

Chapter 1 : History of English - Wikipedia

History of English This page is a short history of the origins and development of the English language. The history of the English language really started with the arrival of three Germanic tribes who invaded Britain during the 5th century AD.

This is Steve Ember. Today we present the second of our two programs about the history of the English Language. Last week, we told how the English language developed as a result of several invasions of Britain. The first involved three tribes called the Angles, the Jutes and the Saxons. A mix of their languages produced a language called Anglo-Saxon, or Old English. It sounded very much like German. Only a few words remained from the Celts who had lived in Britain. Two more invasions added words to Old English. The next invasion took place in the year ten sixty-six. French forces from Normandy were led by a man known as William the Conqueror. The Norman rulers added many words to English. Over time, the different languages combined to result in what English experts call Middle English. Chaucer wrote that poem in the late thirteen hundreds. It was written in the language of the people. The rulers of Britain at that time still spoke the Norman French they brought with them in ten sixty-six. The kings of Britain did not speak the language of the people until the early fourteen hundreds. Slowly, Norman French was used less and less until it disappeared. The English language was strongly influenced by an event that took place more than one thousand four hundred years ago. In the year five ninety-seven, the Roman Catholic Church began its attempt to make Christianity the religion of Britain. The language of the Catholic Church was Latin. Latin was not spoken as a language in any country at that time. But it was still used by some people. Latin made it possible for a church member from Rome to speak to a church member from Britain. Educated people from different countries could communicate using Latin. Latin had a great affect on the English language. Here are a few examples. So do some medical words such as cancer. English is a little like a living thing that continues to grow. English began to grow more quickly when William Caxton returned to Britain in the year fourteen seventy-six. He had been in Holland and other areas of Europe where he had learned printing. He returned to Britain with the first printing press. The printing press made it possible for almost anyone to buy a book. It helped spread education and the English language. Slowly, during the fifteen hundreds English became the modern language we would recognize. English speakers today would be able to communicate with English speakers in the last part of the Sixteenth Century. It was during this time period that the greatest writer in English produced his work. His name was William Shakespeare. His plays continue to be printed, acted in theaters, and seen in motion pictures almost four hundred years after his death. Yet every sound of his words can produce word pictures, and provide feelings of anger, fear, and laughter. The story of the power hungry King Richard the Third is another very popular play by Shakespeare. Three small British ships crossed the Atlantic Ocean in sixteen-oh-seven. They landed in an area that would later become the southern American state of Virginia. They began the first of several British colonies. The name of the first small colony was Jamestown. In time, people in these new colonies began to call areas of their new land by words borrowed from the native people they found living there. For example, many of the great rivers in the United States are taken from American Indian words. The Mississippi, the Tennessee, the Missouri are examples. This borrowing or adding of foreign words to English was a way of expanding the language. The names of three days of the week are good examples of this. The people from Northern Europe honored three gods with a special day each week. The gods were Odin, Thor and Freya. Britain had other colonies in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and India. The English language also became part of these colonies. These colonies are now independent, but English still is one of the languages spoken. And the English language grew as words from the native languages were added. Experts cannot explain many English words. English speakers just started using it. Other words come from the first letters of names of groups or devices. Experts say that English has more words that explain the same thing that any other language. Well, no one really knows. The Oxford English Dictionary lists about six hundred fifteen thousand words. Yet the many scientific words not in the dictionary could increase the number to almost one million. And experts are never really sure how to count English words. Visitors to the Voice of America hear people speaking more than forty different languages. Most broadcasters at VOA come from

countries where these languages are spoken. International organizations such as VOA would find it impossible to operate without a second language all the people speak. The language that permits VOA to work is English. It is not unusual to see someone from the Mandarin Service talking to someone from the Urdu Service, both speaking English. English is becoming the common language of millions of people worldwide, helping speakers of many different languages communicate.

Chapter 2 : History of English | EnglishClub

English is a West Germanic language that originated from Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Britain in the mid 5th to 7th centuries AD by Anglo-Saxon settlers from what is now northwest Germany, west Denmark and the Netherlands, displacing the Celtic languages that previously predominated.

Even sites in other languages often give you the option to translate the site. In fact, because it is so dominant in international communication, you will find more information regarding nearly every subject if you can speak this language. Countries where English is either the national language or an official language. Source Resources Make Learning English Easy Although many people think that it is very difficult and confusing, English is actually the easiest language of the world to learn because there are so many resources available. As soon as you decide you want to learn, there are thousands of resources on the Internet and in bookstores. I suggest watching as much TV as you can, in English with English subtitles, and you will pick up conversational English in no time. If you speak English, you can travel anywhere in the world. Source Travel and Business With good understanding and communication in English, you can travel around the globe. You can test it by online travel. Any travel booking site you can find will have English as a booking option. English skills will also help you in any business venture you choose to follow. If you visit some offices, companies, governmental organizations, or even math or engineering companies, you will see the importance of English. Any big company will hire their professional staff after getting to know whether the people they are hiring are good at English or not. Companies who want to function at an international level only consider their staff well educated if they are good English speakers, writers, and readers. Source The Language of Hollywood Everyone knows that Hollywood is in the United States, and that the biggest television and music industries in the world are based there. As I mentioned above, TV and movies are a great way to practice your English once you start learning. If you want to one day work in the entertainment industry, English is even more essential. Those who are still unaware of the importance of English should start learning it, as a time will come when everything will be understood, spoken and written in English. In a lot of ways, that time is already here. Go ahead, watch some media, and get an idea of the language.

