Lecture 1

**History of English as a science**

*History of the language gives keys to many seeming inconsistencies of the language.*

Plan

1. The subject matter of the History of the English language.

2. The purpose and tasks of the science. Its ties with other sciences.

3. The main periods in the history of the English language.

4. OE Alphabet and pronunciation.

Literature (Verba L. p. 6-18)

Main notions: synthetic, analytical, origin, invasion, levelling

Main dates: 449, 1066, 1475-6, 1485, 1660, 1876

Main names: Hengist, Horsa, Shakespeare, William the Conqueror, Alfred the Great, Henry Sweet

1. The subject matter of the History of the English language.

History of the English language is one of the fundamental courses forming the linguistic background of a specialist in philology. In studying the English language of today we are faced with a number of peculiarities which appear unintelligible from the modern point of view. These are found both in vocabulary and in the phonetic and grammatical structure of the language.

We cannot account for them from the point of view of contemporary English; we can only suppose that they are not a matter of chance and there must be some cause behind them. These causes belong to a more or less remote past and they can only be discovered by going into the history of the English language.

With adequate tools of investigation we still can trace all the changes within the language as a system. So the aim of the course is the investigation of the development of the English Language.

The subject matter of our course is the changing nature of the language through more than 15 hundred years of its existence. It studies the rise and development of English, its structure and peculiarities in the old days, its similarity to other languages of the same family and its unique specific features.

It starts with a view at the beginnings of the language, originally the dialects of a comparatively small number of related tribes that migrated from the continent onto the British Isles, the dialects of the Indo-European family – synthetic inflected language with a well-developed system of noun forms, a rather poorly represented system of verbal categories, with free word order and a vocabulary that consisted almost entirely of words of native origin. In phonology there was a strict subdivision of vowels into long and short, comparatively few diphthongs and an undeveloped system of consonants.

Mighty factors influenced the language converting it into the mainly analytical language of today, with scarcity of nominal forms and a verbal system that much outweighs the systems of many other European languages. Its vowel system is rich, its vocabulary is enormous. Its spelling system is rather confusing.

2. The purpose and tasks of the science. Its ties with other sciences.

The purpose of our subject is a systematic study of the language development from the earliest time to the present day. Such study enables the students to acquire a more profound understanding of the language of today. Tasks^

* to state the facts and to find the causal ties between them;
* to explain the peculiarities of the modern language;
* to be able to explain the discrepancies;
* to analyse the systematic changes.

Study of the history of a concrete language is based on applying general principles of linguistics to the language in question. Foundations of our science are studied in introduction to linguistics (the general notions and categories).

To know the origin of the English language we should remember the introduction to special philology which gave the information about ancient Germanic languages and their structure.

The languages can be studied synchronically or diachronically. The structure of the language of any period whether it is the 20th or the 9th century can be studied as such. The complex study of a language of a certain period means its synchronic study. However, if we study one phenomenon at different times, for example the system of the English noun, it would yield a diachronic result. Saussure ----- - all things at one time; | - one thing at diff. times

7 seofon – angl; gott – sibun; seven.

Both approaches are usually combined in special philology.

History of English is an important subsidiary discipline for history of England and of English literature. It is based on the history of England studying the development of the language in connection with the concrete conditions in which the English people lived in the several periods of their history. In our reference to history we are going to distinguish linguistically relevant historic events. It is also connected with disciplines studying present-day English – theoretical phonetics, grammar and lexicology.

3. The main periods in the history of the English language.

The first inhabitants of the British Isles were Celts – Britons and Gaels (family). In 55 BC the Romans under Julius Caesar landed in Britain. Permanent Roman conquest began only in 43 AD by the emperor Claudius. The Romans subdued and colonized the country, established a lot of military camps, paved roads – completely transformed the aspect of the country.I*t became a Roman province i*n the 4th century the Christianity spread in Britain. In 410 the Roman legions were recalled from Britain to defend Italy from the advancing Goths under Alaric.

The English language is to a certain extent rare in the sense that we actually can find a starting point of its development. Its beginning can be traced back to the year 449, when coming to help their Celtic ally, Vortigern, two Germanic chieftains, Hengist and Horsa, (Jutes) brought their belligerent tribesmen to the Isles. The British resistance was stiff and the advance was brought to a standstill for nearly 50 years by a great battle won at Mount Badon. The inhabitants asked the Romans for help, but the Romans were too busy with their own battles with Germanic Barbarians. Historians attribute the resistance to King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. 12 battles are mentioned in Latin chronicles. So that period was the starting point of the English language.

The conquerors settled in Britain in the following way. The Angles occupied most of the territory north of the Thames; the Saxons – the territory south of the Thames; the jutes settled in Kent and in the isle of Wight.

*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 1100. In the 9th and 10th Century invaders from Scandinavia (the Vikings) occupied a largу part of northern and easter\*n England. They introduced many everyday words in modern English. Many place names end in -"by",from their word for village (Whitby, Grimsby, Formby etc). Some words we use today fromthe Vikings are sky, leg, call, take, dirt, law, are, take, cut, both, ill, ugly, egg, sister,window and get*

The Western regions were held by the Britons: Cornwall was conquered in the 9th, Strathclyde in the 11th and Wales in the 13th century.

The Scottish Highlands where neither Romans nor Teutons had penetrated were inhabited by Picts and Scots. Ireland also remained Celtic until the 12 th century.

The Old English period (written testimonies since 700) lasted till 1066 when the Norman leader William the Conqueror made a turn in the history of the country.

*In 1066 William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy (part of modern France),  
invaded and conquered England. 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 (1340-1400), but it would still be difficult for native English speakers to understand today.*

That was the beginning of the Middle English period. It lasted until 1475 (the introduction of print) or 1485 - the end of the war of Roses which marked the decay of feudalism and the rise of capitalism. Modern English period is subdivided into Early (1660) and Late.

