



# Canadian English

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# History

- Canadian English is the product of **five waves of immigration** and settlement over a period of **more than two centuries**. The first large wave of permanent English-speaking settlement in Canada was the **influx of Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution**.
- Canadian English has been developing features of its own since the **early 19th century**.
- The second wave from Britain and Ireland was encouraged to settle in Canada **after the War of 1812**.
- Further waves of immigration from around the globe peaked in 1910, 1960 and at the present time had a lesser influence, but they did make Canada a **multicultural country**.



Historically, Canadian English included a **class-based sociolect known as *Canadian dainty*** (careful, often in a way that suggests good manners). Treated as a marker of upper-class prestige in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

□ marked by the use of some features of **British English pronunciation**, resulting in an accent similar, but not identical, to the Mid-Atlantic accent known in the United States.

This accent faded in prominence following World War II, when it became **stigmatized as pretentious**, and is now almost never heard in modern Canadian life outside of archival recordings.

# Peculiarities

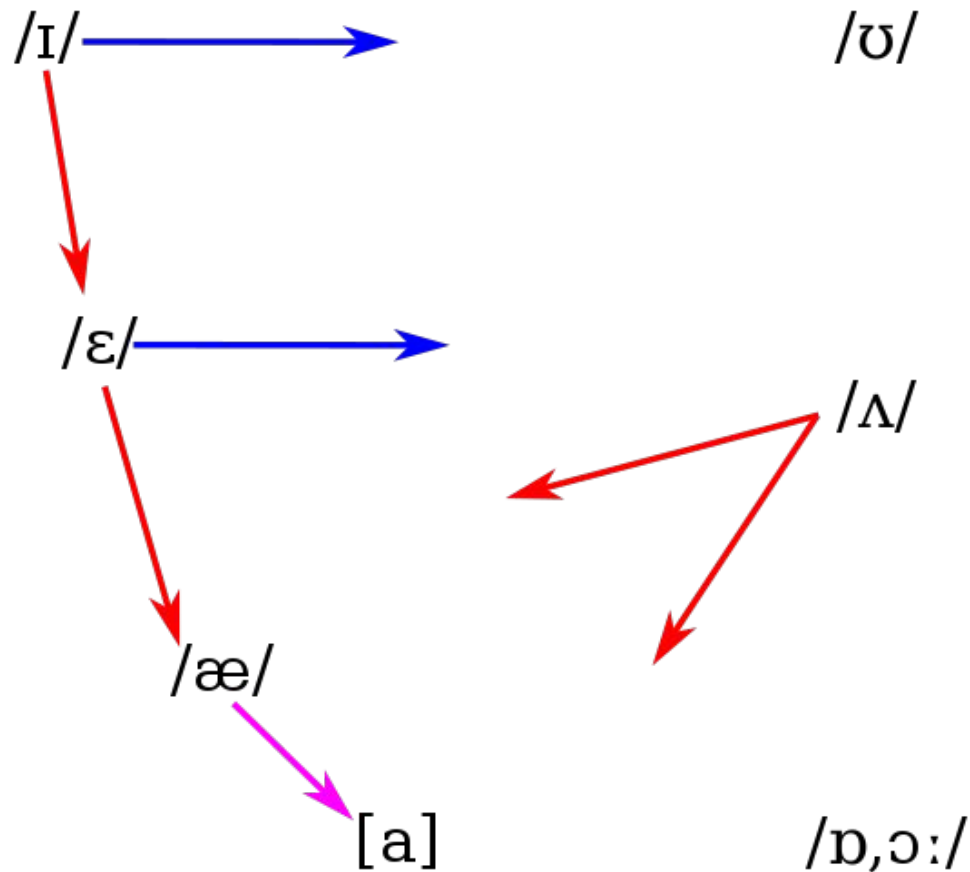
Canadian English is **similar to General American but closer to RP.**

Most Canadians use the **retroflex** (produced with the end of the tongue turned up against the hard palate) r-sound and [æ] instead of [ɑ:].

Standard Canadian English has a **mostly-uniform phonology** and much less dialectal diversity in Canada than the neighbouring American English.



# Peculiarities



**Cot-caught merger** - formally known in linguistics as the low back merger, is a sound change present in some dialects of English where speakers do not distinguish the vowel sounds in "cot" and "caught". The English phonemes involved in the cot-caught merger, the low back vowels, are typically represented in the International Phonetic Alphabet as /ɒ/ and /ɔ/, respectively.

**The Canadian Shift** - a chain shift of vowel sounds found in Canadian English, beginning among speakers in the last quarter of the 20th century and most significantly involving the lowering and backing of the front vowels. The shift involves the lowering of the tongue in the front lax vowels /æ/ (the short-a of trap), /ɛ/ (the short-e of dress), and /ɪ/ (the short-i of kit).

## Peculiarities

- Canadians speak very much like Americans.
- Canadian pronunciation is more nasal than British (Canadians speak ‘through their noses’).
- Canadians pronounce ‘r’ sound in all the words where it is written, including ‘r’ at the end of the words.
- Canadians don’t seem to like the sound ‘t’: a) ‘t’ changes to ‘d’ (better → bedder); b) ‘t’ disappears (center → cenner); ‘t’ changes to ‘ch’ (travel → chavel).
- In many words ‘a’ sounds like ‘e’ (long and loud, open mouth) (master).
- Short sound ‘o’ is often changed to sound more like a short ‘a’ (hot).
- In spoken language, ‘g’ often disappears at the end of the words (getting → gettin).

## Peculiarities

In Canadian English, many words sound the same. That's why you always have to listen to the sentence. For example:

*Mary – merry – marry* (three words sound the same)

*horse – hoarse, four – for, morning – mourning, war – wore* (pairs of words sound the same)

*wine – whine, where – wear* (pairs of words sound the same)

*cot – caught* (sound the same)

*ladder – latter* (pairs sound the same because 't' changes to 'd')

