Standards of Pronunciation
- the extreme sensitivity of the British to variations in the pronunciation of E unparalleled in any other country
- a standard pronunciation exists, though never explicitly imposed by any official body
- written language: the spelling of E fixed in 18th c., the conventions of grammatical forms, constructions and vocabulary accepted without controversy
- spoken language: a great diversity in the spoken realisations of E used in different parts of the country and by different sections of the community

The History of the Standard
- poor communications between regions, different external influence (foreign invasion), etc. => a natural development of different varieties in different parts of the country
- since 16th c.: an increasing social prestige of the south-east England pronunciation for reasons of politics, commerce and the presence of the Court
- 19th c.: the establishment of the London region pronunciation as the speech of the ruling class due to the conformist influence of public schools
- pronunciation = a marker of position in society

Received Pronunciation
- RP = an implicitly accepted social standard of pronunciation, the term suggests its being a result of social judgement rather than of any official decision
- historically: regionally based = the educated speech of the south-east of England
- presently: the original concept of the RP speaker considerably diluted = ‘General British’ (GB) rather than RP
- traditionally taught to foreigners => no longer the exclusive property of a particular social stratum
- for historical reasons continues to serves as a model in Europe x GA used as a model esp. in Asia and Latin Am.
- certain types of regional pronunciation also firmly established and universally accepted (SE)
- main types of RP:
  - General RP
  - Refined RP = reflects class distinction, associated with upper-class (characterised by very open vowels /ɪ/, /ɜ/, and word-final /ə/
  - Regional RP = reflects regional distinction, basically RP except for the presence of a few regional characteristics

General American
- the standard model for learners of E as a 2nd language in esp. Latin Am. and Asia
- Eastern pronunciation: incl. New England and NY City
- Southern pronunciation: incl. Virginia to Texas and southwards
- General pronunciation: all the remaining area
- GA = the form with no marked regional characteristics, in this way comparable to RP

Types of Differences
(a) realisational differences
- differences in the phonetic realisations of the phonemes
- the same system and the same number of phonemes
- (RP: /t/ > CockE: [ʔ] btw vowels)
(b) systemic d.
- differences in phoneme inventory
- different system and different number of oppositions
- (RP: distinction btw ‘Sam’ x ‘psalm’ > SE: homophones; RP: phonemic [ŋ] in ‘sing’ > NortE: no more phonemic [ŋ])
(c) lexical d.
= differences of lexical incidence
- the same system x but: different incidence of phonemes in words
- (RP: opposition btw /u:/ x /ʊ/ > NortE: the same opposition x but: the use of /u/ in ‘book, took’)
(d) distributional d.
- the same system x but: limitation of the phonetic context for certain phonemes
- (non-rhotic accents: the distribution of /r/ limited to prevocalic positions (‘red, horrid’) x rhotic accents: the full distribution of /r/ (‘part, car’))

Differences between RP and GA
(a) systemic differences
- lack of RP monophthong /ɒ/ and diphthongs /ɪə, eə, əʊ/
- /ɒ/ > GA /æ/ (‘cod, spot, pocket’, loss of distinction btw ‘bomb x ‘balm’) or /ɔ:/ before a voiceless fricative
  (‘across, gone, often’)
- /ʊə, eʊ, əʊ/ > GA sequences of vowel + /r/ (‘beard’ /bɪrd/, ‘fare’ /fɛr/, ‘dour’ /dʊr/)
(b) lexical d.
- RP /ɑ:/ > GA /æ/ before a voiceless fricative (‘past, after’)
- RP /ɔ:/ > GA /ɔ/ (loss of distinction btw ‘cot’ x ‘caught’)
(c) realisational d.
- RP diphthongs /eɪ/ and /ɔɪ/ > GA monophthongs [ɛ:] and [ɔ:]: (‘late’ [leːt], ‘load’ loːd])
- RP /ɪ/ > GA [ɪ] = the tip of the tongue curled further backwards
- RP /ʌ/ > GA [r] = voiced tap, in unaccented intervocalic positions (‘better’ [ˈber], ‘butter, latter’)
- RP /l/ > GA [ɻ], i.e. dark (in all positions)
(d) distributional d.
- RP /ɑ:/ > GA /æ/ + /r/ in words spelled with the vowel letter + <r> (‘car, card, large’)
- RP /ɔ:/ > GA r-coloured vowel [ɜ] in words spelled with vowel letter + <r> (‘bird, farm, lord’)
- RP /ɑ/ > GA r-coloured vowel [ɔ] in words spelled with vowel letter + <r>
- RP /ɔː/ > GA /ɔː/ + /r/ in words spelled with vowel letter + <r> (‘horse, cord, war’)
- RP [aɪ] + [ɪ] > GA [aɪ] + syllabic [ɪ] (‘fertile, futile, missile, reptile’)
- RP /a/ > GA syllabic [ɻ] when word final after a consonant (‘razor’ [ˈreɪzɻ], ‘hammer’ [ˈhæmɻ], ‘tailor’ [ˈteɪɻ])
- RP /j/ + /u:/ after /t, d/ > GA /uː/ (‘tune, dune, duty’)

Source: www.anglistika.webnode.cz