*Towards the end of Middle English, a sudden anddistinct change in pronunciation (the Great Vowel Shift) started, with vowels being pronounced shorter and shorter. From the 16 th 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 1604 the first English dictionary was published.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Period | Years | Historical Event | Linguistic difference | Literature |
| Old | 449 – 1066 | Anglo-Saxon Conquest; - Norman Conquest | Henry Sweet – the Period of Full Endings | Beowulf |
| Middle | 1066 – 1475 (85) | war of Roses | Levelled Endings | Canterbury Tales |
| Modern  Early  Late | 1475  1660  1876 | Telephone, phonograph | Lost endings | Shakespeare |

4. OE Alphabet and pronunciation.

The system of writing in OE was changed with the introduction of Christianity. Before that, the English used the runes – symbols that were very vague, that might at the same time denote a sound, a syllable or a whole word.

*Runes are the 24 letters (later 16 in Scandinavia and 30 or more in Anglo-Saxon England) of an ancient Germanic alphabet used from the 2-d or 3-d to the 16th century. Perhaps derived ultimately from the Etruscan alphabet, the runic alphabet was used mainly for charms and inscriptions, on stone, wood, metal, or bone. Each letter had a name, which was itself a meaningful word. The rune , for instance, could stand for either the sound “f” or the fehu, “cattle”, which was the name given to the rune.*

They were of specific shape, designed to be cut on the wooden sticks, and only few people knew how to make them and how to interpret them. Runic inscriptions that came down from the oldest settlers on the isles are few, and the language is not what might be called OE – it was rather an ancient language which might be very close to the languages of other Germanic tribes. The story of runes might be very interesting in itself, yet what we are going to study was written in an alphabet dating back to the 7th century; it was Latin alphabet with few specifically English additions. Some English sounds had no counterpart in Latin, so three signs developed from runes were added, plus ligature ae, now well known as a transcription symbol.

The Latin alphabet was carried throughout medieval Europe by the Roman Catholic church – to the Irish and Merovingians in the 6th century and the AngloSaxons and Germans in the 7th. The oldest surviving texts in the English language written with Latin letters date back to c.700.

So the letters of the OE alphabet were as follows, and they denoted the following sounds:

1. a [a] *an* (go) *and* (and
2. ae [ae] *aet* (that)
3. b [b] *ban* (bone)
4. c [k] *caru* (care) and [ ] before front vowel *cild* (child)
5. d [d] *deor*  (deer; in old times animal)
6. e [e] *mete*  (meat; in old times food)
7. f [f] *findan* (find) and [v] in intervocal positian *lufu* (love)
8. was one of the remnants of the runic alphabet called *joh* (yoke)

and it had several readings

[g] *an* (go)

[j] *ear* (year)

[ ] at the beginning of the word before back vowels and after *n* and between two back vowels: *sor ian* (sorrow), *fol ian* (follow), *uma* (man, human), *da as* (days)

1. h [h] *ham* (home), *him* (him), *hunto* (hunting)
2. i [i] *hit* (it), *him* (him), *lim* (limb)
3. l [l] *lytel* (little), *lif* (life), *lufu* (love)
4. m [m] *man* (man), *macian* (make)
5. n [n ] *nama* (name), *neah* (near)
6. o [o] fon (catch), mona (moon)
7. p [p] *pera* (pear), *up* (up)
8. r [r] *riht* (right), *rin an* (ring), *wyrcan* (work)
9. s [s] *sittan* (sit), *sin an* (sing)
10. t [t] *treo* (tree), *tellan* (tell)
11. o was developed from the rune *thorn* [0] *oaet* (that), *oirda* (third), *oin* (thing);

[o] in intervocal position *ooer* (other), *brooor* (brother)

20. u [u] wudu (wood)

 21. w [w] in original OE texts it was p *wynn* from the rune meaning joy: *winnan*

(win), weoroan (become)

22. x [ks] *oxa* (ox)

23. y [u] *fyllan* (fill), *lytel* (little)

The stress in OE was dynamic, and shifted to the first syllable. Originally in common Indo-European the stress was free; the stress in the OE words was always on the first syllable (verbs with prefixes, however, had the stress on the root vowel). The nouns having the same prefix had the stress on the first syllable too: *and* '*swarian* – '*andswaru*

**Lecture 2 Old English period. Historical Background**

Archaeological digs reveal that the British Isles were occupied during the Bronze Age, between 2000 and 1500 BC. But history as we know it began with the Celts, those warring tribes that had invaded eastern Europe between the fifth century BC and the beginning of the Roman conquests.

The First Celtic Occupants

It was at the beginning of the Iron Age, between the eighth and sixth centuries BC, that Celts began to occupy the British Isles. They settled not only in Ireland, but throughout Great Britain. These Celtic tribes were numerous (listed here by their Latin designations): Caledones, Damnonii, Novantae, Selgovae, Votadini, Carvetii, Brigantes, Parisi, Deceangli, Ordovices, Silures, Demetae, Cornovii, Corieltauvi, Dobunni, Durotriges, Dumnonii, Iceni, Catuvellauni, Trinovantes, Cantiaci, Atrebates, Belgae, and Regni.

