

The History of English

Courage to Risk

Colorado Springs

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English

The language of commerce.

English speakers: 320 million
350 2nd Lang
+ millions studying English

EnglishWords

“Words are the instruments that make thought possible.” Judd

English has the highest number of words.

Numbers vary, from 650,000 -....

English Words

“This all being said, I now unequivocally state that as of 1:16 pm (Pacific) on the 21st day of March (the vernal equinox) in the year 2006 AD (or CE, whatever your preference), there were approximately 988,968 words in the English Language, plus or minus a handful.

Choose well among them.”

By Paul JJ Payack. President, Global Language Monitor

www.languagemonitor.com

English is Alive...

Claiborne, in *Our Marvelous Native Tongue*, p.4 remarked,

The truth is that if borrowing foreign words could destroy a language, English would be dead (borrowed from Old Norse), deceased (from French), defunct (from Latin) and kaput (from German). When it comes to borrowing, English excels (from French) and eclipses (from Greek) any other tongue, past or present. (1983, p. 4)

English continues to grow

- Words are being added daily
- Only about 200 irregular words
 - They are used frequently
 - Must be learned to read and spell

Origins of English

Words are travelers - they bring their past experience and history.

Knowledge of this history helps us understand the structure of English, and explains many of its consistencies and inconsistencies.

Proto-Indo-European

Ancestor of many languages

Today, almost half the world's languages are derived from Indo-European.

Pre Anglo-Saxon "English"

- Indo - Europeans
- Celts, Picts, and Jutes
- Romans

History of English

Three major influences on English:

Anglo Saxon

Latin

Greek

The Elements of English

- Anglo Saxon <25%
- Latin 55%
- Greek 10%
- Other

Historical Framework

- Pre - Anglo Saxon Britain
 - Celts, Romans
- Old English Period: 449 - 1066:
 - Foundation, a German Language
- Middle English Period: 1066 - 1500:
 - Staggering social, political, economic, linguistic changes
 - 1066 - 1250 Norman Domination
 - 1200 - 1500 Bilingualism and Ascent of English
- Modern English Period: 1500 -
 - Renaissance, Empire, Codification

