The problem of dialect which so troubled Caxton in the fifteenth century was still an issue when George Puttenham published his *The Arte of English Poesie* in 1589. Puttenham’s purpose is to advise poets which dialect to write in.

**Exercise**

Describe the assumptions about language which are evident in the text. Comment particularly on (a) his use of the word *corruptions*, (b) his reference to a language which is *naturall, pure and the most usuall*, (c) his references to *the inferiour sort* of men and women, (d) the attitude implied in *any speach used beyond the riuer of Trent*. 
This is not to say that dialect could not be used to brilliant effect in literature. We have already seen Chaucer’s use of the Northern dialect in *The Reeve’s Tale*, and William Shakespeare’s *Henry V* has another famous example.

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Enter Gower.

Gower. Captain Finchell, you must come presently to the Mines; the Duke of Gloucester would speak with you.

Finchell. To the Mines! Tell you the Duke, it is not so good to come to the Mines: for you see, the Mines are not according to the Disciplines of War; the Conceivabilities of it is not sufficient: for look you, th’ adversary, you may direct unto the Duke, look you, is dig him self! four yards under the Countermine: by Clepe, I think a will plow up all, if there is not better direction.

Gower. The Duke of Gloucester, to whom the Order of the Siege is given, is altogether directed by an Irishman, a very valiant Gentleman, Walsh.

Walsh. It is Captain Mankind, is it not?

Gower. I think it be.

Walsh. By Clepe he is an Afi, as in the World, I will verify as much in his Beard: he’s no more directions in the true disciplines of the Wars, look you, of the Roman disciplines, than is a Puppy-dog.

Enter Mankind, and Captain Jamey.

Gower. Here comes, and the Sons Captain, Captain Jamey, with him.

Walsh. Captain Jamey is a marvellous valorous Gentleman, that is certain, and of great expedition and knowledge in th’ancient Wars, upon my particular knowledge of his directions; by Clepe he will maintain his Argument as well as any Militarie man in the World, in the Disciplines of the primitive Wars of the Romans.

Stew. I say godday, Captain Finchell.

Walsh. Goodden to your Worship, good Captain Jamey.

Gower. How now, Captain Mankind, have you quit the Mines? have the Pioneers given o’er?

Irish. By Chrisli, Law, tis ill done; the Work ill give over, the Trompet found the Retreat. By my Hand I swear, and my father’s soul, The Work ill done; it ill give over; I would have blowed up the Town, so Chrisli save me, law, in an hour. O tis ill done, ill done.

Walsh. Captain Mankind, I bestrach you now, will you woudse me, look you, a few disputations with you, as partly touching or concerning the disciplines of the Wai, the Roman Wars, in the way of Argument, look you, and friendly communication: partly to satisfy my Opinion, and partly for the satisfaction, look you, of my Mind, as touching the direction of the Military discipline, that is the Point.

Stew. It fall be very god, god feith, god Captains bath, and I fall quit you with god flare, as I may pick occasion: that fall I marry.

Irish. It is no time to discourse, so Chrisli save me: the day is hot, and the Weather, and the Wars, and the King, and the Duke: it is no time to discourse, the Town is bestrach’d: and the Trompet calls us to the Breach, and we call, and by Chrisli do nothing; it’s flame for us all: so God save us his flame to stand still, It is flame by my hand: and there is Threats to be cut, and Works to be done, and there is nothing done, so Chrisli save law.

Stew. By the Mes, ere theis eyes of mine take themselves to loomber, sye de god serve, or Ile ligge th’ grund for it; sy, or go to death: and leppayt as valorously as I may, that fall I surely do, the treif and the long; marry, I was full fallen heard some question t’ween you tway.
Exercise

The names of the captains in the comic dialogue above, Gower, Fluellen, Mackmorrice, and Iamy, give them away as an Englishman, a Welshman, an Irishman, and a Scotsman. Discuss some of the dialect features which Shakespeare attempts to represent.

Richard Verstegan, in his *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605), discusses the existence of dialects:

This is a thing that easely may happen in so spatusious a toung as this, it beeing spoken in so many different countries and regions, when wee see that in some seueral partes of England it self, both the names of things and pronountiations of woords are somewhat different, and that among the countrye people that neuer borrow any woords out of Latin or French, and of this different pronountiation one example in steed of may shal suffise, as this: for pronouncing according as one would say at London, I would eat more cheese if I had it / the northern man saith, Ay sud eat mare cheese gin ay hadet / and the westerne man saith: Chud eat more cheese an chad it. Lo heer three different pronountiations in our own countrey in one thing, & heerof many the lyke examples might be alleaged.