Each of these peoples (themselves divided into many tribes) spoke its own Celtic language ([Indo-European family](https://slmc.uottawa.ca/?q=indo-european_family)). Intercomprehension must have been relatively straightforward from one person to the next, but more difficult the further one tribe lived from the other. For example, Caledonians, who lived in the north, probably had trouble understanding southern Celts such as the Dumnonii, Durotriges, Belgae, Regni, Cantiaci, etc. We know that the Celts of Britain could understand certain Celts of Gaul, such as the Caletes, Osismii, Veneti, Carnutes, etc., who lived on the other side of the English Channel. Julius Caesar's remarks in his *Gallic Wars* (Book I), although about the continental Gauls rather than the Celts of *Britannia*, are a fitting summary of the Celtic languages in general:

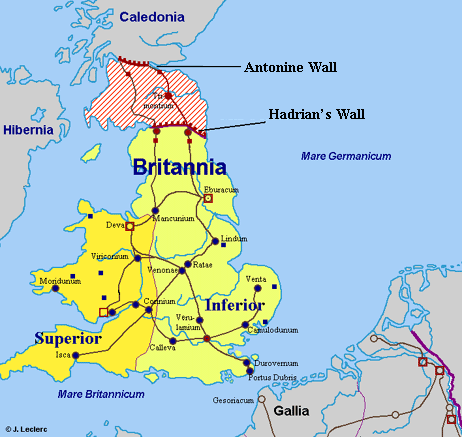
*All Gaul is divided into three parts, one of which the Belgae inhabit, the Aquitani another, those who in their own language are called Celts, in our Gauls, the third.****All these differ from each other in language, customs and laws****. The river Garonne separates the Gauls from the Aquitani; the Marne and the Seine separate them from the Belgae. Of all these, the Belgae are the bravest, because they are furthest from the civilization and refinement of [our] Province, and merchants least frequently resort to them, and import those things which tend to effeminate the mind; and they are the nearest to the Germans, who dwell beyond the Rhine, with whom they are continually waging war; for which reason the Helvetii also surpass the rest of the Gauls in valour, as they contend with the Germans in almost daily battles, when they either repel them from their own territories, or themselves wage war on their frontiers. One part of these, which it has been said that the Gauls occupy, takes its beginning at the river Rhone; it is bounded by the river Garonne, the ocean, and the territories of the Belgae; it borders, too, on the side of the Sequani and the Helvetii, upon the river Rhine, and stretches toward the north. The Belgae rise from the extreme frontier of Gaul, extend to the lower part of the river Rhine; and look toward the north and the rising sun. Aquitania extends from the river Garonne to the Pyrenaean mountains and to that part of the ocean which is near Spain: it looks between the setting of the sun, and the north star.*

Aujourd'hui, les langues celtiques sont en net déclin: seuls le breton en France (l'ancienne Armorique), le gallois au pays de Galles, l'irlandais et l'écossais ont survécu:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Group** | **Languages** |
| Gaulish | Gaulish†, Celtiberian† |
| Brythonic | breton, gallois, cornique† |
| Gaelic | Irish, Scottish, Manx† |

It should be noted that numerous immigrants arriving in Canada during the 18th and 19th centuries still spoke Gaelic, Irish, or Scottish.

The Roman Occupation

In 55 BC, Julius Caesar landed to the south of the island of Great Britain, then still called "Britain" or Britannia (in Latin). But his two invasions (55 and 54 BC) seem to have had little effect on the history of Roman Britain, for they resulted in neither annexation nor colonial settlement. Then in 43 AD, the Emperor Claudius invaded Britain with four Roman legions (roughly 40,000 men). Occupation went no further north than Hadian's Wall (95 km long), which today separates England from Scotland; at the time, *Britannia* did not include Scotland (Caledonia) or Ireland (Hibernia).

The Romans believed that the Celtic "natives" were less developed and civilized than they were, and that it was their duty to make them conform to their lifestyle and cultural values. Thus they formed cities and created a vast network of roads covering the entire country, while a hierarchy of civil servants managed the country and the army ensured that order reigned.

Latin was the common language for both Romans and local inhabitants. However, Romanizing the island's inhabitants—whom the Romans called ***Brittones*** (or "Britons")—was done rather superficially, and old-time Celtic persisted, at least in the countryside. In other words, "Britons" continued to speak a variety of Celtic languages, with the exception of the local élites, who were generally bilingual, and for whom Romanization was clearly successful.

Rural populations were not assimilated by the Roman occupants. Latin was no more than a foreign language, no doubt necessary to maintaining harmonious relations with the Romans. The Latinization of cities was more successful, but not to the extent that inhabitants had to change languages.

Then in the third century came the first Viking incursions on the island of *Britannia*. In the fourth century, following the great reforms of the Emperor Diocletian (284–305), the province of *Britannia* was divided into *Britannia Superior* to the west and *Britannia Inferior* to the east (*see map above*). Subsequent increases in Germanic attacks also contributed to the decline of the Roman Empire in Britain. Roman legions withdrew from the island permanently in 407.

The Arrival of Germanic Tribes

Beginning in 450, the **Angles**, a Germanic people from what is today Schleswig-Holstein (south of Denmark), settled on the southern coasts of *Britannia* and drove back the Celts to Cornwall and Wales. Once settled in England, the Germanic tribes borrowed a number of terms from the Celtic vocabulary; all that remain today are *bin* (Old English *binn*, manger), *brock* (O.E. *brocc*, badger), and *dun* (O.E. *dunn*, dull brown). The legend of King Arthur has preserved the memory of the fierce resistance of "Britons" (synonym for "English").

Although all of these Germanic invaders—**Angles**, **Saxons**, **Friesians**, **Jutes** (from Jutland in Denmark), even **Francs**—came from different places (albeit from the same civilization), they identified themselves either as **Angles** or **Saxons**, whence the name **Anglo-Saxon**. To the north was the **Scotti** kingdom, which gave its name to the country, Scotland.

In seventh century *England* there were seven major Germanic kingdoms: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex (East), Wessex (West), Sussex (South), and Kent. At this time, Germanic tribes still spoke their original languages (Old Norse, Frankisch, Friesian, Saxon, Anglian, etc.), all of them stemming from common or proto-Germanic. Thus, although English did not yet exist, the peoples who had settled there would become the ancestors of a language whose evolution was just beginning.

