

**Analyzing the Northern Cities Shift**  
Field reports due Wednesday, October 06.

What we are doing

The Northern Cities Shift working group assignment is an activity to elicit, record, analyze, and describe NCS features in the speech of members of your working group.

Why we are doing it

This activity will help develop your understanding of American English phonetics and phonology in general and the Northern Cities Shift in particular. By comparing the sounds of NCS features to the sounds of non-NCS articulation, you'll get practice listening for distinctions in pronunciation and transcribing what you hear. Additional benefits include experience in how to elicit linguistic features from research participants, application of the concepts of articulation frequency and type and token analysis, and increased understanding of how independent variables interact with language. You'll also get practice using the recording equipment and gain experience in collecting linguistic data.

How do we do it?

1. Record each member of the group reading the passages provided using the microphones and the Audacity sound editing software. It helps to practice reading through them a few times and even recording each speaker reading the same passage more than once to try to get the most natural-sounding speech.
2. Create a folder on your desktop with your group's name. Once you have all your data recorded and saved to the folder on the desktop, please copy this folder to a jump drive, or ask me, and we can save it to my drive. (Unfortunately, we can't count on our data still being on the laptop over multiple days or on getting to use the same laptop in multiple class sessions.)
3. Once you've recorded and saved everything, listen to and analyze your recordings, keeping track of what you find out (i.e. whether or not the speaker articulates an NCS pronunciation for each opportunity for occurrence). You might find that it helps to make a chart for each speaker to keep track of these data, as we will discuss in class.
4. You might first analyze the data of each member of your group simply for presence or absence of each of the features. Next, focus one or both of the features elicited in the passages and compare frequencies among group members using a type and token analysis.
5. Finally, each group will write up a **brief field report of approximately 2-3 pages, plus appendix (see #6 below), describing how the group proceeded through these steps and what you found out about the distribution of NCS features among the members of your group.** This report (one per group) will be **due on October 06.**
6. **The field report should also include an appendix, containing an individual narrative of approximately 1-2 paragraphs from each group member** to reflect on your experience and discuss what you learned through this assignment about your own speech, that of your fellow group members, and the Northern Cities Shift. You can discuss any new skills or knowledge you acquired, things that surprised you about your findings, any other realizations you might have had as a result of the assignment, or anything else that you'd like to comment on regarding the experiment and your experience participating in it. Please attach these individual narratives to your group's field report.
7. Groups will have ample class time to work on data collection and analysis. Please use your time wisely and be considerate of other groups if you finish early.