なんでやねん is another Kansai-ben catch phrase that is used in a variety of contexts and is rather difficult to accurately translate into English. This phrase is similar to saying どうしてだよ in standard Japanese, and can mean “Why?” “How come!?" “Give me a break!” among other things. なんで is generally favored in the Kansai region over standard Japanese’s なんで or なぜ for saying “why?” The や in なんでやねん is replacing standard Japanese’s で which we learned about in Chapter 2, and the ねん is a sentence final particle used in Kansai-ben, which we will be focusing on in this chapter.

ねん, along with で which was introduced in Chapter 3, are two of the most commonly used sentence final particles in Kansai-ben. While ねん can function in different grammatical capacities, it’s most common usage is like adding だよ to the end of a sentence in standard Japanese. Let’s compare some basic sentences in standard Japanese and Kansai-ben using ねん:

1.) 行くんだよ → 行くねん “(I’m) going.”
2.) どうしてだよ → なんでやねん “How come!!?”
3.) 好きだよ → 好きやねん “I like (this/that).”
4.) 違うよ → 違うねん “That’s wrong.”
5.) 何言ってるんだよ → 何ゆうてるねん “What the hell are you talking about?”

Because English doesn’t have sentence final particles like Japanese does, explaining their function can be rather difficult. During your first couple years of Japanese study you learned how to use よ, ね and possibly な, and probably found it challenging to translate them from Japanese to English on homework and tests. While it was hard to translate, you could probably still understand how they slightly tweak the tone or nuance of a sentence. Sentence final particles in Kansai-ben are no different. It’s often difficult to put your finger on how exactly they change a sentence, but they are used all the time, so getting a feel for how and when they are used is very important. Don’t fret though – as you spend time at Kansai Gaidai they will become second nature to you!
If you end up adapting Kansai-ben when you speak Japanese during your time abroad, you will most likely end up having a conversation like this one of your Japanese friends:

Tomie:  ザックは外人なのに関西弁で話すんやな。なんでやねん！
ザック:  俺関西弁好きやねん。日本人の友達、皆関西弁で話すからええやん。

Tomie:  でもなあ、ザックは日本で仕事したいんやったら標準語を勉強した方がええよ。
ザック:  でも、大阪で仕事するんやったら関西弁で話しても大丈夫やろ？

Tomie:  ほんまや。ザック天才！
ザック:  はいねん。日本語の先生にそう勧められたんやで。

Tomie:  Zach, even though you’re a foreigner you speak Kansai-ben. How come?
Zach:  I like Kansai-ben. All my Japanese friends speak Kansai-ben, so what’s the big deal?

Tomie:  The thing is, if you want to get a job in Japan you should be studying standard Japanese.
Zach:  But if I work in Osaka, even if I speak in Kansai-ben it’ll be fine right?
Tomie:  That’s true! You’re a genius!
Zach:  You’re wrong – my Japanese teacher recommended it.

1 In this sentence we see the verb 勧める ("to recommend") in an honorific form. This form is not to be confused with the passive form learned in Genki Chapter 21, however they happen to conjugate in the same way (drop the final る and add られる). This honorific form is used to show deference to whoever performed the verb – in this case the Japanese teacher.