

DOWNLOAD PDF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE : THE BEGINNINGS OF LANGUAGE

Chapter 1 : What are the origins of the English Language? | Merriam-Webster

History of the English Language Part 1: The beginnings to Ronald I. Kim Faculty of English Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, English belongs to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European (IE) family of languages.

There were two classes of verb stems. A verb stem is that part of a verb to which inflectional changes—changes indicating tense, mood, number, etc. Such verbs are called strong and weak, respectively. All new verbs, whether derived from existing verbs or from nouns, belonged to the consonantal type. Some verbs of great frequency antecedents of the modern words be, shall, will, do, go, can, may, and so on had their own peculiar patterns of inflections. Grammatical gender persisted throughout the Old English period. This simplification of grammatical gender resulted from the fact that the gender of Old English substantives was not always indicated by the ending but rather by the terminations of the adjectives and demonstrative pronouns used with the substantives. When these endings were lost, all outward marks of gender disappeared with them. Thus, the weakening of inflections and loss of gender occurred together. In the North, where inflections weakened earlier, the marks of gender likewise disappeared first. They survived in the South as late as the 14th century. Because of the greater use of inflections in Old English, word order was freer than today. The sequence of subject, verb, and complement was normal, but when there were outer and inner complements the second was put in the dative case after to: Infinitives constructed with auxiliary verbs were placed at the ends of clauses or sentences: The verb usually came last in a dependent clause—e. Negation was often repeated for emphasis. Middle English One result of the Norman Conquest of was to place all four Old English dialects more or less on a level. West Saxon lost its supremacy, and the centre of culture and learning gradually shifted from Winchester to London. The old Northumbrian dialect became divided into Scottish and Northern, although little is known of either of these divisions before the end of the 13th century. The old Mercian dialect was split into East and West Midland. West Saxon became slightly diminished in area and was more appropriately named the South Western dialect. The Kentish dialect was considerably extended and was called South Eastern accordingly. The so-called Katherine Group of writings c. Middle English dialects The distribution of Middle English dialects. With the change in appearance came a change in spelling. For the sake of clarity i. For the first century after the Conquest, most loanwords came from Normandy and Picardy, but with the extension south to the Pyrenees of the Angevin empire of Henry II reigned 1154–1189, other dialects, especially Central French, or Francien, contributed to the speech of the aristocracy. As a result, Modern English acquired the forms canal, catch, leal, real, reward, wage, warden, and warrant from Norman French side by side with the corresponding forms channel, chase, loyal, royal, regard, gage, guardian, and guarantee, from Francien. King John lost Normandy in 1204. With the increasing power of the Capetian kings of Paris, Francien gradually predominated. Meanwhile, Latin stood intact as the language of learning. For three centuries, therefore, the literature of England was trilingual. Ancrene Riwe, for instance, a guide or rule riwe of rare quality for recluses or anchorites ancren, was disseminated in all three languages. The sounds of the native speech changed slowly. Even in late Old English short vowels had been lengthened before ld, rd, mb, and nd, and long vowels had been shortened before all other consonant groups and before double consonants. In early Middle English short vowels of whatever origin were lengthened in the open stressed syllables of disyllabic words. An open syllable is one ending in a vowel. A similar change occurred in 4th-century Latin, in 13th-century German, and at different times in other languages. The popular notion has arisen that final mute -e in English makes a preceding vowel long; in fact, it is the lengthening of the vowel that has caused e to be lost in pronunciation. On the other hand, Old English long vowels were shortened in the first syllables of trisyllabic words, even when those syllables were open; e. This principle still operates in current English. Compare, for example, trisyllabic derivatives such as the words chastity, criminal, fabulous, gradual, gravity, linear, national, ominous, sanity, and tabulate with the simple nouns and adjectives chaste, crime, fable, grade, grave, line, nation, omen, sane, and table. There were significant variations in verb inflections in the Northern,

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Midland, and Southern dialects, as shown in the table comparing the word sing across these dialects. The Northern infinitive was already one syllable sing rather than the Old English *singan*, whereas the past participle *-en* inflection of Old English was strictly kept. These apparently contradictory features can be attributed entirely to Scandinavian, in which the final *-n* of the infinitive was lost early in *singa*, and the final *-n* of the past participle was doubled in *sunginn*. The Northern unmutated present participle in *-and* was also of Scandinavian origin. The Northern second person singular *singis* was inherited unchanged from Common Germanic. The final *t* sound in Midland *-est* and Southern *-st* was excrescent added without any etymological reason, comparable with the final *t* in modern *amidst* and *amongst* from older *amiddes* and *amonges*. The Northern third-person singular *singis* had a quite different origin. Like the *singis* of the plural, it resulted almost casually from an inadvertent retraction of the tongue in enunciation from an interdental *-th* sound to postdental *-s*. In Modern English the form *singeth* survives as a poetic archaism. The Midland present plural inflection *-en* was taken from the subjunctive. The past participle prefix *y-* developed from the Old English perfective prefix *ge-*. Variations in verb inflections.