Chapter 3 : A Brief History of the English Language

According to the literary development of the English language, it could be classified as: Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English and Modern English. Old English (9th and 10th century). The English language uses the Latin alphabet of 26 consonants and vowels.

Help What are the origins of the English Language? The history of English is conventionally, if perhaps too neatly, divided into three periods usually called Old English or Anglo-Saxon , Middle English, and Modern English. The earliest period begins with the migration of certain Germanic tribes from the continent to Britain in the fifth century A. By that time Latin, Old Norse the language of the Viking invaders , and especially the Anglo-Norman French of the dominant class after the Norman Conquest in had begun to have a substantial impact on the lexicon, and the well-developed inflectional system that typifies the grammar of Old English had begun to break down. The following brief sample of Old English prose illustrates several of the significant ways in which change has so transformed English that we must look carefully to find points of resemblance between the language of the tenth century and our own. Gregory the Great" and concerns the famous story of how that pope came to send missionaries to convert the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity after seeing Anglo-Saxon boys for sale as slaves in Rome: The sense of it is as follows: Gregory] asked what might be the name of the people from which they came. It was answered to him that they were named Angles. Others, however, have vanished from our lexicon, mostly without a trace, including several that were quite common words in Old English: Other points worth noting include the fact that the pronoun system did not yet, in the late tenth century, include the third person plural forms beginning with th-: Several aspects of word order will also strike the reader as oddly unlike ours. In subordinate clauses the main verb must be last, and so an object or a preposition may precede it in a way no longer natural: Nouns, adjectives, and even the definite article are inflected for gender, case, and number: The system of inflections for verbs was also more elaborate than ours: In addition, there were two imperative forms, four subjunctive forms two for the present tense and two for the preterit, or past, tense , and several others which we no longer have. Even where Modern English retains a particular category of inflection, the form has often changed. Old English present participles ended in -ende not -ing, and past participles bore a prefix ge- as geandwyrd "answered" above. The period of Middle English extends roughly from the twelfth century through the fifteenth. The influence of French and Latin, often by way of French upon the lexicon continued throughout this period, the loss of some inflections and the reduction of others often to a final unstressed vowel spelled -e accelerated, and many changes took place within the phonological and grammatical systems of the language. It is fiction in the guise of travel literature, and, though it purports to be from the pen of an English knight, it was originally written in French and later translated into Latin and English. In this extract Mandeville describes the land of Bactria, apparently not an altogether inviting place, as it is inhabited by "full yuele [evil] folk and full cruell. Moreover, in the original text, there is in addition to thorn another old character ȝ, called "yogh," to make difficulty. It can represent several sounds but here may be thought of as equivalent to y. Even the older spellings including those where u stands for v or vice versa are recognizable, however, and there are only a few words like ipotaynes "hippopotamuses" and sithes "times" that have dropped out of the language altogether. All the same, the number of inflections for nouns, adjectives, and verbs has been greatly reduced, and in most respects Mandeville is closer to Modern than to Old English. The period of Modern English extends from the sixteenth century to our own day. The early part of this period saw the completion of a revolution in the phonology of English that had begun in late Middle English and that effectively redistributed the occurrence of the vowel phonemes to something approximating their present pattern. Other important early developments include the stabilizing effect on spelling of the printing press and the beginning of the direct influence of Latin and, to a lesser extent, Greek on the lexicon. Later, as English came into contact with other cultures around the world and distinctive dialects of English developed in the many areas which Britain had colonized, numerous other languages made small but interesting contributions to our word-stock. The historical aspect of English really encompasses more than the three stages of development just under consideration. English has what might be

called a prehistory as well. As we have seen, our language did not simply spring into existence; it was brought from the Continent by Germanic tribes who had no form of writing and hence left no records. Philologists know that they must have spoken a dialect of a language that can be called West Germanic and that other dialects of this unknown language must have included the ancestors of such languages as German, Dutch, Low German, and Frisian. They know this because of certain systematic similarities which these languages share with each other but do not share with, say, Danish. However, they have had somehow to reconstruct what that language was like in its lexicon, phonology, grammar, and semantics as best they can through sophisticated techniques of comparison developed chiefly during the last century. Similarly, because ancient and modern languages like Old Norse and Gothic or Icelandic and Norwegian have points in common with Old English and Old High German or Dutch and English that they do not share with French or Russian, it is clear that there was an earlier unrecorded language that can be called simply Germanic and that must be reconstructed in the same way. Still earlier, Germanic was just a dialect the ancestors of Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit were three other such dialects of a language conventionally designated Indo-European, and thus English is just one relatively young member of an ancient family of languages whose descendants cover a fair portion of the globe.

Chapter 4 : How English Evolved Into a Modern Language

The development of the English language took a giant step just nine years before the death of William Shakespeare. Three small British ships crossed the Atlantic Ocean in sixteen-oh-seven.

