4.5 Standard English vs Dialect: 30-minute Pack

about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer all questions in full sentences where required. Read the source text before you start Question 1.

Sunday at Nan's

Written for Revision Library (original, copyright-free). A short first-person narrative extract, invented for this resource to give genuine, respectfully written examples of a regional English dialect in dialogue, framed by Standard English narration.

Every Sunday, without fail, my nan expects the whole family for dinner at one o'clock sharp, and every Sunday, without fail, somebody arrives at half past. This week it was my cousin Danny, ambling through the back door twenty minutes late with an apology already forming on his lips.

'You're late again,' said Nan, not looking up from the potatoes. 'I've told youse a hundred times, one o'clock means one o'clock, not one o'clock whenever it suits.'

'Sorry, Nan,' Danny said. 'The bus never come.'

'Aye, well, it never comes for nobody round here neither,' Nan said, 'so you'd best set off earlier next time, hadn't you.'

Nan talks the way she has always talked, the way her own mother talked before her: broad, quick, and shaped by fifty years on the same South Yorkshire street. She drops her aitches when she is cross, doubles up her negatives when she wants to make a point, and calls anyone she loves 'love,' whether she has met them once or raised them from birth.

My teacher would mark every one of Nan's sentences in red pen, and my nan would not care in the slightest, because she is not writing an essay. She is talking to her family, in the language that raised her, and it does its job perfectly.

At dinner, she told us about Mrs Ogilvie two doors down, who 'hasn't got nowt better to do than watch the street through her nets,' and

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about the new bin collection times, which she reckoned were 'a right carry-on and no mistake.' Danny, who is training to be a solicitor, speaks at work in a careful, rounded voice he seems to have borrowed from a radio announcer, and tried gently correcting her. 'It's "anything," Nan, not "nowt."'

'It's nowt to me what you call it,' Nan said, without missing a beat, passing him the gravy, 'so long as you eat your dinner while it's hot.'

Later, when Danny drafted a work email at the kitchen table, Nan read it over his shoulder and pronounced it 'proper posh talk, that,' full of words she said she would never use down the market but which she agreed looked exactly right on a letter to a client. She is not wrong. The email needs to be understood by a stranger who has never met Danny and will judge his firm by every line of it. The kitchen does not need any such thing. It already knows him.

1 Read again lines 1 to 22 of the source text. List four features of the way Nan speaks that are grammatically different from Standard English, using her own words as evidence.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

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2 Below are four words or phrases that Nan uses in the source text. Complete the table by giving the Standard English meaning of each one.

Word or phrase from the text	Standard English meaning
nowt	
aye	
youse	
a right carry-on	

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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3 Here are eight statements about the source text and about dialect in general. Choose the FOUR statements that are TRUE.

A. Dialect is a systematic, rule-governed form of English, not simply incorrect grammar.
B. The source text states that Standard English is the only correct form of English and that every other form is a mistake.
C. Danny speaks, at work, in a careful, rounded voice that he seems to have borrowed from a radio announcer.
D. Nan immediately changes 'nowt' to 'anything' as soon as Danny corrects her.
E. The source text states that Nan's way of talking 'does its job perfectly' when she is with her family.
F. Nan refuses to admit that the formal language in Danny's email is appropriate for its purpose.
G. The narrator says that a teacher would mark every one of Nan's sentences in red pen.
H. According to the source text, Nan's family always speak in careful, formal Standard English at Sunday dinner.

- ☐ A
- ☐ B
- ☐ C
- ☐ D
- ☐ E
- ☐ F
- ☐ G
- ☐ H

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Rewrite each sentence below in Standard English, keeping the meaning exactly the same. These are examples of dialect grammar, following their own consistent rules, not random errors to mock.

(a) 'The bus never come.' **(2)**

(b) 'It never comes for nobody round here neither.' **(2)**

(c) 'I've told youse a hundred times.' **(2)**

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

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5 Explain why it would be inaccurate to describe Nan's way of speaking simply as 'bad English'. Use ideas from the whole passage to support your answer.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

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6 Explain what lines 15 to 19 suggest about the difference between how the narrator's teacher and the narrator each view Nan's way of talking.

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

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7 The passage shows Danny moving between two different ways of speaking: his usual talk around the family, and the 'careful, rounded voice' he uses for work and for his email. Explain what this suggests about how people choose language depending on the situation they are in (sometimes called 'code-switching').

(Total for Question 7 is 2 marks)

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8 Write a short scene (approximately 100 to 150 words) in which two characters discuss weekend plans. One character should speak in Standard English throughout. The other should speak in a regional dialect of your own invention (do not simply copy Nan's dialect from the source text). Show that you understand the difference between dialect grammar and Standard English grammar by using at least two consistent, believable non-standard grammatical features for the dialect-speaking character throughout.

