

A Dialect Informed Probe: Past Tense

Directions and Forms

These directions and forms have been slightly modified from those used by Oetting, J., B., Berry, J. R., Gregory, K.D., Rivière, A. M., & McDonald, J. (2019). Specific language impairment in AAE and SWE: Measures of tense and agreement with dialect-informed probes and strategic scoring. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 62, 3443-3461. https://doi.org/10.1044/2019_JSLHR-L-19-0089. Funding for the original probe and study came from Oetting, J. B., Hegarty, M., & McDonald, J. (2009-2015). *Tense and agreement in SAAE and SWE by dialect density and SLI status*. R01 DC009811. National Institutes of Deafness and other Communication Disorders.

Dialect informed probes are designed to maximize differences between children with and without developmental language impairments within various dialects of English. We refer to this approach as understanding the nature of **Disorders within Dialects**. The developmental language disorder we study is Specific Language Impairment (SLI), and the English dialects we have study thus far include: rural and urban varieties of African American English (AAE), rural varieties of Cajun/Creole English (CD), urban varieties of General American English (GAE), rural varieties of Gullah Geechee (GG), and rural varieties of Southern White English (SWE). The following information was considered when designing the probe.

- Across all dialects of English, children produce overt forms (*mowed, brought*) and zero forms (*cut, put, hit*) to express past tense. A young child may also produce over-regularizations (*bringed*) and double markings (*moweded*), which demonstrate the child's productive use of a regular past tense rule, and over-irregularizations (*brang*) which demonstrates the child's productive use of an irregular past tense pattern. Children may also produce overt forms for past tense that are specific to their family or community (*brung, had ate*). **The probe was designed to document a child's use of ALL of these past tense forms.**
- By the age of 5 or 6 years (and likely at a younger age), children who speak various dialects of English differ in the relative frequencies at which they produce different types of overt forms and zero forms. By 6 years, GAE-speaking children's inventory of past tense forms becomes restricted and is primarily made up of mainstream overt forms (*mowed, brought*) with a few zero forms (*cut*); whereas, the past tense form inventories of children speaking AAE, SWE, CE, GG (and perhaps other non-GAE dialects) do not become restricted and may even become more diverse with age. Within these dialects, past tense form inventories can include mainstream overt forms (*mowed, brought*), nonmainstream overt forms (i.e., over-regularizations, doubles, over-irregularizations, and alternative forms), and zero forms (*cut, mow, bring*). **The probe was designed to capture dialect differences in the frequencies of these various forms.**
- Across all dialects of English, children with SLI produce relatively fewer mainstream and nonmainstream overt forms than do their same dialect-speaking, typically developing peers. **To maximize within-dialect differences between children with and without SLI, the probe was designed to encourage children to produce mainstream and nonmainstream overt forms.** To do this, we manipulated what preceded and followed the past tense form as **linguistic context can encourage or discourage a speaker's use of an overt form in some dialects.**
 - In dialects with diverse inventories of regular past tense forms, overt forms are most likely to occur when the **verb ends in a vowel, liquid, or glide (*mow*)**. Overt forms are also most likely to occur (and the easiest to be perceived by an examiner) when the **verb is sentence final or followed by word that does not start with a consonant, such as the article *a* (*mowed a lawn*)**.

To examine differences in children's relative frequencies of overt forms, we used a strategic scoring formula:

$$\frac{(\text{sum of mainstream overt forms} + \text{nonmainstream overt forms})}{(\text{sum of mainstream overt forms} + \text{nonmainstream overt forms} + \text{zero forms})}$$

Dialect Informed Probe: Past Tense Elicitation Form

We're going to look at my computer. I'm going to tell you what the animals and people are doing. When they are done, I want you to tell me what they did. Let's try one, okay? [A] = start animation and verbal prompt. If necessary, the examiner may use additional prompts, e.g., *Try to use the word I use*. Also, an examiner may model the verb again and repeat all four items as deemed appropriate, but always use first scoreable response (see scoring directions). Examiners are encouraged to complete the training slides for scoring before administering the probe.

-----Introduce & practice-----

[A] Watch the bunny **jump**. Watch him **jump**. Now he's done. [A] Watch the boy **kick** a ball. Watch him **kick** a ball. Now he's done. [A] Watch the man **count**. Watch him **count**. Now he's done. [A] Watch the cat **answer** a phone. Watch her **answer** a phone. Now she's done. Now you tell me what they did. First he _____. Then he _____. Then he _____. Then she _____. RIGHT: *That's right*. RIGHT: Any response that is scoreable (e.g., jump, jumped, had jump, had jumped, jumpeded, hop, hopped, etc). WRONG: Any response that is not scoreable: Let me show you. First he **jumped**. Then he **kicked** a ball. Then he **counted**. Then she **answered** a phone. *Let's try it again*. [REPEAT IF WRONG].