Between the mid-fifth century and the beginning of the seventh century, Celts from *Britannia* (essentially Cornwall and Wales) were chased from the island by the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons. Crossing the Channel, they sought refuge in Armorica (today's French Brittany), where they introduced the Breton language. Eventually, the Britons in turn pushed the Gallo-Romans east of Armorica (which meanwhile had become Brittany) and then came up against the Francs, who nevertheless left them much to themselves. Ties between Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, and Ireland remained close, and conferred a strong enough sense of identity to fend off the Francs.

The Germanic invasions in *Britannia* caused placenames to change in relatively short order. Thus, insular Britain (*Britannia*) became **England**, the "land of the Angles." At first, Roman Armorica was called by its Latinized Gaulish name of *Letavia*—a name the Welsh preserved in their word for Brittany, *Llydaw*—then became *Britannia Minor* ("Little Britain"), as opposed to *Britannia Major* ("Great Britain"). Over time, the Latin form of *Britannia* evolved in France into *Bretanie* (whence the English *Brittany*), then *Bretaigne*, and finally *Bretagne*. Bretons gave the Quimper region the name *Cornouailles* (the furthermost southwestern region of Great Britain called *Cornwall*). Gaul eventually became **France** (from the name Francs).

**Old English (or Anglo-Saxon): 700 to 1100**

The Old English (or Anglo-Saxon) period extended from about 700 to the 11th century. Other Germanic nations joined the Anglo-Saxons already settled in Britain, such as the **Jutes**of Jutland (Denmark) and a number of **Friesians**. The Jutes took over the southern part of the island as well as the Isle of Wight off the south shore, while the **Angles** settled in the north of England and the **Saxons** in the southwest after confining the Celts to the west (Wales and Cornwall).

War led the numerous Germanic kingdoms to merge, obliterating the traces of Roman organization and changing *Britannia* to the land of the Angles and Saxons. Following the Christianization of the Welsh and Irish in the fifth century and Scots in the sixth, the Saxon kingdoms were evangelized under Pope Gregory the Great (590–604).

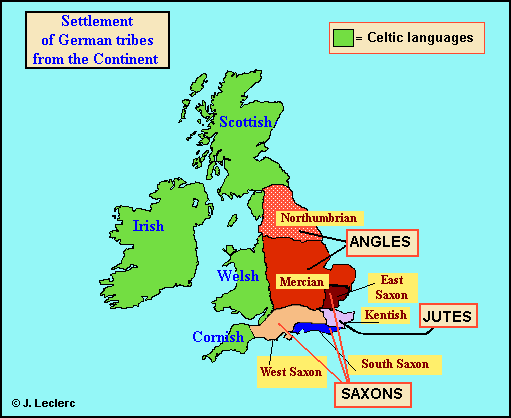
While the ancient Celtic nations were being driven back in the west of Britain (*see map of Britannia above*), the Vikings returned in the eighth ninth 9th centuries to vanquish all the Saxon kingdoms except Wessex. As they spoke **Old Norse**, the Vikings brought with them new northern words, roughly thirty of them, including call (Old English ceallian: "cry"), fellow (feolaga: "partner"), husband (O.E. husbonda: "head of the house"), law (O.E. lagu: "establish"), wrong (O.E. wrangr: "crooked," "unjust"), etc. Thus England remained dominated by Wessex. In time, the Danes settled in the east of England and formed a kingdom called Danelaw (Danalagu: "region where Danish law holds sway").

Anglo-Saxon

In the ninth century, thanks in part to the influence of Alfred the Great (Anglo-Saxon king of Wessex from 871 to 878), the western Saxon kings became the first sovereigns of all England and **West Saxon**,the dominant language of prose literature. Meanwhile, the Catholic church had continued to christianize the region and had brought back **Latin**. The resulting English was then further mixed with **Latin**, **Saxon**, and **Old Norse** words. Named after these German and Danish warriors, the Germanic language **Anglo-Saxon**represents the first period of English, or **Old English**. The Anglo-Saxon language of these peoples remained, however, fragmented into dialects.

Linguistically, the Germanic kingdoms gave birth to the three major dialectical groups found in Old English:

* **West Saxon** (Wessex), as well as East Saxon and South Saxon
* Kentish (Kent)
* **Anglian**, including Mercian and Northumbrian



The region occupied by the Anglians (*Angli* in Latin) was called *Anglia* and the language *Englisc* (whence *English*). The **Jutes** arrived from Denmark and settled mainly in Kent, while the **Saxons** remained in the region that still bears their name (*Sussex*: Southern Saxons; *Wessex*: Western Saxons; *Essex*: Eastern Saxons). Meanwhile, the **Angles** took over the area from the shores of the Thames to the Scottish Lowlands. This geographic dispersion explains in part the diversity of Old English dialects: **West Saxon**, **South Saxon**, **East Saxon**, **Kentish**, **Mercian**, and **Northumbrian**, the last two making up **Anglian**. The alphabet then in use is called the *Runic Alphabet*

Loan Words

By comparison with modern English, the Old English (or Anglo-Saxon) vocabulary appears rather limited today, with approximately 24,000 lexical units to at least 500,000 in contemporary English, if not more than one million. Old English was influenced by Old Norse, Celtic, Latin, and certain Scandinavian languages.

Old Norse

Much of the vocabulary of Old English and Old Norse was identical, though intercomprehension between the two languages was not a given . Today's English has roughly one million words that can be traced to ancient Scandinavian origins through Old Norse: *bag, birth, bread, cake, to die, egg, happy, husband, law, to lift, root, same, to seem, sky*, etc.

Celtic Languages

Borrowings from certain Celtic root words gave rise to some doublets in standard English: whole/hale, no/nay, shirt/skirt, screak/screech, edge/egg*.*Old English also borrowed some proper nouns from Celtic languages (Belfast, Cardiff, Dublin, Glasgow, Avon, etc.) as well as many common nouns, such as bannock, cart, down, and mattock. Most modern English words with Celtic origins—from Welsh, Scots Gaelic, or Irish—are fairly recent loan words.

