

A Level English Language Summer Task



Complete all three tasks.

Task 1

Idiolect is your very personal way of speaking, your own set of vocabulary and phrases. The reasons why you speak the way you do are many but it is most likely influenced by your own family and the people with whom you spend the most time.

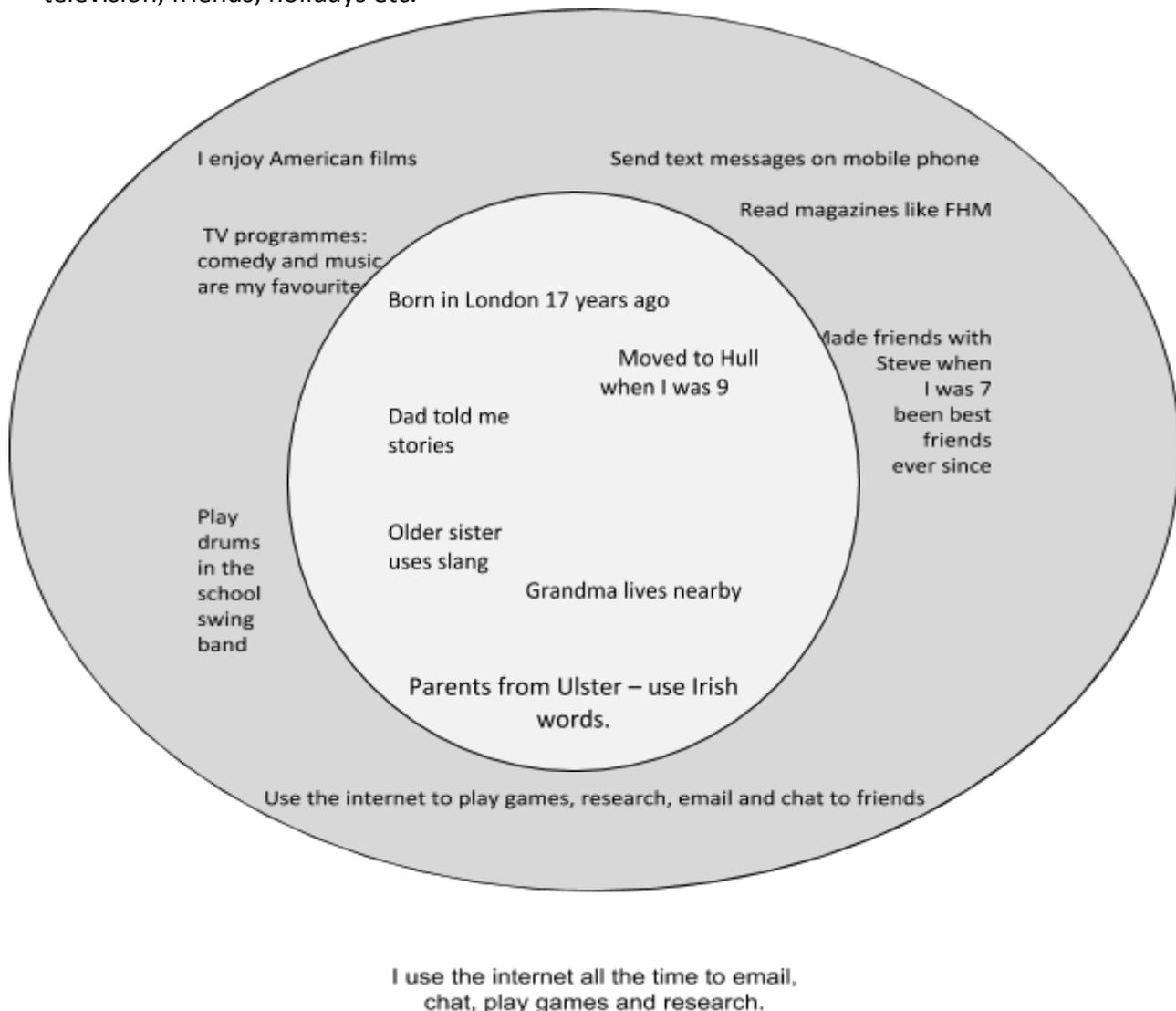
Write a personal essay in which you explore the reasons why you speak the way you do.

Think about: When was the first time *you* realised you had an accent or a dialect? Did you always sound the same as everyone else at school, or have you had an experience where you felt different, perhaps an outsider, because of your language? What do you think of your language now? Are you happy about the way you sound, or would you like to change your accent?

Consider:

- Where and when you were born
- How you copied your parents in speech
- If your personality has affected your speaking and listening
- Where you have lived

Plan your essay, using the circle diagram like the one below. In the small circle, write down all the things about your family that influences the way you talk. In the big one, write down all the influences beyond your immediate family that might affect the way that you speak: school, television, friends, holidays etc.



Task 2

Watch the documentary about Genie Wiley.

<https://topdocumentaryfilms.com/genie-secret-wild-child/>

Genie's situation was extreme but there are many children whose circumstances are not so dire and yet they still struggle with language. Read the following article:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/apr/19/teachers-in-uk-report-growing-vocabulary-deficiency>

1. Summarise what you have learnt about Genie and her situation.
2. Having studied this case and read the article, discuss the correlation between a person's upbringing and the development of language. Is the way we learn language influenced by the way we are brought up?

(At A Level, you will be expected to do your own wider reading (from books and articles you have found yourself). Prove to me that you can do research by substantiating your discussion with references from other sources that you have found while researching this topic.)

Task 3

Corpus Linguistics is a method of analysing large quantities of data. You categorise language by breaking sentences down into individual words - each word categorised into the right word class.

For example, *I like strawberries.*

I - pronoun

Like - verb

Strawberries - noun

Perform a corpus linguistics analysis on the following extract. Do not omit any of the words in the passage. Make sure that every word is accounted for.

Having been born and brought up in South London, I grew up unaware that I spoke differently to anybody else because everybody where I lived spoke Cockney. As a child I did not know what Cockney was. I thought I spoke English.

It was not till much later on in life that I realised that the way you spoke could have class barriers. For instance, at an interview the moment you open your mouth, people seem to look at you as if to say, "Oh yes, she is lower class" because people associate Cockneys with being lower class and unintelligent.