English in the Caribbean
English settlement in North America began in the Caribbean

- Pre-Columbian Period
- The Spanish Period
- British Involvement
Columbus' voyages to the Caribbean
Columbus' voyages to the Caribbean
Replica of the Santa Maria

Columbus takes possession of land in the Caribbean
Gerhard Mercator: Map of North America (1569)
The Americas (1626) by English cartographer John Speed
The Caribbean Sea with its islands
The Anglophone Caribbean

The Caribbean

(names of main anglophone pidgins are shown in red)

Gullah
Bahamas
Samaná Peninsula (African American diaspora)
British Virgin Islands
St. Kitts & Nevis
Montserrat
Guadeloupe
Dominica
Martinique
St. Lucia
St. Vincent
Barbados
Trinidad and Tobago
anglophone settlement after mid 17th century
first English settlers arrive in 1620s
The original population of the Caribbean were of native American stock. The two main groups were the Arawak and the Carib. The former came from the north and occupied large parts of the Caribbean until they were subjugated by the Caribs who occupied southern portions of this area. The name Carib is the root in Caribbean. The label come from Spanish *canibal* because they thought that this native people practised cannibalism. Both the Carib and the Arawak were decimated by the Europeans.
European involvement with the Caribbean began in 1492 when Christopher Columbus landed on the island of Hispaniola on his quest for a shorter route to India. Hence the inaccurate but popular term *West Indies* for the Caribbean.
Slaves were not introduced until the mid 17th century after the British had tried the system of indentured labour whereby people from the British Isles were transported to the Caribbean and bound to work for a fixed period, typically 5 or 8 years.
Trade triangle during the period of slavery

Caribbean goods produced by slaves
1) Tobacco
2) Cane Sugar
3) Cotton (later southern USA)
Groups of anglophone pidgins and creoles
Slave ship
Slave auction (southern USA)
Invoice for sale of slaves

An invoice of ten negroes, sent this day to John B. Williamson by Geo. Freeman, as follows:

- Dorrit, Betty Market: 100.00
- Nancy Judice: 315.00
- Harry J. Helen Miller: 1200.00
- Mary Kootz: 600.00
- Betty Ott: 660.00
- Isaac J. Tommy Branch: 492.00
- Lucinda Longfellow: 487.50
- George Smith: 519.00

Amount of my traveling expenses for bringing 5234.50

of which are not included in the above list: 37.50

Other expenses: Transporting 1000$ debt: 31.00

Barrage hire: 6.00

$5357.10

I have this day delivered the above named negroes, costing, including my expenses and their expenses from thousands three hundred and fifty dollars, this day 26th, 1835:

John W. Pettman

I did intend to leave many children, but she made such a demand that I had to let her take it where

if get fifty dollars or do you want add forty dollars to the above.
Slave market (Caribbean)
Slave quarters (southern USA)
Slaves in the fields, 1 (southern USA)
Slaves in the fields, 2 (southern USA)
TO BE SOLD & LET
BY PUBLIC AUCTION,
On MONDAY the 18th of MAY, 1829,
UNTER THE TREES.
FOR SALE,
THE THREE FOLLOWING
SLAVES,
VIZ.
HANNIBAL, about 25 Years old, an excellent House Servant, of Good Character.
WILLIAM, about 25 Years old, a Labourer.
NANCY, an excellent House Servant and Nurse.
The Men belonging to "LAMON'S" Estate, and the Woman to Mrs. BRIDG.

TO BE LET,
On the usual conditions of the Upper finding them in Food, Clothing and Medical
The following
MALE and FEMALE
SLAVES,
VIZ.
RICHARD WATKINS, about 18 Years old, a good House Servant.
WILLIAM BAGLEY, about 15 Years old, a Labourer.
JOHN COX, about 14 Years old, a Labourer.
JACK ANTOINE, about 12 Years old, a Labourer.
PETIT, an Excellent Patrician.
DADDY, about 17 Years old, a good House Servant.
LUCY, a Young Woman of good Character, used in House Work and the Nursery.
ELIZA, an Excellent Washwoman.
CLARA, an Excellent Woman.
FANNY, about 15 Years old, House Servant.
SARAH, about 14 Years old, House Servant.

