

The Help

Before you watch

As the story of *The Help* takes place in Jackson, Mississippi, Southern American English is spoken throughout. Both the pronunciation and the grammar are considerably different from “standard” American English. Don’t be surprised if you notice the following grammatical features in the dialogues:

- Use of *done* as an [auxiliary verb](#) between the subject and verb in sentences conveying the [past tense](#).

I done told you before. (= I told you before)

- Use of *done* (instead of *did*) as the past simple form of *do*, and similar uses of the [past participle](#) in place of the [past simple](#), such as *seen* replacing *saw* as past simple form of *see*.

I only done what you done told me. (= I only did what you told me)

I seen her first. (= I saw her first.)

- Use of other non-standard [preterites](#), such as *drownded* as the past tense of *drown*, *knowed* as past tense of *know*, *choosed* as the past tense of *choose*, *degradated* as the past tense of *degrade*.

I knowed you for a fool soon as I seen you. (= I knew you for a fool as soon as I saw you.)

- Use of *was* in place of *were*, or other words regularizing the past tense of *be* to *was*.

You was sittin' on that chair. (= You were sitting on that chair.)

- Use of *been* instead of *have been* in [perfect](#) constructions.

I been livin' here darn near my whole life. (= I have been living here.)

- Use of [double modals](#) (*might could*, *might should*, *might would*, *used to could*, etc.--also called "modal stacking") and sometimes even triple modals that involve *oughta* (like *might should oughta*)

I might could climb to the top. (= I might be able to climb to the top.)

I used to could do that. (= I used to be able to do that.)

- Use of *(a-)fixin' to*, or just "fixing to" in more modern Southern, to indicate immediate future action in place of *intending to*, *preparing to*, or *about to*.

He's fixin' to eat. (= He's about to eat.)

They're fixing to go for a hike. (=They're preparing to go for a hike.)

- Preservation of older English *me*, *him*, etc. as reflexive datives.

I'm fixin' to paint me a picture. (= I'm about to paint a picture.)

He's gonna catch him a big one. (= He's going to catch a big one.)

- Saying *this here* in place of *this* or *this one*, and *that there* in place of *that* or *that one*.

This here's mine and that there is yours. (= This one is mine and that one is yours.)

- Existential *It*, a feature dating from Middle English which can be explained as substituting *it* for *there* when *there* refers to no physical location, but only to the existence of something.

It's one lady that lives in town. (= There's one lady that lives in town.)

- Use of *ever* in place of *every*.

Ever'where's the same these days. (= Everywhere is the same these days.)

- Use of "over yonder" in place of "over there" or "in or at that indicated place", especially to refer to a particularly different spot, such as in "the house over yonder". Additionally, "yonder" tends to refer to a third, larger degree of distance beyond both "here" and "there", indicating that something is a longer way away.

Source: Wikipedia