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Chapter 2 : The history of the English language - an introduction

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.

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

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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. 1000. Rendered in Middle English Wyclif, 1380, 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 1350 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 1500, 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 2,000 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 1400. 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 1476. 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 1604. 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

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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 20th 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.

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Chapter 3 : English language - Wikipedia

The history of the English language has traditionally been divided into three main periods: Old English (AD), Middle English (circa AD) and Modern English (since). Over the centuries, the English language has been influenced by a number of other languages.

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

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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.

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Chapter 4 : HISTORY OF LANGUAGE

The most widespread group of languages today is the Indo-European, spoken by half the world's population. This entire group, ranging from Hindi and Persian to Norwegian and English, is believed to descend from the language of a tribe of nomads roaming the plains of eastern Europe and western Asia (in modern terms centring on the Ukraine) as recently as about BC.

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

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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 , 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 , 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.

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The Cambridge History of the English Language, Vol. 5: English in Britain and Overseas: Origins and Development (Volume 5) An Encyclopedia of Swearing: The Social History of Oaths, Profanity, Foul Language, And Ethnic Slurs in the English-speaking World.

The closest undoubted living relatives of English are Scots and Frisian. Frisian is a language spoken by approximately half a million people in the Dutch province of Friesland, in nearby areas of Germany, and on a few islands in the North Sea. The history of the English language has traditionally been divided into three main periods: Over the centuries, the English language has been influenced by a number of other languages.

Old English - AD: These tribes were warlike and pushed out most of the original, Celtic-speaking inhabitants from England into Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall. One group migrated to the Brittany Coast of France where their descendants still speak the Celtic Language of Breton today. Through the years, the Saxons, Angles and Jutes mixed their different Germanic dialects. This group of dialects forms what linguists refer to as Old English or Anglo-Saxon. The Angles were named from Engle, their land of origin. Before the Saxons the language spoken in what is now England was a mixture of Latin and various Celtic languages which were spoken before the Romans came to Britain BC. Many of the words passed on from this era are those coined by Roman merchants and soldiers. These include win wine , candel candle , belt belt , weall wall. In fact, very few Celtic words have lived on in the English language. But many of place and river names have Celtic origins: The arrival of St. Augustine in and the introduction of Christianity into Saxon England brought more Latin words into the English language. They were mostly concerned with the naming of Church dignitaries, ceremonies, etc. Some, such as church, bishop, baptism, monk, eucharist and presbyter came indirectly through Latin from the Greek. Around AD Danes and Norsemen, also called Vikings, invaded the country and English got many Norse words into the language, particularly in the north of England. Words derived from Norse include: The most famous is a heroic epic poem called "Beowulf". It is the oldest known English poem and it is notable for its length - 3, lines. Experts say "Beowulf" was written in Britain more than one thousand years ago. The name of the person who wrote it is unknown.

Middle English circa AD: After William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy, invaded and conquered England in AD with his armies and became king, he brought his nobles, who spoke French, to be the new government. The Old French took over as the language of the court, administration, and culture. Latin was mostly used for written language, especially that of the Church. Meanwhile, The English language, as the language of the now lower class, was considered a vulgar tongue. By about , England and France had split. English changed a lot, because it was mostly being spoken instead of written for about years. The use of Old English came back, but with many French words added. This language is called Middle English. Most of the words embedded in the English vocabulary are words of power, such as crown, castle, court, parliament, army, mansion, gown, beauty, banquet, art, poet, romance, duke, servant, peasant, traitor and governor. It was a massive sound change affecting the long vowels of English. Basically, the long vowels shifted upwards; that is, a vowel that used to be pronounced in one place in the mouth would be pronounced in a different place, higher up in the mouth. The Great Vowel Shift occurred during the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. The portraits that he paints in his Tales give us an idea of what life was like in fourteenth century England.