This broad family includes most of the European languages spoken today. The Indo-European family includes several major branches: The influence of the original Indo-European language, designated proto-Indo-European, can be seen today, even though no written record of it exists. The word for father, for example, is vater in German, pater in Latin, and pitr in Sanskrit. These words are all cognates, similar words in different languages that share the same root. Of these branches of the Indo-European family, two are, for our purposes of studying the development of English, of paramount importance, the Germanic and the Romance called that because the Romance languages derive from Latin, the language of ancient Rome, not because of any bodice-ripping literary genre. English is in the Germanic group of languages. This group began as a common language in the Elbe river region about 3, years ago. Around the second century BC, this Common Germanic language split into three distinct sub-groups: East Germanic was spoken by peoples who migrated back to southeastern Europe. No East Germanic language is spoken today, and the only written East Germanic language that survives is Gothic. North Germanic evolved into the modern Scandinavian languages of Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Icelandic but not Finnish, which is related to Estonian and is not an Indo-European language. They spoke a mutually intelligible language, similar to modern Frisian--the language of northeastern region of the Netherlands--that is called Old English. These invaders pushed the original, Celtic-speaking inhabitants out of what is now England into Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, and Ireland, leaving behind a few Celtic words. Cornish, unfortunately, is now a dead language. Also influencing English at this time were the Vikings. Norse invasions, beginning around , brought many North Germanic words into the language, particularly in the north of England. Some examples are dream, which had meant joy until the Vikings imparted its current meaning on it from the Scandinavian cognate draumr, and skirt, which continues to live alongside its native English cognate shirt. The majority of words in modern English come from foreign, not Old English roots. In fact, only about one sixth of the known Old English words have descendants surviving today. But this statistic is deceptive; Old English is much more important than this number would indicate. About half of the most commonly used words in modern English have Old English roots. Words like be, water, and strong, for example, derive from Old English roots. Old English, whose best known surviving example is the poem Beowulf, lasted until about This last date is rather arbitrary, but most scholars choose it because it is shortly after the most important event in the development of the English language, the Norman Conquest. The Bayeux Tapestry, details of which form the navigation buttons on this site, is perhaps the most famous graphical depiction of the Norman Conquest. The new overlords spoke a dialect of Old French known as Anglo-Norman. The Normans were also of Germanic stock Norman comes from Norseman and Anglo-Norman was a French dialect that had considerable Germanic influences in addition to the basic Latin roots. Prior to the Norman Conquest, Latin had been only a minor influence on the English language, mainly through vestiges of the Roman occupation and from the conversion of Britain to Christianity in the seventh century ecclesiastical terms such as priest, vicar, and mass came into the language this way , but now there was a wholesale infusion of Romance Anglo-Norman words. The influence of the Normans can be illustrated by looking at two words, beef and cow. Beef, commonly eaten by the aristocracy, derives from the Anglo-Norman, while the Anglo-Saxon commoners, who tended the cattle, retained the Germanic cow. Many legal terms, such as indict, jury, and verdict have Anglo-Norman roots because the Normans ran the courts. This split, where words commonly used by the aristocracy have Romantic roots and words frequently used by the Anglo-Saxon commoners have Germanic roots, can be seen in many instances. Sometimes French words replaced Old English words; crime replaced firen and uncle replaced eam. Other times, French and Old English components combined to form a new word, as the French gentle and the Germanic man formed gentleman. Other times, two different words with roughly the same meaning survive into modern English. Thus we have the Germanic doom and the French judgment, or wish and desire. It is useful to compare various

versions of a familiar text to see the differences between Old, Middle, and Modern English. Take for instance this Old English c. Rendered in Middle English Wyclif, , the same text starts to become recognizable to the modern eye: And lede us not into temptacion but delyuere us from euyl. Our father which art in heauen, hallowed be thy name. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heauen. Giue us this day our daily bread. And forgiue us our debts as we forgiue our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliuer us from euill. This began a process where the Norman nobles of England became increasingly estranged from their French cousins. England became the chief concern of the nobility, rather than their estates in France, and consequently the nobility adopted a modified English as their native tongue. About years later, the Black Death killed about one third of the English population. The laboring and merchant classes grew in economic and social importance, and along with them English increased in importance compared to Anglo-Norman. This mixture of the two languages came to be known as Middle English. Unlike Old English, Middle English can be read, albeit with difficulty, by modern English-speaking people. By , the linguistic division between the nobility and the commoners was largely over. In that year, the Statute of Pleading was adopted, which made English the language of the courts and it began to be used in Parliament. The revival of classical scholarship brought many classical Latin and Greek words into the Language. These borrowings were deliberate and many bemoaned the adoption of these inhorn terms, but many survive to this day. Many students having difficulty understanding Shakespeare would be surprised to learn that he wrote in modern English. Many familiar words and phrases were coined or first recorded by Shakespeare, some 2, words and countless catch-phrases are his. Newcomers to Shakespeare are often shocked at the number of cliches contained in his plays, until they realize that he coined them and they became cliches afterwards. Words he bequeathed to the language include critical, leapfrog, majestic, dwindle, and pedant. Two other major factors influenced the language and served to separate Middle and Modern English. The first was the Great Vowel Shift. This was a change in pronunciation that began around Shakespeare, on the other hand, would be accented, but understandable. Long vowel sounds began to be made higher in the mouth and the letter e at the end of words became silent. In linguistic terms, the shift was rather sudden, the major changes occurring within a century. The shift is still not over, however, vowel sounds are still shortening, although the change has become considerably more gradual. The last major factor in the development of Modern English was the advent of the printing press. William Caxton brought the printing press to England in Books became cheaper and as a result, literacy became more common. Publishing for the masses became a profitable enterprise, and works in English, as opposed to Latin, became more common. Finally, the printing press brought standardization to English. The dialect of London, where most publishing houses were located, became the standard. Spelling and grammar became fixed, and the first English dictionary was published in Late-Modern English Present The principal distinction between early- and late-modern English is vocabulary. Pronunciation, grammar, and spelling are largely the same, but Late-Modern English has many more words. These words are the result of two historical factors. The first is the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the technological society. This necessitated new words for things and ideas that had not previously existed. The second was the British Empire. The industrial and scientific revolutions created a need for neologisms to describe the new creations and discoveries. For this, English relied heavily on Latin and Greek. Words like oxygen, protein, nuclear, and vaccine did not exist in the classical languages, but they were created from Latin and Greek roots. Such neologisms were not exclusively created from classical roots though, English roots were used for such terms as horsepower, airplane, and typewriter. This burst of neologisms continues today, perhaps most visible in the field of electronics and computers. Byte, cyber-, bios, hard-drive, and microchip are good examples. Also, the rise of the British Empire and the growth of global trade served not only to introduce English to the world, but to introduce words into English. Hindi, and the other languages of the Indian subcontinent, provided many words, such as pundit, shampoo, pajamas, and juggernaut. Virtually every language on Earth has contributed to the development of English, from the Finnish sauna and the Japanese tycoon, to the vast contributions of French and Latin. The British Empire was a maritime empire, and the influence of nautical terms on the English language has been great. Words and phrases like three sheets to the wind and scuttlebutt have their origins onboard ships. Finally, the 20th century saw two world wars, and the military influence on the language