-----Test-----

[A] Watch the boy **catch** a ball. Watch him **catch** a ball. Now he's done. [A] Watch the lady **fold** a towel. Watch her **fold** a towel. Now she's done. [A] Watch the cow **pour** a drink. Watch him **pour** a drink. Now he's done. [A] Watch the dog **roll** a ball. Watch him **roll** a ball. Now he's done. First he _____. Then she _____. Then he _____. Then he _____.

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- (1) **DO NOT PRIME FOR REGULAR OR IRREGULAR PAST TENSE other than done/did. DO NOT REPEAT CHILD'S RESPONSE. If child produces the bare verb (jump), prompt for subject or object. If child produces a verb overtly marked for past tense (jumped), accept and move on.**
- (2) If child misses a word(s) in the set, replay the animation for that word(s) and repeat that item(s).
- (3) If child uses "was" ask him/her not to use "was". Also try asking child to say "First, Then, Then, Then" or try phonemic cue for regular verbs "he r..." [BUT DON'T CUE IRREGULARS, e.g., EAT or ATE]. To SCORE a zero form, child must say subject and/or object.
- (4) Accept non-target verbs if produced within a past tense context (e.g., children often say rip for tear), as long as the verb has not been produced for a previous item.
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[A] Watch the girl **tear** a page. Watch her **tear** a page. Now she's done. [A] Watch the tiger **mow** a lawn. Watch him **mow** a lawn. Now he's done. [A] Watch the cat **read** a book. Watch her **read** a book. Now she's done. [A] Watch the girl **swallow** a pill. Watch her **swallow** a pill. Now she's done.

1. **First** she _____. 2. **Then** he _____.
3. **Then** she _____. 4. **Then** she _____.

[A] Watch the man **tow** a car. Watch him **tow** a car. Now he's done. [A] Watch the pig **eat** a snack. Watch him **eat** a snack. Now he's done. [A] Watch the girl **draw** a picture. Watch her **draw** a picture. Now she's done. [A] Watch the horse **play** a drum set. Watch him **play** a drum set. Now he's done.

5. **First** he _____. 6. **Then** he _____.
7. **Then** she _____. 8. **Then** he _____.

[A] Watch the tiger **ride** a scooter. Watch him **ride** a scooter. Now he's done. [A] Watch the girl **tie** a shoe. Watch her **tie** a shoe. Now she's done. [A] Watch the boy **throw** a ball. Watch him **throw** a ball. Now he's done. [A] Watch the bunny **dye** an egg. Watch her **dye** an egg. Now she's done.

9. **First** he _____. 10. **Then** she _____.
11. **Then** he _____. 12. **Then** she _____.

[A] Watch the dog **show** a picture. Watch him **show** a picture. Now he's done. [A] Watch the boy **blow** a bubble. Watch him **blow** a bubble. Now he's done. [A] Watch the pig **fry** an egg. Watch him **fry** an egg. Now he's done. [A] Watch the lady **write** a letter. Watch her **write** a letter. Now she's done.

13. **First** he _____. 14. **Then** he _____.
15. **Then** he _____. 16. **Then** she _____.

Dialect Informed Probe: Past Tense Scoring Directions

_____ Type of response

Score-able

MAIN	=	Mainstream overt form (<i>mowed, drank</i> ; child does not have to produce the subject or object)
ZERO	=	Zero form (<i>mow, drink</i> ; child must produce subject or object to rule out response as a label and not a verb, else code as 999)
OVR	=	Over-regularization (<i>drink/ed, drank/ed, drunk/ed</i>) only occurs with irregular verbs
DBL	=	Double (<i>mow/ed/ed</i>) only occurs with regular verbs
ALT	=	Dialect Specific Nonmainstream overt form (<i>drunk</i> ; child does not have to produce the subject or object)
HAD +	=	HAD w/ overt form (<i>had mowed, had drank</i>)
HAD OVR	=	HAD w/ over regularization (<i>had drank/ed</i>)
HAD -	=	HAD w/ zero form (<i>had mow, had drink</i>)

Not Score-able

999 = Bare verb with no subject or object, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, frozen verb (i.e. cut, put, hit), bad audio, examiner error

_____ Repeat of Prompt

If the first score-able response came after 1, 2, or 3 prompts by the examiner, type in 1x, 2x, or 3x. If the child responded without an additional prompt, leave blank. If the examiner prompted but child produced a score-able response before the prompt, code the score-able response and ignore the prompt. If the examiner interrupts the child before the child has a chance to complete his/her response, do not count as a prompt.

_____ Verb Produced

Write in a capital T if the child produces the target verb (the verb bolded on the form). Write in the verb if the child produces a scoreable past tense but not the target verb. If the child used the same verb twice in the probe, then take the next score-able response. Do this regardless of whether the examiner prompted and received the target verb later for the item. If the child never said the target or a novel verb, score as 999. If an item is scored 999 you may still count the verb used as part of a response for another scoreable item.