Also for Sale, at Eleven o’Clock,

AT ONE o’Clock, THAT CELEBRATED ENGLISH HORSE,
BLUCHER,
Slave clashes (mid west USA)
In the 18th and early 19th century slaves escaped from the coastal plantations and fled to the mountainous interior in various parts of the Caribbean and northern South America (for instance, in former Dutch Guyana, now Suriname, and in Jamaica). These people are called *maroons* and they frequently kept forms of creole spoken by their ancestors on the plantations. Saramaccan in Suriname is an example.
The legacy of the colonial period can be seen on many levels of Caribbean society, for instance, in the many residences built by the Europeans, as with this one in Jamaica.
In the southern United States and on Cuba, the cultivation of tobacco is important. On the smaller Caribbean islands, sugar cane replaced tobacco as the main crop in the 17th century.
On the various Caribbean islands, slaves were put to work in the fields where sugar cane was grown.
Nowadays, many people in the Caribbean are of African origin. These people speak English, French, Spanish, Portuguese or Dutch (the languages of the former colonial powers). In many cases there are pidginised or indeed creolised forms of these European languages.
After the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1834, many people from India were transported to other areas to overcome labour shortages. This happened in South Africa, on the Fiji Islands and in the Caribbean, e.g. on Trinidad and Tobago. This accounts for the South Asians in the present-day Caribbean.
The transportation of South Asians to the Caribbean brought Islam to the region. This is clearly in evidence on many of the islands, e.g. by this mosque in Trinidad.
The Caribbean is nowadays an important destination for tourists. Because of the proximity to the equator, air and water temperatures are constant throughout the year.
Tropical fruits grow well in the warm climate found throughout the Caribbean. Goods like bananas and various tropical fruit provide welcome income to small islands states, both for export and local consumption.
The Caribbean islands have their own forms of cuisine. Here a woman is seen preparing *cassava*, made with roots from the shrub of the same name.
There is no heavy industry in the Caribbean (though there is oil refining on Trinidad) and people rely on local production as seen here where women are working a kiln to produce household pottery.
Caribbean culture includes local forms of music. Because people could not afford musical instruments formerly they had to improvise. One tradition which stems from this is the use of steel drums in their music.
Cities of the Caribbean
Belize city
Bridgetown, capital of Barbados
Les Anses-d’Arlets on Martinique
St George's, capital of Grenada
Kingston, capital of Jamaica
Kingston, capital of St Vincent
Natural surroundings in the Caribbean
The interior of Jamaica
Little Tobago (Trinidad and Tobago)
Miskito Coast (eastern Nicaragua)
Rainforest
Farmland on St Lucia
Reef Island
Riverboats in Suriname
The Baths (Virgin Gorda, Virgin Islands)
Anglophone locations in the Caribbean

Greater Antilles
- Jamaica
- Dominican Republic

Lesser Antilles
- Cayman Islands
- Barbados
- Trinidad and Tobago

The Leeward Islands
- Anguilla
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Montserrat
- St Kitts and Nevis
- Virgin Islands (British)

The Windward Islands
- Dominica
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Grenada

Other Islands
- Bermuda
- The Bahamas
- Turks and Caicos Islands

The Caribbean Rim
- Southern Coast of the US
- Belize
- Miskito Coast (Nicaragua)
- Suriname
- Guyana
Anglophone locations in the Caribbean

(1) Greater Antilles
Jamaica
Jamaica
English in Jamaica

The English language in Jamaica has a history which reaches back to the mid 17th century when the English wrenched the island from the Spanish.

A creole developed on the plantations of Jamaica and spread to the entire country where it is still used as a vernacular medium.

There are also other forms which are closer to more standard varieties of English. Linguists speak of a basilect (the creole), the mesolect (a middle form) and the acrolect (the form closest to standard English).
Dominican Republic (Samaná Peninsula)

Samaná Peninsula, the destination of freed African Americans in the early 19th century.
English on the Samaná Peninsula

The island of Hispaniola is divided into two parts, the western one is Haiti, a country where a French creole is spoken. The eastern part is the Dominican Republic where Spanish is spoken.