during the latter half of this century has been great. Before the Great War, military service for English-speaking persons was rare; both Britain and the United States maintained small, volunteer militaries. Military slang existed, but with the exception of nautical terms, rarely influenced standard English. During the mid-century, however, virtually all British and American men served in the military. Military slang entered the language like never before. Blockbuster, nose dive, camouflage, radar, roadblock, spearhead, and landing strip are all military terms that made their way into standard English. American English Also significant beginning around AD was the English colonization of North America and the subsequent creation of a distinct American dialect. Some Americanisms that the British decry are actually originally British expressions that were preserved in the colonies while lost at home e.

Chapter 5 : What are the origins of the English Language? | Merriam-Webster

The main part of this website, the History, can be read as a kind of story, in chapters, following the development of the English language from its Indo-European origins, through Old English and Middle English to Early Modern English and Late Modern English, before a brief look at English Today.

English Influences on the English Language The English language evolved in what is now the south of England, after the Angle and Saxon tribes colonised the area. These tribes spoke a variety of West Germanic dialects, and the close proximity of the tribes led to the evolution of a single language, which is known as Old English. Chris Influences on the English Language The English language evolved in what is now the south of England, after the Angle and Saxon tribes colonised the area. Despite the name, Old English was vastly different from modern English, and most people who speak English today cannot recognise Old English as the same language. About half of the words in modern English have Old English roots, but they existed in different forms back then, and Old English grammar was very different. Words were given a different order in sentences, and they were even inflected based on gender. Latin has its roots in this same language, so it is technically an older cousin of English. The West Germanic dialects had already absorbed many Latin words by the time Old English came into being, and English inherited these words, and continued to borrow more as it evolved. English also absorbed many words from the Celtic languages that were spoken in the British Isles before their colonisation by Germanic tribes. The first major change to the English language came about with the Viking invasions of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Vikings conquered large parts of England, and in many cases settled down and mixed with the Anglo-Saxons. The influence of Old Norse on Old English was massive. Over the next two centuries, English grammar changed drastically. The Vikings were fierce warriors from the North At the end of the eleventh century, a second wave of colonisation took place in England. This time the invaders were Normans, a group of people from what is now the north of France. For a long time after the Norman invasions, the upper class in England consisted of Norman aristocrats and their descendants. These people continued to speak an old dialect of French, and French was even considered an official language of England for hundreds of years. During this time, many French words made their way into the vocabularies of English-speaking peasants. Today, almost a third of English words have French origins. Interestingly, words that have French origins are still considered more formal than words that have Germanic origins, due to the old status of French as a prestige language. After the massive changes brought about by centuries of foreign colonisation, the English language was sufficiently different from Old English to be almost unrecognisable. The Middle Ages were marked by a gradual decline of the Norman aristocracy and their influence. By the fourteenth century, the English upper class was speaking English, and the language continued to change and evolve. An English literary scene began to develop, and when the printing press was introduced, it helped standardise English grammar and spelling, and English texts were made available throughout Europe. Modern English is similar to Middle English, but it has a much vaster vocabulary. For several centuries, English has been incorporating words from languages all around the world, and today English has the largest lexicon of any language. The Oxford English dictionary lists about , words, but most native English speakers have a vocabulary of closer to 20, Spelling conventions continue to change as well, as can be seen in the variations between American and British English. There is no doubt that the English language is still evolving, and people in the future might have as much difficulty trying to understand our English as we have understanding the Old English of the past.

Chapter 6 : Modern English - Wikipedia

The Beginning Of Old English. It is said that the English language originated in AD, with the arrival on the British Islands of Germanic tribes – the Saxons, the Angles, and the Jutes – from what is now Denmark and Germany.

