

Accent: keep it or lose it?

hail wax lyrical one-off like it or lump it bigoted impede drop
thick as two short planks intact deviants have the nerve bristled

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/nov/03/can-you-lose-accent-england-southern#comment-159642907>

Lose it!

I firmly believe that accents do have a strong influence on our social life and affect our career prospects. 1) _____, but most Britons can't accept that a person who doesn't speak with an 'upper-class' English accent isn't 2) _____.

I once went to a lovely social party. My pronunciation always gives people a strong impression of my high level of education. I chatted with a fellow guest; he wanted to know about me, as I was not part of the usual social crowd he mixes with. After a few moments, he wanted to know where I lived. He expected me to say I lived in the upper-social-class area where the party was. I told him my postcode. He could barely hide the utter contempt on his face. He would have gone to the host then and there to demand why I was allowed to come to this party. Only his wife held him back. They seemed shocked that I 3) _____ to have turned up the party. If I'd spoken with my native scouse [skaʊs] accent (from Liverpool area), they wouldn't have noticed me at all.

Sadly, that incident was not a 4) _____. I've met people who believe that their position in life gives them the right to speak down to me. That's why I strongly believe that all state schools should offer elocution lessons in order to promote social mobility. Strong regional accents are likely to 5) _____ many who seek career advancements. Those who 6) _____ about such accents are effectively saying 'know your place and stay there'.

Keep it!

I left Liverpool to live in the Black country over 40 years ago. Other than a slight softening of my accent, it remains pretty 7) _____. I hear "you've not lost your accent" a lot and take it as great compliment actually. When people don't have a regional accent frustrates me a lot. If there has ever been any snobbishness about my accent (and I lived in North London for a few years also) it was _____ said _____ behind _____ my _____ back.

There was one time though that I had a conversation with a very lovely lady customer in her garden in Tenterden, Kent. She mentioned how much she liked my accent, and I said I liked hers too. She 8) _____ at me and said she didn't have an accent, and long story short, I wouldn't 9) _____ it, and we fell out over it. For the record, she was entirely wrong. She had a southern accent, well-spoken but clearly southern. I've never forgotten it, the arrogance that she sat at the centre of the universe, orbited by 10) _____ from her norm. Forming a view of someone based on the way they talk is as 11) _____ as racism.

Our accent forms a part of our identity. To change it is to lose an aspect of ourselves. And by the way, there is no such thing as "perfect" English anyway! So, be proud of your accent wherever you 12) _____ from!