

IDIOLECT JOURNAL | CRITERIA AND EXPECTATIONS
DUE: LITERALLY ANYTIME BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2018

We each have our own internal micro language. There are, of course, group differences that we deem dialects—which are dictated largely by geography or demographics, including age, race, gender, and education—and there are many more subtle factors. For instance, a person could have lived in multiple locations at different ages. Your families all have unique terminology that’s become solidified over time. Your interests alone shape your language.

Think of it like this. An anesthesiologist who watches HBO series only will have a slightly different vocabulary than a carpenter who reads a lot of graphic novels.” Both individuals, moreover, will have a subtly different vocabulary from the pornographer down the street. Simply put, no two people have the same set of linguistic influences. No two people truly end up “speaking the same language.” So, one’s idiosyncratic personal dialect is one’s idiolect. It’s not merely vocabulary. It’s how we pronounce words. It’s how we organize our words. And mostly importantly, it’s the meaning we assign to them.

You’ll be choosing ten people in your life, and you’ll be reflecting on, discussing, and drawing conclusions about each person’s “idiolect.” You’ll basically write one page, single-spaced, for each person. Allow the following formula to guide you.

- ✓ Context in which you know the person.
- ✓ Observations you’ve made about the way in which they speak, the words they use, and how they use them. Don’t worry too much about speaking technically. I want you to use *your* voice to talk about their use of language in *your own* way.
- ✓ Try to include a statement or two that concisely articulates what makes their idiolect unique—and—if you feel so inclined—don’t hesitate to state it in a fun, poetic manner. And remember, we’re celebrating idiolects—not criticizing them in any way, shape, or form. Healthy observations about the subtle differences in the way we speak.

Here are some ideas that might drive your analyses. Don’t feel obligated to hit them all; instead, pick two or three that seem to be particularly suited.

- ✓ How *age* might contribute to their idiolect.
- ✓ How *location* might contribute to their idiolect.
- ✓ How *heritage* might contribute to their idiolect.
- ✓ How *gender* might contribute to their idiolect.
- ✓ How *occupation* might contribute to their idiolect.
- ✓ How *education* might contribute to their idiolect.
- ✓ Whether or not you feel their idiolect has at all changed by the end of the semester. If no change is observable, so be it. Talk it out a bit. If you do notice subtle changes, try your best to be super specific.

So, here’s the deal. The *Idiolect Journal* is worth 75 points out of the available 500. Each of the ten entries will be worth 7.5 points. I recommend using a single document, saving it as a PDF, and submitting it anytime before December 1st.