Modern English to the present: Modern English developed after William Caxton established his printing press at Westminster Abbey in The Bible and some valuable manuscripts were printed. The invention of the printing press made books available to more people. The books became cheaper and more people learned to read. Printing also brought standardization to English. There were three big developments in the world at the beginning of Modern English period: During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I there was an explosion of culture in the form of support of the arts, popularization of the printing press, and massive amounts of sea travel. England began the Industrial Revolution 18th century and this had also an effect on the development of the language as new words had to be invented or existing ones

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modified to cope with the rapid changes in technology. New technical words were added to the vocabulary as inventors designed various products and machinery. These words were named after the inventor or given the name of their choice trains, engine, pulleys, combustion, electricity, telephone, telegraph, camera etc. They sent people to settle and live in their conquered places and as settlers interacted with natives, new words were added to the English vocabulary. See more borrowings from different languages. English continues to change and develop, with hundreds of new words arriving every year. But even with all the borrowings from many other languages the heart of the English language remains the Anglo-Saxon of Old English. The grammar of English is also distinctly Germanic - three genders he, she and it and a simple set of verb tenses.

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Chapter 6 : English language - Historical background | blog.quintoapp.com

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.

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. At that time the inhabitants of Britain spoke a Celtic language. But most of the Celtic speakers were pushed west and north by the invaders - mainly into what is now Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The Angles came from "Englaland" [sic] and their language was called "Englisc" - from which the words "England" and "English" are derived. Germanic invaders entered Britain on the east and south coasts in the 5th century Old English AD The invading Germanic tribes spoke similar languages, which in Britain developed into what we now call Old English. Old English did not sound or look like English today. Native English speakers now would have great difficulty understanding Old English. Nevertheless, about half of the most commonly used words in Modern English have Old English roots. The words be, strong and water, for example, derive from Old English. Old English was spoken until around The new conquerors called the Normans brought with them a kind of French, which became the language of the Royal Court, and the ruling and business classes. For a period there was a kind of linguistic class division, where the lower classes spoke English and the upper classes spoke French. In the 14th century English became dominant in Britain again, but with many French words added. This language is called Middle English. It was the language of the great poet Chaucer c , but it would still be difficult for native English speakers to understand today. From the 16th century the British had contact with many peoples from around the world. This, and the Renaissance of Classical learning, meant that many new words and phrases entered the language. The invention of printing also meant that there was now a common language in print. Books became cheaper and more people learned to read. Printing also brought standardization to English. Spelling and grammar became fixed, and the dialect of London, where most publishing houses were, became the standard. In the first English dictionary was published. Late Modern English has many more words, arising from two principal factors: Varieties of English From around , the English colonization of North America resulted in the creation of a distinct American variety of English. Some English pronunciations and words "froze" when they reached America. Some expressions that the British call "Americanisms" are in fact original British expressions that were preserved in the colonies while lost for a time in Britain for example trash for rubbish, loan as a verb instead of lend, and fall for autumn; another example, frame-up, was re-imported into Britain through Hollywood gangster movies. Spanish also had an influence on American English and subsequently British English , with words like canyon, ranch, stampede and vigilante being examples of Spanish words that entered English through the settlement of the American West. French words through Louisiana and West African words through the slave trade also influenced American English and so, to an extent, British English. Germanic is a branch of the Indo-European language family.

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Chapter 7 : English language | Origin, History, & Characteristics | blog.quintoapp.com

A Brief History of the English Language English is a member of the Indo-European family of languages. This broad family includes most of the European languages spoken today.