The Development of English Grammar Category: The starting point of the English language is the language we call West Germanic, and the starting point of England is the arrival of West Germanic peoples in Britannia in the fifth century. West Germanic is itself a version of the ancient Germanic language which had arrived with the Germanic peoples in north-west Europe about BC. Germanic evolved into three separate languages: The East Germanic languages have disappeared. Modern English grammar is very different from Modern German grammar. First, English grammar was changed by Norse-speaking invaders in the ninth and tenth centuries. Second, it was changed by Norman-French speaking invaders in the eleventh century. Third, it was changed by scholars and antiquarians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Fourth, English grammar is being changed in the twenty-first century by globalisation, the internet, and new notions of authority. From the West Germanic of the fifth century to the global English of the twenty-first century, we can then distinguish five stages in the development of English grammar, and we will want to look at all of them, but, first, we should say something about the development of that grammar in the thousands of years before West Germanics arrived at the continental coast of the North Sea. Almost all the languages of Europe and many in India have evolved from a language known as Proto-Indo European. Proto-Indo European was spoken by a tribe that lived somewhere between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea four to six thousand years ago. Proto-Indo European was never written down, and its structure has been conjectured by working backwards from its hundred and more descendant languages that exist today in India and Europe. It was he who first recognized the links between Latin, Greek and Sanskrit. Sir William, who knew thirteen languages fluently and twenty-eight very well, believed Latin, Greek and Sanskrit to be among the finest of languages but, of the three, he gave the palm to Sanskrit: The grammars of these ancient languages were fully formed. There is no sense in which they were primitive. Grammar has developed in the last three thousand years, but it has not improved and it has not degenerated. It has merely changed. Constant, slow change without improvement and without degeneration is a characteristic of grammar in all languages. The grammars of English, Sanskrit and Proto-Indo European are all equally good, equally valid, equally able to do what grammar does. So what is it that grammar does? An answer is provided by Daniel Everett, a linguist who has studied the languages of the Amazonian Indians. He begins by pointing out that not only do human use words, they also use sentences. By contrast, animals have words, but they do not have sentences. Since grammar is essential to human communication, speakers of all human languages organize words into larger units - phrases, sentences, stories, conversations, and so forth. This form of compositionality is called grammar by some and syntax by others. No other creature has anything remotely like duality of patterning or compositionality. The cries of animals work by establishing a one-to-one relationship between a sound and a thing or a sound and an act. Certain monkeys have a wide range of cries, and we can call those cries words. But it appears that only humans have the ability to move beyond the one-to-one relationship of word to thing or act. Humans can create relationships between one word and another. We do that in two ways: Grammarians call shape changing morphology. Grammarians call order changing syntax. Morphology and syntax together make up what we call grammar, and we can see, at once, that small changes in grammar can result in large changes in meaning. Grammar is then a demonstration of the complexity of the human mind; it is something that evolved as we evolved; it is a product of nature not of culture. That is why English grammar is no better and no worse than Sanskrit grammar. So what are the basic features of English grammar? Their English was a Germanic language. Therefore, it was an inflected language with nouns of three genders: These nouns had four case endings - nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive. As well as coming in three genders, Old English nouns came in seven declensions. Old English adjectives came in two declensions, five cases and three genders. Old English verbs came in two conjugations: Strong verbs indicate tense by a change in the quality of a vowel, while weak verbs indicate tense by the addition of an ending. Modern English retains that division: That is a