A number of African Americans settled on the tip of the Samaná Peninsula in the north-east of the country during the 19th century and many of these continued to speak their variety of English. Because it is cut off from the North American mainland, Samaná African American English shows archaic features not found in varieties on the US mainland.

There are a couple of other African American diaspora communities as indicated on the following map.
African American diaspora locations

Diaspora African American communities (Nova Scotia and Samaná). Repatriated African Americans (Liberia)
Anglophone locations in the Caribbean

(2) Lesser Antilles
Cayman Islands
Barbados
The settlement of Barbados

The English took control of the small island of Barbados in the south-east of the Caribbean in 1627. The first decades of their presence there are term the *homestead phase* because there only whites from the British Isles went to the island.

Working in the fields in the tropical climate proved difficult for the British and Irish indentured labourers (people bound to work for some years to defray the cost of passage). The British then decided to capture natives in West Africa and transport them to the Caribbean and use them as slave labour on the plantations. This happened in the later 17th century and afterwards.
English on Barbados

English on Barbados developed out of transported varieties from the British Isles and later came under the influence of varieties which were created by Africans who were kept on the island as slaves.

Because of the small size of the island many people left and moved to other locations in the Caribbean carrying their forms of English with them. Some went to larger islands like Trinidad and Jamaica, some up the south-east coast of America, some indeed to the area of the Guyanas on the northern coast of South America.

These movements have meant that Barbadian English has had a significant influence on the formation of other varieties of English in the Caribbean region.
Trinidad and Tobago
Anglophone locations in the Caribbean

(2a) The Leeward Islands
Anguilla
Antigua and Barbuda
Montserrat
Virgin Islands (British)
Anglophone locations in the Caribbean

(2b) The Windward Islands
St Lucia
St Vincent and the Grenadines
Grenada
Anglophone locations in the Caribbean

Other minor islands / island groups
Bermuda
The Bahamas
Turks and Caicos Islands
The Caribbean Rim

- Southern Coast of the US
- Western coast of Central America
  - Belize
  - Miskito Coast (Nicaragua)
- Northern coast of South America
  - Suriname
  - Guyana
Belize
Nicaragua
Miskito Coast, a stretch of the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua and Honduras, where an English-derived creole is spoken. Stemming from early Anglophone settlements in the Caribbean it has been influenced by Spanish and Native American languages of the region.
In 1631 a group of British Puritans settled on the island of Providence some 250 km off the east coast of present-day Nicaragua. In 1641 the Spanish destroyed the colony.

Together with San Andrés the island now forms a department of Colombia and is called Provindencia. On both islands a creole form of English is still spoken.
The former Guyanas on the northern coast of South America
Guyana
Suriname
African American Vernacular English
Distribution of African Americans today
Southern American English
Southern United States (political)
African American Vernacular English

The term *African American Vernacular English* (formerly referred to as ‘Black English’) refers to the varieties of English spoken by those people in the United States who stem from the original African population transported there. These speakers are currently distributed geographically across the entire country. However, the African Americans were originally settled in the south (from Texas in the West to the Carolinas in the East) where they were kept as slaves to provide a labour force for the plantations of the whites in this region.

With the industrialisation of the United States in the last century a migration from south to north began leading to considerable numbers of African Americans settling in industrial centres, particularly of the north and north east. These latter speakers are severed from the historical core area of African American Vernacular English and have frequently undergone developments not shared with the original speakers in the south. The remarks below hold for the most undiluted form of African American Vernacular English. There are three basic views on the origin of African American Vernacular English.
Theories of origin

1) *Baby talk theory* Now completely out-dated; African American Vernacular English is said to have developed from a simplified form of English used in communication with slaves, supposedly akin to language in early childhood.

2) *Creole hypothesis* African American Vernacular English is viewed here as having developed out of the necessity of slaves from different linguistic backgrounds on the plantations of the south to have a form of basic communication, i.e. an English-based pidgin, later a creole with native speakers).