Latin

Already at the time, words with Latin origins were numerous —there were roughly 150 of them . M any actually derived from Greek: altar, mass, priest, psalm, pear, etc. Most of these words—often religious terms— were introduced through the spread of Christianity. At this time, members of the clergy and scholars used Latin, and scientists readily used Greek. This Latinization of English enriched the language with many words and gave a " Mediterranean flavour" to the " Nordic language," or a "Latin flavour" to the " G ermanic language."

Scandinavian Languages

There were also about forty words of Scandinavian origin introduced by the Vikings during their many invasions of Britain: are, take, cut, both, ill, ugly, etc. Of course the writing underwent numerous changes, but one can still recognize certain words: deor (deer), scort (short), disc (dish), môna (moon), sunne (sun). Although some Old English words are unrecognizable due to their Celtic appearance: eorðe (earth), cniht (knight), cyning (king), wicu (week), gærs (grass), costung (temptation), many survived and remain almost intact today: feet, geese, teeth, men, women, lice, mice, etc.

In the early 11 th century, Old English was a language that, despite its Celtic and Greco-Latin influences, remained firmly Germanic. Linguistic transformations of t he next period, however, would produce an Anglo-Saxon unrecognizable in relation to the preceding one.

**Middle English : 1100 to 1500**

The 11th century saw the beginning of the "second period" of English, called Middle English, with the conquest of the country by William II of Normandy. At the death of Edward of England in 1066, his cousin, the Duke of Normandy—then called "William the Bastard," the illegitimate son of the Duke of Normandy, Robert I (Robert le Diable) and Arlette, a tanner's daughter—landed in England with the Pope's blessing in order to lay claim to the English throne. With an army of 6,000 to 7,000 men and some 1,400 ships, William landed in Sussex on September 29th and headed for Hastings, where he confronted King Harold II.

At the Battle of Hastings (October 14, 1066), which lasted only one day, William vanquished and killed Harold II. Thus "William the Bastard" became **William the Conqueror** and, on Christmas day, was crowned king in Westminster Abbey and became **William I of England**.

A Norman King for England (and Vassal of the King of France)

The new king ousted the Anglo-Saxon nobles, who had not supported him, and promoted his Norman barons. He began by appropriating the lands of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy: over 1,000 "thegns" (aristocratic landowners or rich merchants) lost their lands to some 600 barons (mostly Normans but also Lorraines, Flemish, and Bretons). William I also did away with Anglo-Saxon prelates and ecclesiastical dignitaries by handing over the archdioceses to Norman dignitaries. It is thought that roughly 20,000 Normans settled in England following the Conquest. Thereafter, William I of England (1066–1087) ruled over his feudal lords with authority and became the richest and most powerful king in the West. As the kingdom's principal landowner, three-fifths of the land fell under his direct control. After twenty years of rule, the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy had vanished completely and a Norman elite had replaced it. There was not a single Englishman at the head of a bishopric or an abbey. The English language had begun to decline while Franco-Norman thrived

However, as the Duke of Normandy, the King of England remained a vassal of the King of France (until 1204), which only succeeded in provoking antagonism. After the death of William I in 1087, his heirs fought over the English throne, and rivalries with Normandy intensified. William II ("William the Red") assumed the English throne to the displeasure of his brother, Robert Courteheuse, the eldest son of William I and heir to the Duchy of Normandy. Tensions and conflicts between the two brothers lasted twenty years, as each tried to seize the other's lands, which served only to further the claims of the King of France.

The Franco-Norman Language

During the reign of William I of England, members of the court spoke a *kind of French* known today as *Franco-Norman* (or ***A nglo-Norman***), a French tinged with northern words brought by the Vikings who had conquered northern France a century earlier. By that time, the word *Norman* had lost its etymology of "man of the North" in favour of "inhabitant of the Duchy of Normandy." As conqueror, William declared Franco-Norman the official language of England. While inhabitants of the countryside and most common townspeople spoke Anglo-Saxon, the local nobility, the conquering aristocracy, and those connected with the church and the courts spoke **Franco-Norman** . Clergy, clerks, scientists, and scholars wrote in **Latin**. Thus, three languages shared the same language arena without any real competition: Franco-Norman, Anglo-Saxon, and Latin.

**French**, the language of the King of France, had not yet become established in high society, but this changed by the close of the 13th century. More prestigious than Franco-Norman, French was finally adopted by aristocrats and high dignitaries of the Church of England. The French language became widespread in cultural and artistic life. T he Norman nobility had always forced its children to learn French, either in France itself or in specialized schools. Robert of Gloucester, one of the kingdom's leading figures, wrote in his *Chronicle*in 1298:

Vor bote a man conne frenss me telþ of him lute.  
Ac lowe men holdeþ to engliss and to hor owe speche ßute.

For unless a man knows French, men think little of him .  
But low men hold to English and to their own speech yet.

In short, commoners and country dwellers were barely influenced by French. They continued to use their Anglo-Saxon dialects while also borrowing (without knowing it) words from Franco-Norman or French.

