

1 Read the text quickly and answer the questions.

- 1 TV broadcasters in the United States typically use a dialect of English from ...
 - a New York.
 - b Washington DC.
 - c Texas.
 - d no particular region.
- 2 The dialect of English spoken in New York is considered by many to be ...
 - a standard American English.
 - b the dialect spoken by rich people in the United States.
 - c the dialect spoken by educated people in the United States.
 - d a dialect which is not highly esteemed.
- 3 The Midwest region dialect is ...
 - a closer to the American English standard dialect than other dialects.
 - b mostly used by farmers.
 - c a combination of many American dialects.
 - d the standard dialect of American English.

The standard dialect of American English

A

In South Korea, the standard dialect is that spoken by the residents of Seoul. In Japan, it is the dialect spoken in Tokyo. In Taiwan, it is the speech of Taipei that is considered standard. It is not surprising, then, that many Asians assume that the standard dialect of American English is that spoken in New York (the economic capital of the States) or Washington DC (the political capital). This is not the case, however. As a matter of fact, native speakers of English in the United States often look down on the accent of native New Yorkers, considering it to be rough and uneducated.

B

So where does the standard dialect of American English come from? In some respects, the answer to this question is *nowhere*. The standard dialect of American English has evolved naturally through radio and TV broadcasts, and people who go into broadcasting often work hard to eliminate their regional accents.

As the Texas-native television journalist Linda Ellerbee once said, “In television you are not supposed to sound like you’re from anywhere.” Characters in movies and TV shows often speak this “regionless” dialect as well. For example, although the popular sitcom *Friends* was set in New York, none of the characters spoke with a typical New York accent.

C

However, the standard dialect is perhaps closer to the Midwest region dialect than any others. One reason might simply be that as the Midwest is in the middle of the country, it is strongly positioned geographically to be familiar to the people in surrounding regions. Another factor might be that John Kenyan, a graduate of Hiram University in Ohio, was the pronunciation editor of the highly influential second edition of *Webster’s New International Dictionary*, which played a major role in defining the standard pronunciation of American English.

2 Match the definitions to words from the text.

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|--|-------|
| a not respect (paragraph A) | _____ |
| b believe that something is true, even though you cannot be certain (paragraph A) | _____ |
| c get rid of something that is not wanted (paragraph B) | _____ |
| d expected to behave in a certain way (paragraph B) | _____ |
| e well known, easily recognized (paragraph C) | _____ |
| f able to affect someone (paragraph C) | _____ |

3 Talk to a partner and answer the questions.

- a** What information in the article was new or the most interesting to you?
- b** What dialect of your mother tongue do you speak?
- c** Are there any dialects of your mother tongue that are hard for you to understand?