

Join in: A different English

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If you played football in a foreign country, would you learn the language? Can you imagine if you had to understand a special accent as well? Newcastle United’s overseas players have to understand a famous English accent called Geordie.

Before you read

Before you read the article, make sure you know all the difficult words.

Fill in the gaps with the words from the box.

HOWAY THE LADS



1. regional	2. vowel	3. accent	4. pronounce
5. speak	6. phrase	7. fluent	8. English speaking

- a. Two or more words together
- b. Talk
- c. Able to speak a language well
- d. Describing a place where English is a main language
- e. Make the sound of a letter or word
- f. The way people from one area speak a language
- g. Describing something from an area
- h. Sound or letter like a, e, i o, or u

If you played football in a foreign country, would you learn the language?

Can you imagine if you had to understand a special accent as well? Newcastle United’s overseas players have to understand a famous English accent called Geordie. Geordie is the kind of English that people speak in Newcastle. In Newcastle’s regional accent, people say some vowel sounds differently: ‘house’ is pronounced ‘hoose’, and ‘town’ is ‘toon’.

Is it easy to learn Geordie?

Paolo, a Brazilian student at Newcastle University thinks so. “I found it hard at first to speak to local people, because I couldn’t understand what they were saying. I’m learning Geordie in the same way I learned English – by listening to the way people pronounce words, and by talking to people as much as I can. And my girlfriend is from Newcastle, so I’m getting better at understanding Geordie, especially now that I’m a member of the ‘Toon Army’.

What does the phrase ‘Toon Army’ mean?

Paolo explains: “It’s what we Newcastle United fans call ourselves. And when we’re watching a Newcastle United game, we all shout ‘Howay the lads!’ ‘Howay’ is a Geordie word meaning ‘Come on’, and ‘lads’ means ‘boys’. There’s even a big sign at the ground saying

‘Howay the lads’. The stadium where Newcastle play, St James’ Park, is right in the centre of the city. People shopping in the city centre know when Newcastle score because they hear the cheers from the thousands of supporters inside the stadium!

Has Newcastle United always had foreign players?

Newcastle United was one of the first major English clubs to sign overseas players back in the 1950’s, when Chilean George Robledo joined the club. Other Newcastle stars have included French winger David Ginola, and Colombian striker, Faustino Asprilla.

Now, nearly half of the squad are not from English speaking countries. They don’t need to speak fluent English, but they need to be able to be able to communicate on the pitch. And off the pitch, they need a good understanding of Geordie as well.

So is Geordie English OK?

Paolo: “When I got to Newcastle, I was surprised, because the English I heard here was so different from the English I learned at school. But now I realise that there are lots of different kinds of English all over the world. And they’re all really useful. After three years living here, I’m happy when people say I have a Geordie accent. It’s who I am.”

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## Fill in the gaps

Complete the sentences with the words from the box.

vowel --- regional --- phrase --- English speaking  
pronounce --- fluent --- accent --- speak

1. India and the USA are the world's largest \_\_\_\_\_ countries.
2. I've got an Australian \_\_\_\_\_ because I was born in Sydney.
3. What does the \_\_\_\_\_ 'Howay the lads!' mean?
4. How do you \_\_\_\_\_ your name?
5. The words 'house' and 'town' have the same \_\_\_\_\_ sound.
6. I'm now \_\_\_\_\_ in Spanish after living in Spain for 5 years.
7. I can \_\_\_\_\_ Hindi quite well, but I'm not fluent.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ newspapers in my country, like the Manchester Evening News, are more popular than the national ones.

**Answers**

**Before you read:** 1 – g, 2 – h, 3 – f, 4 – e, 5 – b, 6 – a, 7 – c, 8 – d

**Fill in the gaps:** 1 - English speaking, 2 – accent, 3 – phrase, 4 – pronounce, 5 – vowel, 6 – fluent, 7 – speak, 8 – regional