More dialect features are to be found in a passage from Shakespeare’s *King Lear*:
Exercise

Edgar, the Duke of Gloucester’s son, banished by King Lear, disguises himself as a madman – a Tom of Bedlam. At one point, defending his blinded father, his speech becomes clearly dialectal. In the above passage, Gloucester does not recognise his son and cannot see him. The Steward believes Edgar to be a beggar. Which of Richard Verstegan’s examples does Edgar’s speech resemble? The scene of the play is set in Kent. The words *ice try* stand for *I sal try*. *Sal for shall* and *gate for way* are both northern forms. Is Shakespeare accurately reproducing a regional dialect? Another significant feature of the passage above is the changing use of the second person pronouns *thou/thee/thine* and *ye/you/your*. Is there any system to the appearance of these forms? Is it the same as it would be in Middle English?

George Fox (1624-1691) was the son of a Leicestershire weaver who experienced a religious conversion and became a preacher, and eventually a founder of the Society of Friends, or Quakers. At this time, failure to conform to the doctrines and practice of the Church meant civil penalties, and he was gaoled (jailed) many times. During a long stay in a Worcester gaol, he dictated his experiences to his son-in-law (and fellow prisoner). The following text is a reproduction of a letter to Justice Bennett, who first coined the term ‘Quakers’ in 1650.

*The Journal of George Fox (1650)*

...thou wast the first man in the nation that gave the people the name quaker And Called them quakers, when thou Examinesst George in thy house att Derbey (which they had never the name before) now A Justice to wrong name people, what may the brutish people doe, if such A one A Justice of peace gives names to men, but thou art Lifted upp proud and haughty and soe turnest Against the Just one given upp to misname the saints, and to make lyes for others to beeleeve.

The grammar and lack of punctuation are typical for a letter for this time, as we have seen. What is remarkable is Fox’s insistence on using *thou* to a Justice of the Peace. In 1660, he published a pamphlet on the subject. He believed that the use of thou to address one person was a mark of equality between people, whereas it had long been used to mark social superiority or inferiority.

*George Fox, A Battle-Door for Teachers* (1660)

For all you Doctors, Teachers, Schollars, and School-masters, that teach people in your Hebrew, Greek, Latine, and English Grammars, Plural and Singular; that is, *Thou* to one, and *You* to many, and when they learn it, they must not practice it: what good doth your teaching do them? for he is a Novice, and an Ideot, and a fool called by *You*, that practises it; Plural, *You* to many; and Singular, *Thou* to one.

Exercise

Fox’s is full of accounts of violent attacks on Fox and his followers for their faith and preaching. The extract on the next page is typical and makes a useful indicator of one variety of written style in the seventeenth century. Compare it to the ‘aureate’, or rhetorical, style in the extracts taken from *A Speech of Mr John Milton for the Liberty of Vnlicenc’d Printing, to the Parliament of England, printed in the Yeare 1644*, known as *Areopagitica* (after the Areopagus, the highest civil court in Ancient Athens).
The Journal of George Fox, 1652 (iv)

... then we went away to Balby about a mile off: & the rude people layde waite & stoned us doune the lane but blessed be ye Lorde wee did not receive much hurte: & then ye next first day (= Fox’s term for Sunday) I went to Tickill & there ye friends (= members of the Society of Friends) of y’ side gathered togetheer & there was a meetinge (= Quaker term for a religious service).

And I went out of ye meetinge to ye steeplehouse & ye preist & most of ye heads of ye parish was gott uppe Into ye chancell & soe I went uppe to y” & when I began to speake they fell upon mee & ye Clarke uppe with his bible as I was speakinge & hitt mee in ye face y’ my face gusht out with bloode y’ I bleade exceedingly in ye steeplehouse & soe ye people cryed letts have him out of ye Church as they caled it: & when they had mee out they exceedingly beate mee & threw me doune & threw mee over a hedge: & after dragged mee through a house Into ye street stoneinge & beatinge mee: & they gott my hatt from mee which I never gott againe.

Soo when I was gott upon my leggs I declared to y” ye worde of life & showed to y” ye fruietes of there teachers & howe they dishonored Christianity.