Contact Author What is Grammar? The grammar of a language is about the way that language is structured, how the words are constructed and the way they are related to each other in a sentence. A book about grammar is also known as a grammar. Of course, historically, early ways of communicating developed well before there was any thought about the structure of a language, but since the earliest beginnings of an interest in grammar, its understanding has been influenced by people interested in both language and philosophy. Definitions and attitudes to grammar and language in general have changed over the centuries. As this article is biased towards English grammar, it is interesting to look briefly at the historical development of the study of grammar in European countries from early times, touching on Transformational Grammar, Universal Grammar that is forever linked with the name of Noam Chomsky, and the attitude of grammarians today. In translation work an understanding of the grammar of a language is essential. Source Traditional Type Grammars As early as the fifth century BC, a grammar was developed in Sanskrit, but what has become known as Traditional Grammar was conceived by the early Greeks and they also were the first to establish an alphabetic writing system. This innovation led to the beginning of literary writings as we know them, and from these the need for a grammar developed so that people could better understand and appreciate what was written. By the first century BC, the Greek, Dionysius Thrax, had defined grammar as something that permits a person to either speak a language or to speak about that language and how its components relate to each other. Latin grammars emerged a little later and mostly relied on Greek grammar as a basis. Considerably later than that, almost two thousand years after Thrax, our English grammars evolved from the Latin. The use of Latin grammar as a basis for English grammar led to an emphasis being laid on a prescriptive type of grammar. In these Traditional Types of grammars rules were laid down for the formulation of what was seen by grammarians and linguists as principles for the correct usage of the language, rather than the grammar being a description of the actual way in which the language was being used. Universal Grammar and Chomsky When more movement between countries began, and especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, missionaries began to learn to communicate in languages that were quite different from Greek and Latin. In an effort to translate the Bible as accurately as possible into these languages, it was found that a view of traditional grammars was really inadequate as they could not be easily applied to many of these languages. A huge change came about in the s with some new theories about grammar. These are usually credited to Noam Chomsky, although centuries before, Roger Bacon had suggested some of these ideas about a Universal Grammar. That is, that our ability to learn language is already in our genes and as a child grows it learns to process the data that it hears. Universal Grammar is actually far more complicated than this in the proposals it makes and in recent years the theory has received considerable criticism. This happens with the grammar of a language as well; it changes over time. Linguists study a language as a system of human communication and this has developed into a wide field with a number of different methods of approach, such as the sounds, known as phonology, the structure of a language, the syntax, and the meanings, or semantics, and many other categories. In recent years the study of linguistics has expanded greatly to include areas such as anthropology, psychology and sociology. This is very useful, especially when working with a second or other language. As we have seen, Grammarians are concerned with the structure of a language and the way that words and phrases are combined to produce sentences. Most teachers of English to children find that there is still a place in the classroom for what was known as prescriptive grammar. Linguistic aberrations may be interesting for linguists but for children growing up, the learning of grammar continues to be important. A brief understanding of the differences between the study of linguistics and the study of grammar and its history can be helpful.

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Chapter 8 : A Brief History 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.

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

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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.

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Chapter 9 : The history of English | Oxford Dictionaries

The Cambridge History of the English Language is the first multi-volume work to provide a full account of the history of English. Its authoritative coverage extends from areas of central linguistic interest and concern to more specialised topics such as personal and place names.

The beginnings to Ronald I. Using the comparative method, historical linguists can reconstruct the unattested Proto-Indo-European language which is the ancestor of all the known ancient and modern Indo-European languages, and similarly the Proto-Germanic language which is ancestral to all the Germanic languages. There are also a few other poorly attested ancient languages, e. The major discovery of the late 19th-century philological scholars was that sound changes which have gone to completion in a particular speech community are regular, i. Exceptions can always be expressed in terms of phonological conditions, e. The most common such irregularities are commonly called analogy, in which a form is reanalyzed on the basis of related forms e. It is often said that paradigms become irregular as a result of sound change, and that analogy serves to regularize paradigms. This is often, but not always, the case. The plural was understandably replaced with *dei* e *s*, which gave us modern day, days. Such changes usually begin as mistakes by children learning a language, or by second-language learners, and become 1 generalized in the community. But note that some originally regular verbs have actually become irregular in Modern English, e. PIE had a very complex system of inflectional and derivational morphology. Polish and many other Slavic languages preserve seven cases nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, instrumental, locative, vocative ; PIE also had an ablative motion away from and an allative motion towards. There were many others, which had complex alternations of stress and vowels; such vowel alternations are called ablaut. The PIE verb was also complex. These inflected for three persons and three numbers. Various suffixes were used to form verb stems, which could denote future, desiderative want to X , or intensive meaning as well as aspect. The other, archaic types had the same kinds of stress and vowel ablaut alternations as in the noun. The verb was last in its phrase, so the normal sentence type was SOV. Most such languages allow stuff to move to the right of the verb, so PIE probably did as well. PG also had a contrast of indicative, subjunctive from the PIE optative , and indicative commands ; the old subjunctive was lost. Most of these have vowel alternations between the indicative singular and the other forms. This is another major innovation of PG, and the ancestor of modern English past -ed, Dutch -de, German -te. They had similar endings in the present, but different endings in the past strong past vs. These are mostly modal verbs, which most often govern another verb. As a result, they have distinctive endings from other presents as still today in English: The verb-second restriction probably also arose in PG, since it is found in all old Germanic languages; see below under the Old English section. This is a classic example of partial assimilation: Most ModE vowel alternations outside the verb go back to this change: The OE noun reflects the PG situation, but sound changes have led to the collapse of some distinctions. OE has also merged the instrumental with the dative except in a couple of pronouns, so there are four cases: See the textbooks for typical paradigms. As a result of umlaut, these were marked by umlaut in the plural, e. OE had over 20 of them, but only seven survive today: Many comparatives in -ra and superlatives in -est show umlaut, as still in modern German: The OE verb shows a number of innovations compared to PG. All seven classes have been preserved from PG; see the texts for paradigms. Thus in the subjunctive, there are only two forms: OE syntax has been well studied in recent years. OE vocabulary is mostly of Germanic origin, but there are some early Latin loanwords. Some go back to the days before the Angles, Saxons, etc. Unlike later periods of English, OE writers were fond of creating neologisms using native resources, e. In early OE times *s*, early *s* , the great monasteries were in northern England, such as Lindisfarne, home to the Venerable Bede. But Wessex became the center of English literary and cultural life during the time of King Alfred the Great late *s* , so the great majority of our literary texts are in West Saxon. The Viking invasions had an enormous impact on the development of the English language. Many locals were killed or fled during the wars, and the area was later

