1	pit	27	pull
2	pet	28	pool
3	pat	29	pole
4	put	30	Paul
5	putt	31	doll
6	pot	32	cot
7	bee	33	caught
8	bay	34	fir
9	buy	35	fern
10	boy	36	fur
11	boot	37	fair
12	boat	38	nose
13	bout	39	knows
14	beer	40	plate
15	bear	41	weight
16	bird	42	poor
17	bard	43	pour
18	board	44	pore
19	city	45	paw
20	seedy	46	tide
21	hat	47	tied
22	dance	48	pause
23	daft	49	paws
24	half	50	meet
25	father	51	meat
26	farther	52	mate

One day last year, when I was driving back to work after I'd had lunch, I had an amazing and unforgettable experience. It must have been two o'clock — or perhaps a quarter of an hour later, a quarter past two. It was an incredible thing, really: I was sitting there at the steering wheel of my new car, waiting for the lights to change, when all of a sudden the car started to shake this way and that, rocking from side to side, throwing me backwards and forwards, up and down. I felt as if I was riding a bucking horse. Worse than that, some mysterious spirit or hostile force seemed to be venting its vast fury upon the earth. And the noise! — there was a kind of deep groaning and horrible awesome grinding which seemed to fill the air. And then, a short while after, the whole paroxysm had stopped, just as suddenly. Everything was calm and smooth again, quiet and peaceful once more. I put my foot down, just a gentle pressure on the accelerator (or the gas pedal, as it's known in America), and drove off. Everything was utterly normal once more.

So then — was this some very local and momentary earth tremor which had struck us? Or, I ask myself, was it a supernatural visitation, some fiery storm of diabolical wrath? Or was it, rather, merely that I'd drunk a double vodka or two during my lunch?

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FIELD TASK

Step 1: Record your speakers

     1) reading the word list

     2) reading the test passage

     3) being interviewed by you

     4) talking on their own i.e. telling a story

Step 2: Transcribe the recordings *orthographically* (i.e. NOT phonetically). You can download a free transcribing programme called 'Express scribe', which makes this task much easier. It is also useful to learn to use this programme.

Step 3: Analyse the recordings in terms of what you know about the speaker (non-linguistic variables: sex, age, regional origins, social class and educational and ethnic background) and what you know about the features of accents in the place the person comes from.

Focus on those sounds that would be likely to distinguish the speaker from RP (or General American) if s/he had a regional accent and then listen to their reading of the word list paying particular attention to the words in which these sounds occur. Because the word list is a very strange context for most speakers and one in which they will be very conscious of their realizations of the sounds, you may find that there are hardly any instances of the accent feature that would mark them as Londoners, Northerners etc. Nevertheless, when they read the passage you may find some examples and there may be even more in the interview and storytelling contexts. Your speaker might be consistent or might be very inconsistent across the four contexts.

Your task is to try and explain why this might be on the basis of the non-linguistic variables (sex, age, social class, educational background, ethnic origin).