Ancient Briton

c. 4000 BCE Picts

farmers, traders

c. 2000 BCE Beaker People

Builders of Stonehenge

800 BCE Iron Age

Celts

Spread throughout Europe from Asia Minor

Arrived in England 800 BCE

Warriors, farmers, traders

Celtic spoken in England until invasions
by Angles and Saxons

Roman Invasion 55 BCE

Julius Caesar

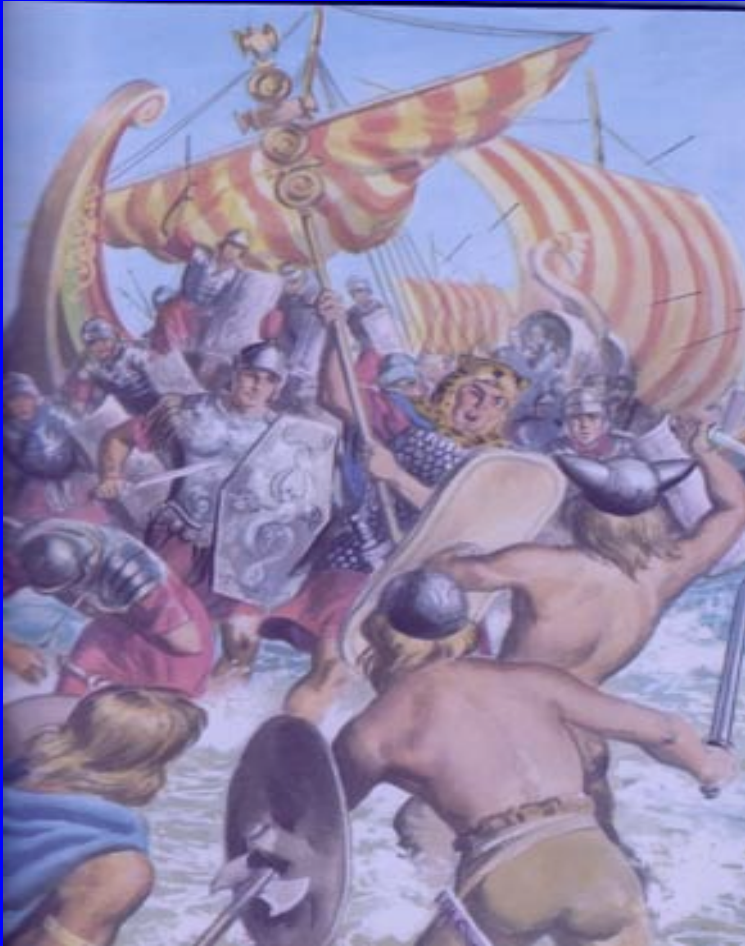
43 CE Britain part of Roman Empire

First (but of least influence) introduction of Latin into English

Celtic and Latin coexisting



Roman Invasion 55 AD



Roman alphabet

Vulgar Latin
vocabulary

Advent of
Christianity

Latin Alphabet Replaces Runes

THE FUTHARK RUNIC ALPHABETS

THE OLD FUTHARK RUNES (PRE- AND EARLY VIKING AGE) – 24 LETTERS



The runic alphabet or futhark (the third character has the value 'th') is shown here in one of its earliest forms. It was to be used in the north for more than a thousand years. Originally designed for carving on wood or stone, the angular form of the characters was conditioned by the nature of the material on which they were incised.

- Runes have been found throughout Europe; they were probably carried north by Germanic tribes. The Brythonic Celts in Ireland used runes
- Thorn, þ and the edh or eth, ð (voiced: *bathe*) were retained for the unvoiced and voiced /th/

Vocabulary

- 300 loan words remain from the period of occupation
- These word entered Brythonic Celtic - then were taken into Old English
 - Candle, city, tile, chest, crisp, ark, port
 - Master, monastery, alter, apostle, martyr, mass
 - Demon, comet, crystal, verse, psalm
 - pear

Christianity

- Monasteries established
- Produced and copied manuscripts
- England's first Christian Martyr,
Saint Albans 250 AD

Invasion of Angles and Saxons ~400 CE (Germanic Tribes)

Angles- Northumbria, Mercia
Saxons- Sussex, Essex, Wessex

Celts

Gradually retreat to west- Wales, Ireland

North - Scotland

East - Brittany

Very few Celtic words left in England

- mainly place names: Avon, Cam, Bryn
Mawr

Second Wave of Latin: Church Latin

- England Christianized
 - St Augustine of Canterbury 597AD + St Aidan
- Monasteries established school
- Manuscripts in both Latin and vernacular English
 - Latin became the dominant academic language

450 loan word

some assimilated and could assume AS
affixes (*martyrdom*)

Christianity maintained the presence of Latin

- Earlier influence had been primarily “vulgar” Latin
- Church Latin - a higher ecclesiastical register
- Latin associated with preserving the practice of writing

Written History

- Venerable Bede ~673 - 735 CE
"Ecclesiastical History of England"
- Wrote of events from the time of Julius Caesar to the arrival of Augustine.

Viking Invasions c. 800 CE

Spoke a language related to
Angles and Saxons

Norse words brought into the
language

The Viking Raids

A.D. 793. This year came dreadful fore-warnings over the land of the Northumbrians, terrifying the people most woefully: these were immense sheets of light rushing through the air, and whirlwinds, and fiery dragons flying across the firmament.

These tremendous tokens were soon followed by a great famine: and not long after, on the sixth day before the ides of January in the same year, the harrowing inroads of heathen men made lamentable havoc in the church of God in Lindinsfarne, by rapine and slaughter. March.

