

Idiolect

An idiolect is a feature of language that is characteristic of one particular speaker. An example of an idiolect is Homer Simpson on *The Simpsons* always saying, “Doh!” Many a family has a word or phrase that is only used in that family and would not make sense in a wider language community. An idiolect doesn’t have to be an unfamiliar or made up word. It could just be a word that a person chooses to use consistently rather than using another suitable word. For example, when a person habitually uses the word “restroom” rather than the more common “bathroom,” that is an idiolect.

DIRECTIONS: Underline the idiolect in each piece of dialogue.

1. “Do you want to go to the movies with me?”

“Do I ever!”

2. “Did the garbage get picked up today?”

“No. It’s a holiday. Bugger.”

3. “Will you help me with my project?”

“Absolutely.”

4. “You should have been there. What a riot!”

5. “Ug! I can’t believe I forgot your birthday.”