Following Context

Circle the type of context that followed the verb response. Options include: 1=consonant, 2=vowel, 3=semivowel, 4 = Ø if verb ended the child's response).

Y / N Circle to indicate whether or not child changed the regularity of the item. This would include when a child produced a regular verb when item was irregular or an irregular verb when the item was regular. To change regularity, the child has to produce a DIFFERENT lexical verb from a category that does not MATCH the target. A change would include producing rip [regular] for tear [irregular] or drink [irregular] for swallow [regular]. If a child produces an irregular verb in a regular way, this DOES NOT change regularity because the base of the verb remained irregular; read produced as read, red, readed, reded, or tear produced as tear, tore, teared do not change regularity because the base of the verbs read and tear remained irregular.

Y / N Circle to indicate whether or not the examiner accidentally produced an overtly marked regular or irregular past tense verb form during the administration of the item. These are not desired as they may PRIME the child's overt form production.

Y / N Circle to indicate whether or not examiner's accidentally REPEATED the child's scoreable response. These are not desired as they may PRIME the same type of response from a child on a future item.

Dialect Informed Probe: Past Tense Scoring Form

Regular

Irregular

	<p>1. _____ Type of response (tear) (if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)</p> <p>_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)</p> <p>_____ Verb (write verb form if response wasn't target)</p> <p>Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)</p> <p>Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)</p> <p>Y / N Examiner PRIMED target</p> <p>Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response</p>
<p>2. _____ Type of response (mow) (if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)</p> <p>_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)</p> <p>_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)</p> <p>Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)</p> <p>Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)</p> <p>Y / N Examiner PRIMED target</p> <p>Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response</p>	
	<p>3. _____ Type of response (read) (if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)</p> <p>_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)</p> <p>_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)</p> <p>Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)</p> <p>Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)</p> <p>Y / N Examiner PRIMED target</p> <p>Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response</p>
<p>4. _____ Type of response (swallow) (if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)</p> <p>_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)</p> <p>_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)</p> <p>Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)</p> <p>Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)</p> <p>Y / N Examiner PRIMED target</p> <p>Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response</p>	
<p>5. _____ Type of response (tow) (if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)</p> <p>_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)</p> <p>_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)</p> <p>Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)</p> <p>Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)</p> <p>Y / N Examiner PRIMED target</p> <p>Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response</p>	<p>6. _____ Type of response (eat) (if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)</p> <p>_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)</p> <p>_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)</p> <p>Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)</p> <p>Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)</p> <p>Y / N Examiner PRIMED target</p> <p>Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response</p>
	<p>7. _____ Type of response (draw) (if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)</p> <p>_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)</p> <p>_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)</p> <p>Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)</p> <p>Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)</p> <p>Y / N Examiner PRIMED target</p> <p>Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response</p>

8. _____ Type of response (play)
(if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)

_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)

_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)

Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)

Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)

Y / N Examiner PRIMED target

Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response

9. _____ Type of response (ride)
(if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)

_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)

_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)

Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)

Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category target)

Y / N Examiner PRIMED target

Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response

10. _____ Type of response (tie)
(if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)

_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)

_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)

Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)

Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)

Y / N Examiner PRIMED target

Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response

11. _____ Type of response (throw)
(if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)

_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)

_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)

Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)

Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)

Y / N Examiner PRIMED target

Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response

12. _____ Type of response (dye)
(if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)

_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)

_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)

Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)

Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)

Y / N Examiner PRIMED target (jump/ed)

Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response

13. _____ Type of response (show)
(if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)

_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)

_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)

Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)

Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target)

Y / N Examiner PRIMED target

Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response

	<p>14. _____ Type of response (blow) (if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)</p> <p>_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)</p> <p>_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)</p> <p>Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)</p> <p>Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target) Y / N Examiner PRIMED target Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response</p>																																
<p>15. _____ Type of response (fry) (if 999, circle Ø subject, wrong syntax, verb reused, no response, audio, error)</p> <p>_____ Repeat (write 1x, 2x, or 3x for repeats)</p> <p>_____ Verb (write in verb form if response wasn't target)</p> <p>Circle following context (1 = consonant, 2 = vowel, 3 = semivowel, 4 = Ø)</p> <p>Y / N Verb regularity CHANGED (verb differs from category of target) Y / N Examiner PRIMED target Y / N Examiner REPEATED child's score-able response</p>																																	
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*Responses that change regularity get counted for the verb category produced by the child; e.g., *rip* for *tear* is counted as a regular past tense form and not an irregular past tense form. Changes to regularity will affect the number of regulars and irregulars, but the total for the probe will always = 16.

Dialect Informed Probe: Strategic Scoring Formula

$$(\text{Sum of Mainstream} + \text{Nonmainstream Overt Forms}) / (\text{Sum of Mainstream} + \text{Nonmainstream Overt Forms} + \text{Zero Forms})$$