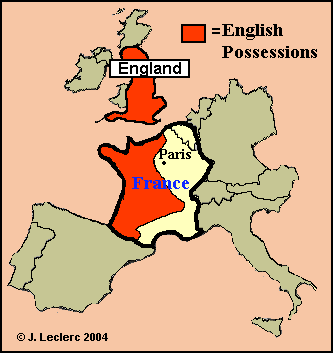
Quadrilingualism

Until the 14th century, four languages were spoken in the country, but did not seriously compete with one another. **Franco-Norman**(also called "Anglo-Norman") was the language of local administration and was taught in schools from the elementary level. The Church even preached to its congregations in Franco-Norman, although it used **Latin** for its own internal administration. **French** was the language of the aristocracy, legislation, and the courts; many rich and/or noble families sent their children to study in French cities. Meanwhile, the Anglo-Saxon people continued to speak an **Anglo-Saxon** (fragmented into five linguistic varieties) infused with Latin, Franco-Norman, and French words. Certain Anglo-Saxon words were created: town, home, house, and hall. This is how English acquired numerous lexical doublets, one of Germanic origin, the other of Romance origin: *house/ home, bookstore/ library, kitchen/ cuisine, sheep/ mutton, stream / river, coming/ arrival, tank/ reservoir, tongue/ language, town/ city, mansion/ manor,*etc.

Other words came into English through Franco-Norman: *accustom* (acostumer > accoutumer), *afraid* (afrayé > effrayé), *butler* (buteler > bouteiller), *candle* (candeile), *crown* (coronne > couronne), *eagle* (egle > aigle), *garden* (gardin > jardin), *jacket* (jacquet), *mayor*(maire), *money* (moneie), *oil* (oile > huile), *school* (escole > école), *soldier* (soudier > soldat), *tailor* (taillour > tailleur), *war* (werre > guerre), etc. **Old Norse** (of Scandinavian origin) gave Middle English the very important word *law*.

The English nobility had borrowed its titles from **French** (*prince, duke, peer, marquis, viscount, and baron*), but had created others in Middle English:*king, queen, lord, lady, and earl*. There was also an administrative vocabulary with French origins, such as *county, city, village, justice, palace, mansion, residence, government*, and *parliament*. There were words in the areas of religion (*sermon, prayer, clergy, abbey, piety*, etc.), law (*justice, jury, verdict, prison, pardon*, etc.), fashion (*fashion, collar, button, satin, ornament*, etc.), cooking (*dinner, supper, sole, salmon, beef, veal, mutton, pork, sausage, pigeon, biscuit, orange, oil, vinegar, mustard*, etc.), and art (*art, music, image, cathedral, column*, etc.).

The Growing Influence of French

By his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152, Henry II, first king of the Plantagenet dynasty, controlled over half of eastern France, aside from Ireland and Scotland. His kingdom now stretched from Scotland to the Pyrenees, the greatest potential power in Europe. Eventually, Philippe Auguste took back from Henry II's sons (Richard the Lionhearted and John Lackland) the lion's share of the Plantagenets' French possessions ([Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, Poitou, Aquitaine, Limousin et Brittany](https://slmc.uottawa.ca/?q=former_provinces_france)).

At this time, the entire English monarchy spoke French, not to mention that the English kings married only French princesses (every princess between 1152 and 1445 came from France). Some English kings actually spent more time on the continent than in England; Henry II spent 21 of his 34 year reign there.

In 1259, Henry III of England officially renounced Normandy, which nonetheless retained a kind of autonomy within the French kingdom. The loss of Normandy forced the English nobility to choose between England and the continent . This contributed to marginalizing Franco-Norman while benefiting both Parisian French and English. In 1328, the last of the French Capetians (Charles IV) died heirless. The King of England claimed his succession rights to the French realm, but the French princes chose Philippe VI of Valois (1337). Henceforth, the two French-speaking kings fought over the French kingdom (until 1453) during the **Hundred Years War**.

After winning the Battle of Crécy (1346), English king Edward III was completely unable to address his troops in an English they could understand. Two years later (1348), he founded The Most Noble Order of the Garter, with its French motto Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense, meaning "Evil to him who evil thinks." But this long war had given birth to strong nationalist feelings in both France and England, and there were to be consequences for the French language of the English monarchy.

The English middle class protested the increasing use of French and demanded the use of English in their legislation. Edward III was forced to concede. In 1362, the Statute of Pleading officially recognized **English** as the sole language of the courts, although in practice French remained in use until 1731, despite the act of Parliament of 1362 that made English the sole legal language of the country. Gradually, French even lost its privileged place in education. Beginning in 1349, English became the language of instruction at the University of Oxford, whereas previously university teaching had been done in French. English began to be taught in some "grammar schools," and eventually in all schools.

The first king of England to speak English as a mother tongue was in fact Henry IV (1399–1413). One might say that in "kicking the English [allied with the  urgundians ] out of France," Joan of Arc (1412–1431) also contributed to the decline of French across the Channel. One wonders what would have happened to French and English if she had not intervened: the King of England, Henry V— already Count of Maine, Duke of Normandy and of Guyana—would have been crowned at Rheims, thus becoming both King of France and England. French would surely have become the language of both countries thus united in a single kingdom. In short, if Joan of Arc saved France from the English, unbeknownst to her she also did a disservice to the French language, as her intervention ensured the enduring presence of English across the Channel.

The State of Middle English

When compared to Old English, the linguistic developments of Middle English were in the considerable simplification of the language during that period. In fact, beginning in the 13th century, the three or four cases (declensions) of nouns in the singular were reduced to two, and the –*es* ending marking the plural of nouns was adopted. "Arbitrary" distinctions of grammatical gender were replaced by "natural" ones, contrary to French practice, which arbitrarily assigned the gender of nouns. The duel number (to indicate "two," as in Greek) fell into disuse, while the dative and accusative of pronouns were merged into a single form. Verb conjugation was also simplified by omitting endings and using a common form for the singular and plural of the past tenses of "strong verbs." As for writing, it had evolved from the Runic to the Latin alphabet when England as a whole became Christian. The Middle English writing system retained a number of characteristics inherited from Old English, but adapted them according to the writing system inherited from the Normans.