brief summary of Old English morphology or word shape. Now, to look at Old English syntax or word order. Since subject and object could be distinguished by case endings, Old English was not dependent on word order to give its sentences meaning; nonetheless, it tended to the form Subject-Verb-Object. Number was important as it is in Modern English and in all European languages. Old English verbs, nouns, adjectives and pronouns, all the time indicate whether they are singular or plural. Asian languages, such as Chinese or Japanese, only indicate number if it is necessary to do so. That fact goes to show that grammatical features of a language are often apparent only by contrast with other languages. Old English was a language very much like present-day Frisian, an island dialect spoken in the most isolated corner of Holland. So English is at once like and unlike Frisian. Why has English changed so much? The answers to that give us the story of the development of English grammar. While Frisian has been a very sheltered language in the last sixteen-hundred years, English has a very exposed language. From the year to the year, Old English changed very little, but in the year, a great force for change arrived in the form of Viking invaders. While they were simply landing, looting and going home, they made no difference to English, but when they arrived to stay, settle, intermarry and have Anglo-Norse children, they made a considerable difference. The Vikings spoke a North Germanic language called Norse. Ready intermixing was facilitated by the fact that the Norse and English languages may have been mutually intelligible. They were certainly close enough to influence each other in the most subtle ways. That change is probably a result of Norse influence. OED There is considerable uncertainty about the exact nature of Norse influence on English because we have no ongoing written record by which to track them. Changes were beginning as early as the year perhaps, but they do not become apparent for five and a half centuries. The reason for that was a single invasion that was even more significant than the very many Danish invasions. The great invasion was that of the Norman French in In, French-speaking invaders arrived in sufficient numbers with sufficient military power and they stayed for a sufficiently long time to bring about major changes in the grammar of English. Within three hundred years, Norman French had become blended with Old English, and the effects were startling. Grammatical gender was replaced by logical gender; most noun endings were lost; word order became paramount. English had ceased to be a normal Germanic language. By, English had fully supplanted French as the dominant language of England, and, by, Westminster English had established itself as the dominant dialect, what linguists call the prestige dialect. That language was Latin. All the learned spoke it as well as wrote it. It was the universal language of the Church and of Europe. But by, it was apparent that Latin was not the only language of learning and science in England. It was also about this time that the first English-language grammars and dictionaries begin to appear. The first English grammars were modelled on Latin grammars. These made English appear to fall short in a number of ways. It is not possible to end a sentence with a preposition in Latin; double negatives are not used in Latin; double comparatives are impossible in Latin; infinitives cannot be split in Latin. A sense that English was inferior became inbuilt. Even though English gradually superseded Latin, it continued to be thought second best, and not only to Latin. It was an unhappy fact that not a single one of the best writers could be relied upon to write correctly. Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Addison, Pope, Johnson were all found to have broken some of the rules at some time in some of the works. By the end of the century, what is probably the most influential of all English grammars was published. It was the work of an American called Lindley Murray. It is worth noting that it not simply a description of English grammar, but it is in addition a handbook for the writing of good English. It has never been out of print; it was in use, along with the cane, in every public school in nineteenth-century England; it is a book so famous that Charles Dickens had only to mention it to make his readers laugh. By, the rules of English grammar had been established with such authority that for many they are still taken as a matter of fact and not a matter of convention. In the nineteenth century those rules became canonical: But if you go back to the seventeenth century, you will see that the very rules of English grammar that people find difficult to follow are the rules based on the linguistically false premise that Latin grammar is superior to Germanic grammar. In fact you might well suspect that if you have to have a self-conscious rule to tell you that one form is right and another form is wrong, then you are being asked to go against the natural bent of the language. Natural English inclines to double negatives, double comparatives, split infinitives and sentence-ending prepositions. However, the English were not alone in correcting their

language. The Accademia della Crusca had been founded in Florence in with a mission to maintain the purity of the Italian language. The Academie francaise had been founded in Paris in with a mission to establish a literary language based on the French of the Ile de France.

Chapter 7 : The Development of English Grammar | English Project

Here is a list of important dates in the development of the English language. The selection of events is my own, and the dates are approximate in some cases, but it gives at least some idea of the time-scales involved, and puts the developments into some sort of perspective.

Later on the Jutes settled in Kent and the southern Hampshire, the Saxons in the rest of the south of the Thames area and the modern Middlesex, and the Angles spread throughout the rest of England and as far as up to the Scottish lowlands. The Jutes, Saxons and Angles still held their dialects separately. Later on two separate Anglian dialects developed. The dialect of the north of Humber river was called Northumbrian and of the south was called the Mercian. Also the Saxons dialect was called West Saxon as they were settled in the west, and the dialect of Jutes was called the Kentish who were on the southern and eastern sides of the river Thames. Thus, there were four main dialects in England. In the beginning, the Northumbrians held prominence in literature and culture, but after the Viking invasions the cultural leadership went to the West Saxon group. Old English 9th and 10th century. The English language uses the Latin alphabet of 26 consonants and vowels. In the beginning there were very few words of general use like, words of kinship: There were two demonstratives: Hors horse and maegden maiden were neuter gender; eorthe earth was feminine but lond land was neuter; sunne sun was feminine, but mona moon was masculine. Inflections were used in abundance, so the word order in a sentence was not of much importance in those days as long as the theme was understood. But Old English is totally incomprehensible for a Modern English knower. It was more like the modern German of today. Hie ne dorston forþ bi th ere ea siglan They dared not sail beyond that river. Modern English onward. The extensive two volume work of Samuel Johnson was simplified by the single volume of his dictionary in which continued to be used up to the 20th century. In fact, since the 13th century, every century had its reformers of the English language. The grammarians of the 18th century like Robert Lowth and James Buchanan etc. During that period Noah Webster produced his Spelling Book in 1783, the first edition of his American Dictionary of English Language in 1783 and a subsequent edition in 1828. Vocabulary of Modern English. The vocabulary of English language is a mixture of Germanic Old English and Scandinavian, Greek, Latin and French where almost half of it is Germanic and Greek and half is Latin and French with some of the words from almost all of the notable languages of the world as it had taken free admission from everywhere. A sample of other adaptations are: Spanish-cigar, mosquito, tornado, tomato tomate and potato patata. Hebrew-amen, manna, messiah, rabbi and jubilee. Portuguese-marmalade, flamingo and molasses. Turkish-turban, coffee and caviar. Hindi-sahib, maharajah, jungle, cheetah, karma, mantra and dhoti. Persian-divan, purdah, bazaar and chess. Malay-ketchup, sago and bamboo. African languages-mumbo jumbo and voodoo. Caribbean-hammock, hurricane and tobacco. These are just a few examples of adaptations. Murray and assisted by three more editors, Bradley, Charles Onions and Craigie, was published in 12 volumes along with its supplements from 1903 to 1913. It gives the inventory and the history of words in use from up to of all the five dialects of the Middle English. After only literary English words are taken, not the dialectals. It enormously contains the quotations from the English literature and records, and incorporates the words that have entered into English vocabulary from the earliest records to the existing date along with their history and origin. It contains more than 15,000 pages and over 400,000 words. Dialects of Modern English. There are a number of dialects and subdialects in United Kingdom. The latest form of the most advanced English language. The English language is considered to be the world language of today. It has an extensive amount of words not found in other languages and its rich vocabulary may sufficiently accommodate all the situations of a social and technical nature. But, even at the maximum height of its evolution which took a full 1,500 years since the arrival of the Germanic people in England in the 5th century AD could you be sure of the spellings of the names of people or their pronunciations unless you are told? It is because the basic alphabetic structure was scientifically wrong from the very beginning; and this is the case with all other languages of the world.