(Total for Question 8 is 10 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.5 Standard English vs Dialect: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies the use of 'youse' as a regional plural form of 'you' (oe) **B1**

identifies the non-standard past-tense verb form 'come' instead of 'came' ('The bus never come') **B1**

identifies multiple/double negation, e.g. 'it never comes for nobody round here neither' **B1**

identifies the double negative and dialect word in 'hasn't got nowt better to do' **B1**

Answer: Any four of: 'youse' used as a plural form of 'you'; the non-standard past tense 'come' instead of 'came'; multiple negation in 'never comes for nobody...neither'; the double negative and dialect word in 'hasn't got nowt better to do'.

Question 2

nowt = nothing **B1**

aye = yes **B1**

youse = you (plural form of 'you') **B1**

a right carry-on = a great fuss/an annoying, chaotic business **B1**

Answer: nowt = nothing; aye = yes; youse = you (plural); a right carry-on = a great fuss or annoying business.

Question 3

A selected (true) **B1**

C selected (true) **B1**

E selected (true) **B1**

G selected (true) **B1**

Answer: A, C, E and G are true. B is false (the text never claims this, and its whole argument works against this view); D is false (Nan says 'It's nowt to me what you call it' and does not change her word); F is false (she agrees the email 'looked exactly right on a letter to a client'); H is false (Nan speaks in dialect at dinner throughout).

Question 4

(a) identifies 'come' as the non-standard past-tense form **B1**

(a) correct rewrite: 'The bus never came.', cao **B1**

(a) Answer: The bus never came.

(b) identifies the multiple negation across 'never...nobody...neither' **B1**

(b) correct rewrite using single negation, e.g. 'It never comes for anybody round here either.', cao **B1**

(b) Answer: It never comes for anybody round here either.

(c) identifies 'youse' as the non-standard plural form of 'you' **B1**

(c) correct rewrite, e.g. 'I've told you all a hundred times.', cao **B1**

(c) Answer: I've told you all a hundred times.

Question 5

identifies that dialect is a genuine, structured variety of English with its own consistent patterns, not random error (oe) **B1**

supports this with reference to the passage, e.g. that Nan's language 'does its job perfectly' with her family, or is 'the language that raised her' (oe) **B1**

develops the idea that correctness depends on context and purpose, e.g. Standard English is expected in formal writing such as an email to a client, but this does not make Nan's everyday speech wrong (oe) **B1**

Answer: Nan's speech follows the consistent rules of a real regional dialect rather than being randomly wrong; the passage shows it 'does its job perfectly' for talking to her family. Standard English is simply the form expected in formal, written contexts like Danny's client email, not an absolute standard that makes every other form of English incorrect.

Question 6

identifies that the teacher would 'mark every one of Nan's sentences in red pen', implying a school context judges her grammar as wrong **B1**

identifies that Nan 'would not care', showing she does not see her own speech as inferior **B1**

explains that the narrator frames this positively, stating that Nan's language 'does its job perfectly' for its actual purpose **B1**

develops the idea that this contrast suggests correctness is relative to purpose and audience, not an absolute standard (oe) **B1**

Answer: The teacher represents a strict, exam-based view that would mark Nan's speech as full of errors, but Nan herself is untroubled, because she is not writing an essay. The narrator's comment that her language 'does its job perfectly' shows the writer's own view: that Nan's grammar is only 'wrong' by the standard of a context (school writing) she is not actually operating in, suggesting correctness depends on purpose and audience rather than being fixed.

Question 7

identifies that Danny uses a different, more formal register for work/writing than for talking with his family (oe) **B1**

explains that this shows speakers often deliberately adapt or switch their language to suit their audience and purpose, rather than one form being 'correct' in every situation (oe) **B1**

Answer: Danny speaks in a careful, rounded voice for work and writes formally in his client email, but is comfortable with Nan's dialect at the family table. This shows that fluent speakers can deliberately switch between different forms of English depending on their audience and purpose, rather than only ever having one 'correct' way of speaking.

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Question 8

Content and organisation (AO5)

Level 1 Simple dialogue with little sense of two distinct characters; limited organisation and little awareness of the task's requirements. **1-3**

Level 2 Convincing, well-organised dialogue with clearly differentiated voices for the two characters and a clear sense of scene and purpose. **4-6**

Technical accuracy and consistency of invented dialect (AO6)

Level 1 One or two non-standard grammatical features attempted, with inconsistent or inaccurate use; the Standard English speaker's grammar may also contain errors. **1-2**

Level 2 At least two clear, consistent and accurately controlled non-standard grammatical features used for the dialect-speaking character throughout, alongside accurate Standard English grammar, punctuation and direct speech for the other character. **3-4**

Indicative content:

- Dialogue correctly punctuated with inverted commas, capital letters and end punctuation for direct speech
- The dialect-speaking character uses at least two believable, consistent non-standard features (e.g. a non-standard subject pronoun, a non-standard verb form, double negation, a dialect word), invented rather than copied from the source text
- The Standard English speaker's grammar remains fully accurate and unmarked throughout, providing a clear contrast
- A believable, natural weekend-plans scenario with a clear sense of setting and relationship between the two characters
- Both voices are consistent from the character's first line to their last, rather than drifting between dialect and Standard English

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