

## Week 2. Cockney (i)

As a **dialect**, Cockney is similar to much local non-standard English, though traditionally with special usages such as rhyming slang. As an **accent**, Cockney (= the broadest London working-class speech) is identifiably south-eastern. Phonologically, it is largely **innovative**: as compared with RP, it reflects nearly all the latter's historical innovations plus several more of its own. See *Accents of English 2*: 301-334.

There is an accent **continuum** in London extending from Cockney to RP. Standard English spoken with a near-RP, London-influenced accent is sometimes referred to as **Estuary English**. (Some claim EE is due to replace RP as the educated accent of England.) Many of the following points apply to popular English widely in England, not just to Cockney.

1. **H dropping** (also in most other parts of England)

h → Ø *hammer, hit*

2. **-ing** (also in most other kinds of English)

ɪn, ɪ rather than ɪŋ *running, feeding, morning*

3. **TH fronting/stopping** (spreading geographically)

θ, ð → f, v *think, rather*  
ð → d / #\_ *this and that*

4. **Yod dropping/coalescence** (of yod after an alveolar consonant)

j → Ø / n \_ [V, +stress] *new, neutral*  
and either **dropping** j → Ø / t, d \_ *tune, duke*  
or **coalescence** tj, dj → tʃ, dʒ *tune, duke*

**Grammar** (Cockney):

multiple negation

*I ain't never done nothing*

verb morphology

*You seen 'im! - I never! They done it. You was.*

reflexive pronouns

*'E'll 'urt 'isself. That's yourn.*

demonstratives

*them books*

adverbs without -ly

*Trains are running normal. The boys done good.*

prepositions

*down the pub, up her nan's, out the window*

other non-standard forms

*runnin', mornin'. Ain't it (inni')? Where's me bag?*

**Vocabulary:**

Cockney rhyming slang:

*use your loaf, titfer, on his tod, butcher's, ...*

(See Ayto, J., 2003, *Oxford Dictionary of Rhyming Slang*, OUP)