And soo after a while I gott Into ye meetinge againe amongst freinds & ye preist & people comeinge by ye house I went forth with freinds Into ye Yarde & there I spoke to ye preist & people: & the preist scoffed at us & caled us Quakers: but ye Lords power was soo over y” all: & ye worde of life was declared in soo much power & dreead to y” y’ ye preist fell a tremblinge himselfe y’ one saide unto him looke howe ye preist trembles & shakes hee is turned a Quaker alsoe.

John Milton’s *Areopagitica* (i)

be assured, Lords and Commons, there can no greater testimony appear, then when your prudent spirit acknowledges and obeyes the voice of reason from what quarter ever it be heard speaking; and renders ye as willing to repeal any Act of your own setting forth, as any Act by forth by your Predecessors.

If ye be thus resolv’d, as it were injury to thinke ye were not, I know not what should withhold me from professing ye with a fit instance wherein to shew both the love of truth which ye eminently profess, and that uprightness of your judgement which is not wont to be partial to your selves; by judging over again the Order which ye have ordain’d to regulate Printing. That no Book, pamphlet, or paper shall be henceforth printed, unless the same be first approved and licensed by such, or at least one of such as shall be thereto appointed.

I deny not, but that it is of greastest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how Bookes demene themselves, as well as men; and theretofore to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors: For Bookes are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be active as that soule was whose progeny they are; nay they do preserve as in a viole the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragons teeth and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand, if the seint of sinne be us’d as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee who destroys a good Book, killres reason it self, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man liveth a burden to the Earth; but a good Book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalned and treasur’d up on purpose to a life beyond life.
For as in a body, when the blood is free, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rationall faculties, and those in the acute, and perfect operations of wit and futtlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is, so when the cheerfulnesse of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has, not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to beflow upon the solideft and sublimest points of controver-fie, and new invention, it betok'ns us not degenerated, not drooping to a fatall decay, but calling of the old and wrinkled skin of corruption to outlive these pangs and wax young again, entring the glorious waies of Truth and prosperus vertue deftin'd to become great honourable in these latter ages. Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation routung her selfe like a strong man after sleep, and flaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an Eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzl'd eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unleasing her long abused fight at the fountain it self of heav'nly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amaz'd at what he means, and in their envious gabble would prophocticat a year of fects and fchims.

Literary style in the late seventeenth century became increasingly less rhetorical, as an interest in careful observation was encouraged by the growth of the natural sciences. In 1662, the Royal Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge, usually called just The Royal Society, was founded under the patronage of Charles II, who had been restored to the throne in 1660. It's founder was John Evelyn, a sample of whose diary is given below. In the second passage, Thomas Sprat, Secretary of the Royal Society in 1667, discusses the prose style being developed for scientific papers.

John Evelyn's diary for 2 and 3 June 1658

2 An extraordinary storme of haile & raine, cold season as winter, wind northerly neere 6 moneths. 3 large Whale taken, twixt my Land butting on ye Thames & Greenwich, which drew an infinite Concourse to see it, by water, horse, Coach on foote from Lon'd, & all parts: It appeared first below Greenwich at low-water, for at high water, it would have destroyed all ye boates: but lying now in shallow water, encompassed wth boates, after a long Conflict it was killed with the harping yrons, & struck in ye head, out of which spouted blood and water, by two tunnells like Smoake from a chimny: & after an horrid grone it ran quite on shore & died: The length was 58 foote: 16 in height, black skin'd like Coach-leather, very small eyes, great taile, small finns & but 2: a piked (= pointed) snout, & a mouth so wide & divers men might have stood upright in it: No teeth at all, but scujed the slime only as thro a grate made of y' bone wth we call Whale bone: The throate yet so narrow, as woud
downwards, from ye upper jaw, & was hairy towards the Ends, & bottome withinside: all of its prodigious, but in nothing more wonderfull then that an Animal of so greate a bulk, should be nourished onely by slime, thrû those grates:

a) The bones making ye grate.
b) The Tongue, c. ye finn. d ye Eye:
e) one of ye bones making the grate (a) f ye Tunnells thrû which shutting ye mouth, the water is forced upward, at least 30 foote, like a black thick mist. &c:

Thomas Sprat’s *The History of The Royal Society*, 1667

As in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the last three hundred years have witnessed an explosion of new words and a heavy adoption of loanwords. A list of examples from different languages and centuries is given below:
1. Loanwords acquired after 1500 and still used

evaluate (19c), proliferate (19c), statistics (18c)