French Loan Words

Middle English vocabulary underwent a radical transformation due in large part to its borrowings from **Franco-Norman** and especially **Parisian French**. The English nobility and clergy, most of whom were fluent in French and English, littered their English with French words relating to government, the Church, the army, life at court, the arts, education, and medicine. A century after the arrival of William the Conqueror, more than 1,000 **Norman words** had entered Middle English. Eventually, so did roughly 10,000 **French words**. In reality, English and Franco-Norman melded so well that the lexical result was very supple and contained numerous terms. However, it is not always easy to distinguish Franco-Norman derivations from French ones in today's English. For example: *bargain*(bargaignier > barguigner), *bastard* (bastard, bâtard), *choice* (chois > choix), *crust* (cruste > croûte), *custom* (custume > coutume), *merchant* (marchand), *money* (monnaie), mutton (mouton), pork (porc), to toast (toster > rôtir), etc.

Some idea of the standard English of the period can be found in this extract from *The Canterbury Tales*, by the famous English poet Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400):

He knew the **cause** of everich **maladye**  
Were it of hoot or cold, or **moyste** or drye,  
And where they **engendred** and of what **humour**;  
He was a **verray parfit praktisour**.

Il connaissait la **cause** de toutes les **maladies**;  
Qu'elles soient dues au chaud, au froid, au temps humide ou sec;  
Il savait où elles se développaient et de quelles **humeurs** elles **provenaient**;  
C'était un **praticien vraiment parfait**.

These Middle English verses contain at least eight words of French origin: **cause** (*cause*), **maladye** (*maladie*), **moyste** (*moite*), **engendred** (*engendrer*), **humour** (*humeur*), **verray** (*vrai*), **parfit** (*parfait*), and **praktisour** (old form of *médecin*, doctor). Even this small sample illustrates the importance of the French contribution to the English vocabulary of the period.

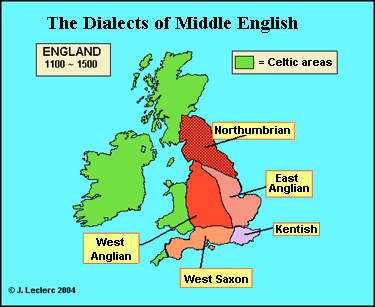
Latin Loan Words

English at this time underwent another massive Latinization, borrowing heavily from Medieval Latin, sometimes prompted by French: *attencioun* (attention), *diffusioun* (diffusion), *pastour* (pastor), *rectour* (rector), *actualyte* (actuality), *captivite* (captivity). Among the many terms of Latin origin to have survived are *allegory, conspiracy, contempt, homicide, incarnate, infinite, intellect, lapidary, lunatic, moderate, nervous, promote, quiet (quietus), rational, solidary, submit, suppress, temporal, tributary*, and zenith. In addition, English was enriched by **Latin suffixes and prefixes**, some of them borrowed through French. For example, the prefixes de- (deduce), dis- (distract), ex- (except), inter- (interval), per- (pervert), pre- (predestine), pro- (prosecute), and sub- (subscribe); and the suffixes -able (admirable) -ible (credible), -al (capital), -ant/-ent (important*,*different), -ment (argument*,*segment), etc. English would later draw from Latin in order to adjust its verbal and adjectival systems to its substantive one. Moreover, English "imported" terms from ancient regional languages spoken in medieval France, especially Angevin and Provençal.

Latin (or French) was also the medium for a number of words of **Greek** origin. Some 14th century examples include *agony, artery, basis, centre, character, climate, comedy, cycle, echo, fantasy, harmony, horizon, idiot, logic, magic, mystery, pomp, prune, schism, spasm, theatre*, and *tragedy*.

Dutch Loan Words

Finally, the Netherlands brought their share of lexical loan words, thanks to flourishing economic relations between England and Flanders at the time. There are words such as *poll* (meaning "man's head"), *clock, pickle, firkin, hop* (the plant), *skipper, deck, hose*(tube), groat, wainscot, bulwark, luck, groove, and snap.

Meanwhile, the **people of the English countryside** spoke only a Middle English dialect. The language map at left illustrates the locations of the varieties of Middle English dialects.

There were dialects in the north (equivalent to **Northumbrian**), southwest (**West Saxon**), southeast (**Kentish**), West Midlands (**West Anglian**), and East Midlands (**East Anglian**). Compared to the preceding Old English period, Celtic speech areas shrunk while Middle English ones grew, in Scotland as much as in Wales and Cornwall.

By the end of the 14th century, standard English was fully formed. It had developed in the area around London for various political, economic, and demographic reasons. Due to massive borrowing from Latin and French, the English of this period had become far removed from other Germanic languages such as German, Dutch, and Danish. And compared to Old English, it was completely transformed. This English was used by the people insofar as it corresponded to the speech around London, one that would become the language of public life, trade, and learning.

It is worth noting that English evolved unchecked, never having been "governed" by the rules generally imposed on official languages. Until now, Latin and French had been the languages used in official functions. In centuries to come, Latin would continue to exercise a profound influence on English, a Germanic language: no small feat!

**Modern English : 1500 to the Present**

Modern English begins in the middle of the 15th century, when Franco-Norman and Anglo-Saxon coalesced to form today's English. Modern English can be divided into three periods:

1. **Early Modern English** : 1500 to 1750
2. **Late Modern English** : 1750–1800 to the 20th Century
3. **Contemporary English** : the 20th Century

Early Modern English

The period known as Early Modern English began just prior to the Renaissance, a time o f unprecedented, intense excitement that included a fascination with Italy, new inventions, the discovery of America, etc. While it was a prosperous era for the aristocracy and the middle class, the peasants generally lived in squalor and knew nothing of Renaissance splendours. The English language attained its definitive structure in the 16th century, when spelling began to be standardized and grammar acquired the characteristics known today. At the end of the first period, which corresponds to the Renaissance movement, pronunciation transformed itself: for example, *to meet*, once pronounced [met], evolved into [mi:t].

