

## Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms (Cambridge Paperback Library)

By Shirley Brice Heath


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### Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms (Cambridge Paperback Library) By Shirley Brice Heath

Ways with Words, first published in 1983, is a classic study of children learning to use language at home and at school in two communities only a few miles apart in the south-eastern United States. 'Roadville' is a white working-class community of families steeped for generations in the life of textile mills; 'Trackton' is an African-American working-class community whose older generations grew up farming the land, but whose existent members work in the mills. In tracing the children's language development the author shows the deep cultural differences between the two communities, whose ways with words differ as strikingly from each other as either does from the pattern of the townspeople, the 'mainstream' blacks and whites who hold power in the schools and workplaces of the region. Employing the combined skills of ethnographer, social historian, and teacher, the author raises fundamental questions about the nature of language development, the effects of literacy on oral language habits, and the sources of communication problems in schools and workplaces.

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#### **Review**

'One of the classic texts in educational praxis.' American Scientist

'Deserves to be widely read by all researchers on child language.' Journal of Child Language

'A milestone in understanding the roots of school achievement.' London Review of Books

'Should become a point of reference for all discussions of spontaneous oral story telling.' Harvard Educational Review

'... captures the elusive nature of effective ethnography: involvement and empathy yield a sound and practical analysis.' Developments in Language Teaching

#### **From the Back Cover**

Ways with Words is a classic study of children learning to use language at home and at school in two communities only a few miles apart in the southeastern United States. 'Roadville' is a white working-class community of families steeped for generations in the life of textile mills; 'Trackton' is a black working-class community whose older generations grew up farming the land but whose current members work in the mills. In tracing the children's language development the author shows the deep cultural differences between the two communities, whose ways with words differ as strikingly from each other as either does from the pattern of the townspeople, the 'mainstream' blacks and whites who hold power in the schools and workplaces of the region.

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