Chapter 8 : The Origins and Development of the English Language by John Algeo

WIDA has established language development standards for English and Spanish. These standards represent the language students need to be successful in early childhood programs and Grades K The first standard, Social and Instructional Language, reflects the ways in which students interact socially to build community and establish working.

This website uses cookies that provide targeted advertising and which track your use of this website. You can change your cookie settings at any time. Little is known of this period with any certainty, but we do know that Germanic invaders came and settled in Britain from the north-western coastline of continental Europe in the fifth and sixth centuries. However it is fairly certain that many of the settlers would have spoken in exactly the same way as some of their north European neighbours, and that not all of the settlers would have spoken in the same way. The reason that we know so little about the linguistic situation in this period is because we do not have much in the way of written records from any of the Germanic languages of north-western Europe until several centuries later. When Old English writings begin to appear in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries there is a good deal of regional variation, but not substantially more than that found in later periods. The Celts were already resident in Britain when the Anglo-Saxons arrived, but there are few obvious traces of their language in English today. Some scholars have suggested that the Celtic tongue might have had an underlying influence on the grammatical development of English, particularly in some parts of the country, but this is highly speculative. The number of loanwords known for certain to have entered Old English from this source is very small. Those that survive in modern English include brock badger, and coomb a type of valley, alongside many place names. The Scandinavian Settlements The next invaders were the Norsemen. From the middle of the ninth century large numbers of Norse invaders settled in Britain, particularly in northern and eastern areas, and in the eleventh century the whole of England had a Danish king, Canute. The distinct North Germanic speech of the Norsemen had great influence on English, most obviously seen in the words that English has borrowed from this source. These include some very basic words such as take and even grammatical words such as they. The common Germanic base of the two languages meant that there were still many similarities between Old English and the language of the invaders. Some words, for example give, perhaps show a kind of hybridization with some spellings going back to Old English and others being Norse in origin. However, the resemblances between the two languages are so great that in many cases it is impossible to be sure of the exact ancestry of a particular word or spelling. However, much of the influence of Norse, including the vast majority of the loanwords, does not appear in written English until after the next great historical and cultural upheaval, the Norman Conquest. In the course of what is called the Middle English period, the fairly rich inflectional system of Old English broke down. It was replaced by what is broadly speaking, the same system English has today, which unlike Old English makes very little use of distinctive word endings in the grammar of the language. The vocabulary of English also changed enormously, with tremendous numbers of borrowings from French and Latin, in addition to the Scandinavian loanwords already mentioned, which were slowly starting to appear in the written language. Old English, like German today, showed a tendency to find native equivalents for foreign words and phrases although both Old English and modern German show plenty of loanwords, whereas Middle English acquired the habit that modern English retains today of readily accommodating foreign words. Trilingualism in English, French, and Latin was common in the worlds of business and the professions, with words crossing over from one language to another with ease. You only have to flick through the etymologies of any English dictionary to get an impression of the huge number of words entering English from French and Latin during the later medieval period. This trend was set to continue into the early modern period with the explosion of interest in the writings of the ancient world. Standardization The late medieval and early modern periods saw a fairly steady process of standardization in English south of the Scottish border. The written and spoken language of London continued to evolve and gradually began to have a greater influence in the country at large. For most of the Middle English period a dialect was simply what was spoken in a particular area, which would normally be more or less represented in writing - although where and from whom the writer had learnt how to write were also

important. It was only when the broadly London standard began to dominate, especially through the new technology of printing, that the other regional varieties of the language began to be seen as different in kind. As the London standard became used more widely, especially in more formal contexts and particularly amongst the more elevated members of society, the other regional varieties came to be stigmatized, as lacking social prestige and indicating a lack of education. In the same period a series of changes also occurred in English pronunciation though not uniformly in all dialects, which go under the collective name of the Great Vowel Shift. The phonetic pairings of most long and short vowel sounds were also lost, which gave rise to many of the oddities of English pronunciation, and which now obscure the relationships between many English words and their foreign counterparts. Colonization and Globalization During the medieval and early modern periods the influence of English spread throughout the British Isles, and from the early seventeenth century onwards its influence began to be felt throughout the world. Words were absorbed from all over the world, often via the languages of other trading and imperial nations such as Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands. At the same time, new varieties of English emerged, each with their own nuances of vocabulary and grammar and their own distinct pronunciations. More recently still, English has become a lingua franca, a global language, regularly used and understood by many nations for whom English is not their first language. The eventual effects on the English language of both of these developments can only be guessed at today, but there can be little doubt that they will be as important as anything that has happened to English in the past sixteen hundred years.

Chapter 9 : The History of English - Timeline

Today, we have a remarkable development in the number of people learning English as a Second Language since in so many countries English is being introduced in primary schools, and, in many non-English speaking countries, secondary education is being conducted in English.