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heavily settled by Norse speakers from modern Denmark and Norway. OE *steorfan*, now *starve*. OE stands out among early medieval European languages for its literature, both in poetry and in prose. The famous epic *Beowulf* is the longest surviving epic poem from the Old Germanic period; it was probably written before 1000, in the alliterative style inherited from PG at least two words in each line must begin with the same consonant, or a vowel. There are also 7 several shorter poems, on both religious and secular themes, and a set of famous riddles in verse. However, the language of the *Petersborough Chronicle* is often considered to be early ME; it represents a transitional phase in the language. The southwestern English dialects generalized voiced fricatives in initial position, and a few words like *vat*, *vixen* were taken into standard English. In many cases, the long vowel was generalized, *e*. This was an extension of a highly restricted OE sound change, *e*. The same happens with some instances of [v], *e*. Consonant clusters like *kn-*, *gn-*, *wr-* were reduced in late ME, giving us the silent initial letter. The inflection of nouns, adjectives, and pronouns is greatly simplified in ME times. The genitive and dative plural soon generalize *-e s* as well. With the loss of final *-e*, this distinction disappears as well, and the only adjective endings are comparative *-er* and superlative *-est*. These include *-ate*, *-ation*, and *-ity*. This distinctive feminine form arose in some dialect and spread widely. The morphology of the ME verb is also greatly simplified from OE. The shortening described above also creates some new irregularities, *e*. In addition, late ME also gradually abandons verb-second word order. According to a recent view, the northern ME dialects had a type of verb-second syntax similar to modern Scandinavian languages or German the result of language shift from Norse, but the southern dialects had a different type of verb-second syntax, where the verb is in second position in most main and dependent clauses. These two types came into contact in late medieval London, and the resulting variation and confusion led to the loss of verb-second order. ME has famously borrowed lots of vocabulary from French Norman and then Continental French, but the influence of French is actually very limited before the early 1500s. It appears that the main influx of French words began around 1066, and was connected to the loss of Normandy by the English kings, which cut off the Norman aristocrats from the continent. Anglo-Norman French went into rapid decline around this time; as the nobility developed a new sense of their English identity, they incorporated many French and a few Latin words into their English, and these words were gradually adopted by the rest of the monolingual population. The peak of borrowing was roughly during the period 1100-1500. Most French loanwords naturally came from areas of life in which Norman ways, institutions, or concepts were dominant military, government, law, the court, cuisine and refined things, medieval chivalry, religion and philosophy. The influence of Latin was limited during this time, and only really took off after with the Renaissance. The percentage of French loanwords depends on geography more in the south than the north, for obvious reasons and literary genre, and undoubtedly also was related to social class and other factors London vs. The main division in ME dialects is between north and south, *i*. Note also the survival of OE alliteration, rather than the French model of end-rhyme, as the main principle of poetic organization. The main reason is the Great Vowel Shift, a chain shift which affected most of the late ME long vowels. So by the end of this process, we have a single form *you* for all second- person pronouns. In the verb, northern 3rd singular *-s* comes to London, and gradually becomes more and more common. This process seems to have started in imperative command clauses *Do eat your dinner! Do not go home! Did I see my shirt? Have you the time? American Do you have the time?* From the Elizabethan period and throughout the 1600s, we have a large number of documents by members of the new and increasingly powerful middle classes of young, educated, assertive men. Much of their work falls into the period after 1500, but they are responsible for introducing many, many new words from the classical languages Latin and Greek, and for fixing modern English spelling in often arbitrary and outrageous ways.