



Standard American English and Writing Centers

Increasing Writing Beyond the Standard



Acknowledge that writing is exclusive. Racial minorities in the United States are forced to adhere to grammatical and writing standards set by **Standard American English (SAE)**, a **system created from their erasure**.

By Tafarah Cherilus

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Modern writing and formal language are shaped through the concept of **Standard American English (SAE)**.



SAE through definition: Prestigious form of language used for all functions of grammar and formal writing.

But who has the power to dictate a standard language?



SAE through context (“White English”):

“Those who **benefit** the most from this **standard** are those who are **historically privileged** by systemic structures, including colonialism, capitalism, and racism, especially in educational systems.” (Vue, Wongwai)



Minoritized voices, especially those from racial minorities (People of Color) are **regressed** and **silenced** through:

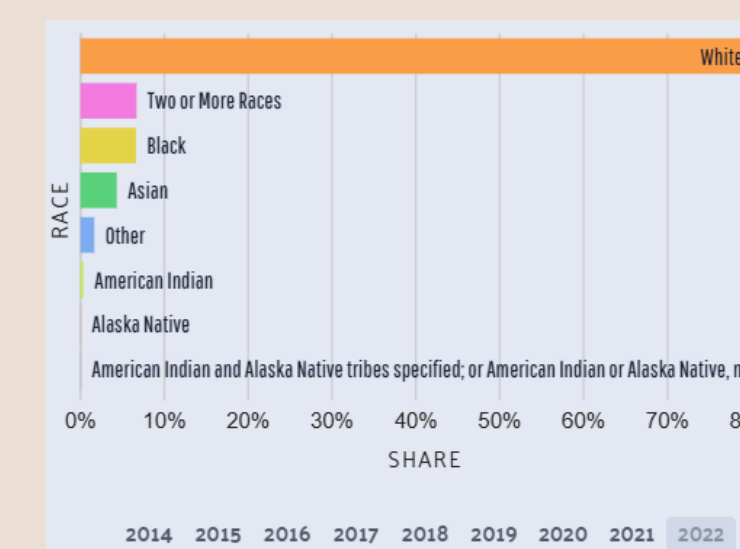
- punishment
- shame
- lack of opportunity

English aside from SAE are **“improper”** and **“unintellectual.”**
SAE becomes the **“only”** form of effective communication.
“Teaching students of color to go against SAE is **sabotage.**” (Smith)

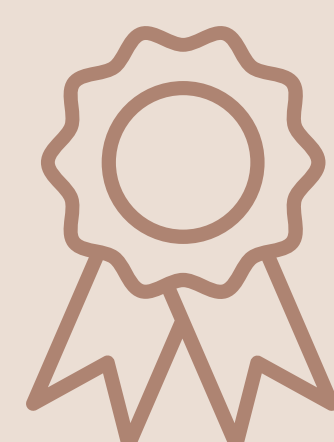
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Lack of writers of color due to **writing insecurity**—trying to abide by a standard that does not recognize or acknowledge them.

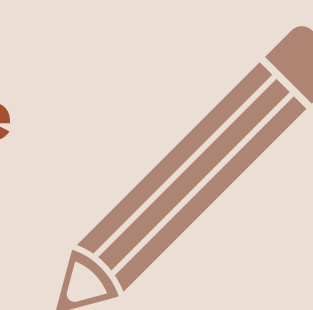
So, **80.3%** of writers are **white** (the Census Bureau vis datausa 2022)



However, it's possible to break away from SAE



Creative Nonfiction: Damon Young
Feature Stories/ Journalism: Mitchell S. Jackson
Professional Writing: Branding & Advertising



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Writing Centers have a role in cultivating future writers. How can you **amplify** minority voices and create **security** to promise a **future with more writers of color**?

1. **Acknowledge** prejudices in the Writing Center, institutions, and in writing. Do **you** hold any prejudices?
2. **Increase diversity** in Writing Centers. Learn from one another and become educated. Read and share writing that **differs** SAE.
3. **Validate** writers of color. It all starts with a simple nudge of encouragement.

We need more diverse writing to gain insight into more **diverse perspectives, voices, and stories.**

Writing deviating from SAE should not be considered **other** ways to write, but instead **another** form of writing that falls under the bigger umbrella of the **English** language we all know.

Writing, like time, is **fluid** and **changing**. As writing progresses, we must ensure these **progressive changes include more diverse voices**. In a society where context and understanding exists through SAE, we can learn to understand diverse English languages.