2. Ways in which new words were formed

Compounding: blackboard (19c), shortfall (20c), large-scale (19c), spellbound (18c)
Prefixation: disconnect (18c), subway (19c), transatlantic (18c)
Suffixation: byphenate (19c)
Conversion:
   Verbs from nouns: 18c – badger, guarantee, handcuff, queue, shepherd; 19c – blacklist, buttonhole, loot, schedule, signal, wolf; 20c – audition, freewheel, package, process, service
   Verbs from adjectives: 18c – negative; 19c – best, tidy
   Nouns from verbs: 18c – bid, finish, ride; 19c – muddle, shampoo, spin
Back-formation:
   Verbs from agent-nouns: 18c – swindle, edit; 19c – burgie, sculpt
   Verbs from object-nouns: 18c – resurrect; 19c – donate; 20c – televise
   Verbs from compound nouns or adjectives: 18c – waterlog; 19c – stage-manage; 20c – brainwash, sleepwalk
Shortening: canter (18c, from Canterbury pace), gin (18c from geneva < Dutch genever ‘spirit flavoured with juniper’; cf. French genièvre ‘juniper’), fan (19c, from fanatic), van (19c, from caravan), phone (20c, from telephone)
Blending: chortle (19c), guestimate (20c), motel (20c), smog (20c)
Phonetic symbolism: smash (18c), snigger (18c), squawk (19c)

3. New vocabulary formed from classical elements

carcinogenic (20c), chromosome (20c), haemoglobin (19c), isotope (20c)

4. Additions to the vocabulary in the present century

let-down (1933), liaise (1902), limousine (1902)
leptocaull ‘tree having a thin primary stem and branches’ (1949), lepotosomic ‘having a physique characterised by leanness and tallnes’ (1936), lichenometry ‘method of dating surfaces by the size of the lichens growing on them’ (1957), linomycin (an antibiotic) (1963)

Loanwords

Latin

18th century: adjuducate, affiliate, amorphous, antiseptic, aroma, habitat, inertia, minutiae, moribund, nucleus, prospectus, ultimatum.
19th century: agoraphobia, amnesia, amoeba, amorphous, antiseptic, anaesthesia, aquarium, bacterium, bestiary bovine, candelabrum, chiasmus, moratorium, neuralgia, orchid, referendum, sanatorium.

Greek
18th century: aphrodisiac, bathos.

19th century: asteroid, demotic, pylon.

Formations from Latin and Greek elements
18th century: heliography (‘description of the sun’)

19th century: agnostic, epistemology, gramophone, isobar, megalomania, metronome, monograph, neurasthenia, neuropathology, photograph, phrenology, psychopath, seismometer, tachometer, taxidermist, telepathy.

20th century: econometrics, ergonomics, glottochronology, television, thermodynamics.

French
18th century: amateur, assonance, aubergine, avalanche, banal, barque, bassoon, bonhomie, boudoir, brochure, carafe, caramel, carbon, casserole, début, échelon, élite, etiquette, guillotine, malaise, mentor, nuance, ostensible, outré, predilection, ration, recherché, reconnaissance, terrain.

19th century: acrobate, altruism, ambience, ambulance, analogue, artesian, attaché, aviation, caffeine, calorie, chauvinism, cliché, débâcle, entrepreneur, enjVue, escarpement, fincé(e), flamboyant, gourmet, grandiose, mauve, mayonnaise, mirage, monocle, mousse, picaresque, rapprochement, renaissance, silhouette, trousseau.

20th century: chauffeur, collage, discothèque, garage.

Italian
18th century: al fresco, aria, arpeggio, ballerina, bravura, cantata, casino, concerto, dilletante, impresario, libretto, obbligato, oratorio, pianoforte, portfolio, soprano, tempo, viola.

19th century: fiasco, graffiti, inferno, intermezzo, mafia, replica, spaghetti, studio, vendetta

20th century: pasta, pizza, tagliatelle

Spanish
18th century: bolero, fandango, flotilla, stevedore

19th century: bonanza, canyon, guerilla, rodeo, stampede
20th century: cafeteria, tango

*Dutch or Low German*
roster (18c), trek (19c, Afrikaans), apartheid (20c, Afrikaans)

*High German*
cobalt (18c), quartz (18c), waltz (18c), accordion (19c), marzipan (19c), paraffin (19c), poodle (19c), seminar (19c), angst (20c), blitzkrieg (20c), ersatz (20c), strafe (20c)

*Scottish Gaelic*
pibroch (18c), whisky (18c)

*Indian languages*
shampoo (18c), chutney (19c), dinghy (19c)

*Japanese*
kimono (19c), tycoon (19c)

*Russian*
samovar (19c), vodka (19c)