Crimean Gothic Other Germanic languages with which Old Norse still retained some mutual intelligibility Vikings from modern-day Norway and Denmark began to raid parts of Britain from the late 8th century onward. In , however, a major invasion was launched by what the Anglo-Saxons called the Great Heathen Army , which eventually brought large parts of northern and eastern England the Danelaw under Scandinavian control. Most of these areas were retaken by the English under Edward the Elder in the early 10th century, although York and Northumbria were not permanently regained until the death of Eric Bloodaxe in The Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians thus spoke related languages from different branches West and North of the Germanic family; many of their lexical roots were the same or similar, although their grammatical systems were more divergent. Probably significant numbers of Norse speakers settled in the Danelaw during the period of Scandinavian control. Many place-names in those areas are of Scandinavian provenance those ending in -by, for example ; it is believed that the settlers often established new communities in places that had not previously been developed by the Anglo-Saxons. The extensive contact between Old English and Old Norse speakers, including the possibility of intermarriage that resulted from the acceptance of Christianity by the Danes in , [10] undoubtedly influenced the varieties of those languages spoken in the areas of contact. Some scholars even believe that Old English and Old Norse underwent a kind of fusion and that the resulting English language might be described as a mixed language or creole. During the rule of Cnut and other Danish kings in the first half of the 11th century, a kind of diglossia may have come about, with the West Saxon literary language existing alongside the Norse-influenced Midland dialect of English, which could have served as a koine or spoken lingua franca. When Danish rule ended, and particularly after the Norman Conquest , the status of the minority Norse language presumably declined relative to that of English, and its remaining speakers assimilated to English in a process involving language shift and language death. The widespread bilingualism that must have existed during the process possibly contributed to the rate of borrowings from Norse into English. The borrowing of words of this type was stimulated by Scandinavian rule in the Danelaw and during the later reign of Cnut. However, most surviving Old English texts are based on the West Saxon standard that developed outside the Danelaw; it is not clear to what extent Norse influenced the forms of the language spoken in eastern and northern England at that time. Later texts from the Middle English era, now based on an eastern Midland rather than a Wessex standard, reflect the significant impact that Norse had on the language. In all, English borrowed about words from Old Norse , several hundred surviving in Modern English. Norse influence is also believed to have reinforced the adoption of the plural copular verb form are rather than alternative Old English forms like sind. It is also considered to have stimulated and accelerated the morphological simplification found in Middle English, such as the loss of grammatical gender and explicitly marked case except in pronouns. The spread of phrasal verbs in English is another grammatical development to which Norse may have contributed although here a possible Celtic influence is also noted. Middle English Middle English is the form of English spoken roughly from the time of the Norman Conquest in until the end of the 15th century. Merchants and lower-ranked nobles were often bilingual in Anglo-Norman and English, whilst English continued to be the language of the common people. Even after the decline of Norman, standard French retained the status of a formal or prestige language , and about 10, French and Norman loan words entered Middle English, particularly terms associated with government, church, law, the military, fashion, and food [13] see English language word origins and List of English words of French origin. The strong influence of Old Norse on English described in the previous section also becomes apparent during this period. The impact of the native British Celtic languages that English continued to displace is generally held to be much smaller, although some attribute such analytic verb forms as the continuous aspect "to be doing" or "to have been doing" to Celtic influence. English literature began to reappear after , when a changing political

climate and the decline in Anglo-Norman made it more respectable. The Provisions of Oxford, released in 1215, was the first English government document to be published in the English language after the Norman Conquest. The Pleading in English Act made English the only language in which court proceedings could be held, though the official record remained in Latin. Anglo-Norman remained in use in limited circles somewhat longer, but it had ceased to be a living language. Official documents began to be produced regularly in English during the 15th century. Geoffrey Chaucer, who lived in the late 14th century, is the most famous writer from the Middle English period, and *The Canterbury Tales* is his best-known work. The English language changed enormously during the Middle English period, both in vocabulary and pronunciation, and in grammar. While Old English is a heavily inflected language synthetic, the use of grammatical endings diminished in Middle English analytic. Grammar distinctions were lost as many noun and adjective endings were levelled to -e. The older plural noun marker -en retained in a few cases such as children and oxen largely gave way to -s, and grammatical gender was discarded. Early Modern English[edit] Main article: Early Modern English English underwent extensive sound changes during the 15th century, while its spelling conventions remained largely constant. Modern English is often dated from the Great Vowel Shift, which took place mainly during the 15th century. The language was further transformed by the spread of a standardized London-based dialect in government and administration and by the standardizing effect of printing, which also tended to regularize capitalization. As a result, the language acquired self-conscious terms such as "accent" and "dialect". By the time of William Shakespeare mid 16th - early 17th century, [19] the language had become clearly recognizable as Modern English. In 1604, the first English dictionary was published, the *Table Alphabeticall*. Increased literacy and travel facilitated the adoption of many foreign words, especially borrowings from Latin and Greek from the time of the Renaissance. In the 17th century, Latin words were often used with their original inflections, but these eventually disappeared. As there are many words from different languages and English spelling is variable, the risk of mispronunciation is high, but remnants of the older forms remain in a few regional dialects, most notably in the West Country. During the period, loan words were borrowed from Italian, German, and Yiddish. British acceptance of and resistance to Americanisms began during this period.