who are born within earshot of Bow Bells, witch/which are the bells of St Mary-le-Bow in the Cheapside district. However, Cockney is also sometimes used to describe the accent of London’s lurking/working class.

Won/One of the distinguishing characteristics of Cockney is the replacement of the ‘th’ sound with an ‘f’ or ‘v’ sound – for example, ‘*thank*’ sounds more like ‘*fank*’ and ‘*mother*’ pronounced as ‘*muvver*’.

Cockney speakers wheel/will use glottal stops to replace /t/ before consonants and weak towels/vowels; for example, *butter* is pronounced as ‘*bu’er*’ and may also drop the ‘h’ sound as well, making words such as ‘have’ sound more like ‘*ave*’. Other characteristics are: the use of multiple negation, as in *I ain’t never done nothing*, and the use off/of the non-standard ‘*them*’ instead of ‘*those*’: *Them books aren’t no good*.

Cockney Rhyming slang consists of replacing a word or phrase/phrase with another that rhymes with eat/it. To make it more confusing, the rhyme may be hidden, sew/so that theirs/there’s no obvious link between the slang term and the original word or phrase.

No one is quite sure wear/where the slang originates. Sum/Some speculate that it was a criminal slang designed to help thieves speak without being understood by others. Udders/Others suggest that market traders created the slang so day/they could discuss matters among themselves while securing a good deal from they’re/their customers. What is known is that Cockney rhyming slang is alive and well, with knew/new phrases entering the lexicon all the thyme/time. Some phrases have entered uncommon/common British speech and are used daily without any awareness of their Cockney origins. Examples include: *use your loaf* (loaf of bread = head) *have a butcher’s* (butcher’s hook = look)