Norse Words

by-village - Derby, Whitby

gate-street- Billingsgate,
Ludgate

thwaite-clearing

Braithwaite

fell-hill, Scarfell

beck-stream troutbeck

Tuesday-Tiew

Wednesday-Woden

Thursday-Thor

King Alfred The Great

871 - 899

A Saxon, reestablished the monasteries

Encouraged literacy among clergy and freemen

Translated Bede's history into vernacular

Began history of the English people in English, "The Anglo Saxon Chronicle" -continued for 200 years

Anglo-Saxon Old English is a German Language

- Phonetic
- Highly Inflected
- Primarily a spoken language
- Very little written word survives
- Vowels changed with tense
 - Take/took
 - Drink/drank
 - Speak/spoke
- Nouns had number, gender and case

Anglo-Saxon Numbers

ByrM 1 195-196:

I. getacnað **an**.

V. getacnað **fif**.

X. getacnað **tyn**.

L. **fiftig**.

C. centum. **hundred**.

D. **fif hundred**.

M. þusend ...

xxiii. þreo & twentig.

xxiiii. feower & twenti.

xxv. **fif & twentig**.

xxvi. **syx & twentig** ...

•And multiplication ... ditto!

ByrM 1 64.11: **Feower** siðon **syx** beoð **feower & twentig** ...

ByrM 1 60.11: **Twelf** siðon þrittig, oððe þrittig siðon **twelf**, beoð þreo **hundred & syxtig**.

Words of Anglo Saxon Origin

"Simple words for simple
folks"

Anglo-Saxon Words

- Most are one syllable words
- Syllables: closed, open, r controlled, VCE, -cle
- Everyday words for things and events
- Vowel combinations - out, blood, boil
- Silent letters - knight, wrote, lack, knuckle, gnaw

The Power of A-S Words

"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."

('surrender' only non A-S word)

Winston Churchill, 1940, in *Our Marvelous Native Tongue*, R. Claiborne



King Alfred the Great Warrior, Scholar Anglo Saxon becomes Old English



- "Simple words for simple folk" *but*.
- Flexible and resourceful with rich stocks of synonyms - productive word compounding and affixes
 - Example: *mod* meaning mood connoting heart, mind, spirit yield over 100 words including:
 - Modig/spirited, modiglic/magnanimous, modleas/spiritless,
 - Modhord/mind, thought, modcræft/intelligence
 - Madmod/folly, glædmod/ kindness,
 - Modcaru/sorrow, swiþmod/great of soul



Old English

449-1066 CE

The Language of the Angles and Saxons became the foundation of English

Old English a mixture of Anglo-Saxon and Norse

The Three Periods of the English Language

Old English

449 - 1066

Middle English

1066 - 1500

Modern English

1500 - present

The Norman Invasion

'1066 and All That'

Major impact on the English
language

Middle English

1066-1500 CE

Many words from Norman-French.

French the language of the rulers

Latin greatly influenced this period -language of church, and judicial system.

Anglo-Saxon

sheep

pig

cow

hut

deer

deep

lonely

feed

help

French

mutton

pork

beef

cottage

venison

profound

solitary

nourish

aid

Middle English

- Language of the commoners
- Developed unchecked by written form
- Simplified
 - Inflectional endings of Anglo-Saxon were dropped
 - Gender became logical
 - Case endings vanished
 - Plurals formed by s, es, not vowel changes
- Accent became fixed on the base word

Chaucer 1345-1400

- The Hundred Year's War
 - 1337 - 1453 with France
- The Black Death 1347-51
 - Killed nearly half the population
- Political and Religious Upheaval

- Middle class birth
- Trilingual

The Canterbury Tales

Whilom ther was dwellynge at Oxenford
A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord,
And of his craft he was a carpenter.
With hym ther was dwellynge a poure scoler,
Hadde lerned art, but al his fantasye
Was turned for to lerne astrologye,
And koude a certeyn of conclusiouns,
To demen by interrogaciouns,

If that men asked hym in certain houres
Whan that men sholde have droghte or elles shoures,
Or if men asked hym what sholde bifalle
Of every thyng; I may nat rekene hem alle.