3) *Dialect origin view* Also known as the segregation hypothesis. This sees African American Vernacular English as having developed from dialects of English cut off from others hence independent features arose not shared by the input forms.
• **Phonological simplification** The sounds of the English which formed the base for African American Vernacular English have been reduced, particularly the phonotactics have been affected with consonant clusters being simplified (*desk* > *dess*; *master* > *massa*, with *r*-dropping in syllable-final position).

• **Development of a system of aspect** Verbs have two basic modes: tense and aspect. The former is quite developed in Western European languages: the time axis for a verbal action is always explicitly expressed. But there is another equally important axis for verbs: that of aspect. The latter refers to the manner in which an action is carried out or refers to the result of an action or its relation to the present point in time. Typical aspectual distinctions are *habitual* : *non-habitual*, *durative* : *non-durative*, *perfective* : *non-perfective*. The first distinction is present in Standard English (compare the progressive forms of verbs). The second is expressed in African American Vernacular English by an unstressed form of the verb *do*: *He does be in his office in the morning*, i.e. He is in his office every morning for a certain length of time. The third distinction concerns the action of a verb is stated as being completed or not. Indeed African American Vernacular English frequently distinguishes between an Immediate Perfective (*I done go* = *I have gone*) and a Remote Perfective aspect (*I been go* = *I had gone*).
Similar aspectual distinctions are to be found in other varieties of English such as Irish English, however, the relation with African American Vernacular English is not established.

3) **Movement towards an analytic structural type** African American Vernacular English betrays its pidgin origin in a number of ways. One of these is the tendency to develop grammar to the analytic ideal of one-word-one-morpheme. This principle holds for practically all pidgins (at least for the small number of combinations of basic lexeme + inflectional ending).

4) **Elimination of redundancy** The clearest example of this is to be found with verbs. In the present tense the -s ending of the third person singular is eliminated, e.g. *he likes > he like*. Analogy may cause the -s to be generalised to the entire tense leading to forms like *I likes*, *we likes*. With the past tense of regular verbs the -ed ending is frequently deleted; the context ensures that no ambiguity arises (no confusion with present tense forms without any ending).
Another example of the elimination of redundancy is the deletion of the copula (cf. sentences like *He a nice girl* in which the lack of distinction between ‘he’ and ‘she’ is also to be seen). Note that copula deletion is common in other languages as well (in Russian for example).

5) **Multiple negation** A feature both of older English and many dialects including African American Vernacular English. It refers to the use of two (or more) negative particles to intensify a negation, e.g. *He don’t know nothing*. This feature is also called *negative concord* as there is a requirement that the tensed verb and the quantifier both agree, i.e. both occur in the negative form in a negated sentence.
Vocabulary

1) Some vocabulary items are clearly of West African origin, such as *buckra* `white man´, *tote* to carry. Even more obvious are terms referring to food also found in African, e.g. *goober* `peanut´, *yam* `sweet potato´.

2) Many semantic extensions of existing English words are also to be found such as *homies* for close friends (often those with whom one shared a spell in prison), *bloods* for other blacks, *whities* for white people, *rednecks* for poor southern whites. Some of these terms appear to have some sound symbolism such as *honkey* for a white person, though this is difficult to quantify.
Varieties of AAVE

1) There are considerable register differences within present-day AAVE. Slang terms are fairly general, such as bad for `good, admirable´, cool for `good, neat´, hip `knowledgeable´, dude `male´ (often disparaging). Some of these terms have diffused into general American English and from there to other languages, e.g. the word cool.

2) In-group language is characteristic of black street gangs in the major cities of the United States (such as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago). Here as elsewhere in AAVE the pragmatics of discourse is quite different from that of white Americans. Verbal insulting can take on ritual forms and a volatile, rhythmic eloquence is known as rappin´.
Gullah is spoken mainly on the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia in the South-East of the United States.
Location of Sea Islands

[Map showing the location of Sea Islands along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, with major cities and islands labeled.]
African American Diaspora
Samaná Peninsula on Isla Hispaniola

Samaná Peninsula, the destination of freed African Americans in the early 19th century.

Dominican Republic (with Haiti to the west the two states on the island of Hispaniola)
Liberia in west Africa
Recommended literature, 1

Recommended literature, 2