

Distinguishing Between Dialect and Standard American English

Directions: Students should number their paper 1 to 9. For each quote, students should decide whether it is an example of dialect or standard American English. Students should also justify their choices.

1. "He laid into his work, and the way he hove acorns into that hole for about two hours and a half was one of the most exciting and astonishing spectacles I ever struck."
2. "When he spoke, the acorn dropped out of his mouth and rolled down the roof."
3. "...why you never see a blue-jay get stuck for a word. No man ever did. They just boil out of him."
4. "They examined the house all over, too."
5. "He had strength enough to crawl up on the comb and lean his back agin the chimbly."
6. "They came a-swooping down like a blue cloud."
7. "Well at last he could hardly flop his wings, he was so tuckered out."
8. "He ... walked around and around the hole and spied into it from every point of the compass."
9. "According to Jim Baker, some animals have only a limited education and use only very simple words..."

Quotes from "Jim Baker's Blue-jay Yarn" by Mark Twain