Early Modern English

- Printing
- The Great Vowel Shift
- Classical Revival
- King James Bible
- The Book of Common Prayer 1549
- Shakespeare

William Caxton 1422-91

- Set up the first printing press in England in Westminster 1476.
- First step in spreading literacy
- English becomes more standardized
- Printed Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

The Great Vowel Shift

- Took place slowly - 200 years
- The vowel shift resulted in certain vowel sounds being articulated in new positions and resulted in a sharp separation between phonology and spelling
- Hoos → hose → house
- Ded → deed

The King James Bible

- William Tyndale 1494-1536
- Translated the New Testament from original Greek. 1526
- Studied Hebrew and began a translation of the Old Testament
- King James Bible 1603 - much based on Tyndale's version

Shakespeare

- Huge vocabulary in excess of 30,000 words.
- Coined new words and phrases freely
- Plays acted and read

The Classical Revival

- A renewed interest in Greek and Latin language and culture.
- Words borrowed directly from Latin
- Impacted spelling - debitum/debt
 - February/februarius
 - Tried to impose Latin Grammar rules on English

Modern English 1500 -

- No sharp division between Middle and Modern English
- Influenced by;
 - Colonialism
 - Science, Technology

Many Greek words introduced at this time.

Dictionaries

- Dr Johnson 1709-1784
- James Murray and the Oxford Dictionary 1837 - 1915
- Noah Webster 1758-1843

The Oxford Dictionary

- First complete edition A-Z 1927
- 50 years in the making
- Most contributions were voluntary.

American English

- Brought to America at the time of the Pilgrims, the beginning of Modern English
- English and American English developed in parallel
- Accent is not as variable
- Retained some old forms, gotten
- Introduced new words
- Simplified, more phonetic

Colonialism

British Imperialism

- North America
- India
- Africa
- Asia
- Australia/New Zealand

Noah Webster 1758-1843

- Born West Hartford Conn
- Attended Yale 1774-78
- Patriotic fervor
- Taught school 1787-80
- Attended Law School
- 1783 Published *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (100 million copies sold to date)
Revised as *The Elementary spelling book*

Noah Webster and Publishing in America

- Webster was responsible for copyright laws being adopted
- Supreme marketer of his product;
 - donated books to institutions and sought publicity
 - Made sales tours throughout America- gave copies to local printers, put them in general stores

Noah Webster

- From 1787-98 he worked in publishing
- Turned to producing a dictionary- first publishing in 1806 and finally in 1828 the *American Dictionary of the English Language*
- After his death the rights were bought by the G&C Merriam Co

Differences between English and American Spelling

- Websters influence
- or/our
- favor/favour
- re/er
- centre/center
- se/ce
- offense/offence
- check/cheque
- program/programme
- plow/plough
- ax/axe
- tire/tyre
- curb/kerb
- wagon/waggon
- traveler/traveller

Alphabet Reform

- Throughout the 19th century several alphabet reforms were proposed with the aim of making written English match spoken English
- Beginning teaching alphabets: Pitman, i.t.a. (1960)
- George Bernard Shaw

Simplified Spelling

- Beginning with Webster several attempts were made at spelling reform
- Funded by Andrew Carnegie the Simplified Spelling Board proposed 300 spelling changes in 1906
- President Theodore Roosevelt wrote his annual message to Congress using simplified spelling .

Example of Simplified Spelling

- The real obstacles to progress are not the ancient arguments still naively advanced by opponents of simplified spelling and spelling reform-arguments minutely analyzed and refuted before most of their proponents were born.

BY GODFREY DEWEY. *Hon. Secy. United States Simplified Spelling Board.*

Horace Mann 1796-1859

- From humble beginnings on a MA farm he attended Brown and became a lawyer
- Practiced in Dedham then MA State legislature
- Established the Board of Education in 1837
- He traveled MA to visit all the schools to observe the conditions

Horace Mann

- Founded teachers colleges
- Ensured Supervision of Public schools
- Built schools with adequate light, ventilation and comfort
- Traveled to Europe and observed Prussian schools where the whole word method was taught.
- Although rejected by the "Boston Schoolmasters" Mann's views prevailed

Progressive Educational Movement 1880-1920

- Colonel Francis Wayland Parker
(Quincy MA and Cook Co, Chicago)
- John Dewey
- G. Stanley Hall

Had similar beliefs about reading and a whole word approach. Responsible for widespread "reform"

Summary

- **Old English**
 - mixture of Anglo-Saxon and Norse
 - Simple words of simple folk
- **Middle English**
 - Language of everyday people. Simplified and understandable to us today
- **Modern English**
 - Classical revival, addition of many Latin and Greek words.

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