The Contribution of Latin and Scientific Words

Vocabulary once again borrowed heavi ly from Greek and Latin, often through French. For example, with *real* and *royal* came the Latinism *regal*. The great authors wrote in English (this was the Shakespearean era), but scientific writings were always in Latin. This is why English drew from **Latin** and **Greek**: *maternity, esteem, education, atmosphere, skeleton, catastrophe, drama, scheme, genius, vacuum, anonymous, celebrate*, and *confiscate* are but a few examples. Others include *absurdity, adapt, agile, alienate, anachronism, appropriate, assassinate, atmosphere, autograph, benefit, capsule, catastrophe, chaos, climax, conspicuous, contradictory, crisis, criterion, critic, disability, disrespect, emphasis, encyclopaedia, enthusiasm, epilepsy, eradicate, exact, excavate, excursion, exist, expectation, expensive, explain, external, extinguish, fact, glottis, habitual, halo, harass, idiosyncrasy, immaturity, impersonal, inclemency, jocular, larynx, lexicon, lunar, monopoly. monosyllable, necessitate, obstruction, pancreas, parenthesis, pathetic, pneumonia, relaxation, relevant, scheme, soda, species, system, temperature, tendon, thermometer, tibia, transcribe, ulna, utopian, vacuum*, and *virus*.

Many words borrowed from Latin first went through French, but as usual it is not always easy to tell which ones. Meanwhile, new complications arose in spelling, leading to some disharmony between pronunciations and written forms, a characteristic as striking in French as in English.

Some English scholars very attached to Latin etymology managed to impose Latinate forms. For example, *debt* (F *dette*) and *doubt* (F *doute*) acquired a written [b] as a reminder of the Latin *debitum* and *dubitum*. A -*g* was added to *reign* because of the Latin *regnum*, and an -*s* to *island* because of *insula*. But in the latter case, *island* did not come from the Latin *insula* but from the Old English *iegland*. There was also the addition of numerous **Latin prefixes and suffixes**:

* Prefixes: a- (amoral), ab-, ac-, ad-, ante-, anti-, co-, com-, con-, de-, di-, dis-, e- (eject), em-, en-, ex-, it-, im-, in-, ir-, ob-, op-, per-, pre-, pro-, re-, sub-, super-.
* Suffixes: -age, -al, -ance, -ant, -ar, -ate, -ence, -ent, -ible, -ic, -id, -ile, -ion, -ite, -ity, -ive, -or, -ous, -tion and nouns like -a (data), -is (crisis), -ude (decrepitude), -um (datum), and -y (contingency).

It is noteworthy that Latinate words had a higher status than Anglo-Saxon or Germanic words, especially during the Renaissance, when professional vocabulary (medicine, botany, law, etc.) entered English in full force directly from Latin or through French. Thus, Latinate words became indicators of a good English education and, consequently, of the speaker's social status. For example, it can be shown how words of Latin (or French) origin have acquired a higher social cachet than Germanic ones. Today's English has many such doublets: *amiable/ friendly, lachrymose/ weeping, libr a ry / book store, city/ town, journey/ trip, couch/ bed, cuisine/ kitchen, pork/ pig, mutton/ sheep*, etc.

The English humanists also borrowed from **Greek**, either directly or through Latin. Many scholars knew Greek and promoted its study. They directly introduced words such as *criterion, acoustic, idiosyncrasy, pathos, topic, acoustic, anonymous, chorus, crisis, critic, cylinder, dogma, drama, enigma, isthmus, larynx, nectar, site*, and *theory*. Moreover, Renaissance English fostered the use of compound words taken from Greek, such as *anthropology, archaeology, biography, cacophony, geography, hydrography*, and *physiology*. This way of enriching the lexicon would become very much in vogue in the 18th and 19th centuries—not to mention the 20th.

On the other hand, during the Renaissance many Latin or Greek words were considered pompous. Called *inkhorn terms*, they seem to have been most popular in university circles. With this fashion, however, came a growing resistance to borrowings often considered pointless. Some writers who used inkhorn terms were criticized for being boring and unintelligible, and even pedantic. Terms that the local populations would find hard to understand or use were called ***hard words***. Some scholars, such as George Pettie (1548–1589), spoke of "the barbarousness of our tongue," while Sir Thomas Wilson denounced "these scholars who Latinize to the point that the man in the street wonders what they are saying." Later on, English protestants would refer to Latin as a *Popish language* in the belief that it had been created to keep the common people in ignorance and uphold the power of the clergy. Moreover, changes were underway as the 17th century drew to a close: in 1687 Newton wrote his *Principia Mathematica* in Latin, but in 1704 published his *Opticks* in English.

The Contribution of Modern Languages

Throughout the 17th century, English continued to borrow **French words**, notably through the English aristocracy and middle class. Examples include *aide-de-camp, belles-lettres, burlesque, cabaret, canaille, champagne, chef-d'oeuvre, commandant, compote, cortège, contretemps, crayon, démarche, dishabille, double entente, envoy* (from envoyer), *façade, faux pas, group, liaison, muslin*(from mousseline), *penchant, pis-aller, repartee, reverie, suite*, and *tableau*.

As elsewhere in Europe, the Renaissance also brought a contingent of **Italian words**. Thanks to its economic riches, military strength, technological and scientific advances, and cultural supremacy, Italy dominated almost every field of endeavour. So it is no surpri s e that many in England were fascinated by this country and gave in to a vogue of Italomania that is still evident in the English language today. Between 1500 and 1650, English borrowed heavily from Italian: *artisan, bandit, battalion, bankrupt, belvedere, cav a lier, cornice, madon n a, opera, partisan, pedant, populace, balloon, carnival, caprice, gazette, disgrace, mustachio, tarot*, etc.

Although Queen Elizabeth I and her advisors took great pains to foster anti-Hispanic sentiment, many English people also spoke Spanish, especially since the marriage of Mary Tudor, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, with Philip II of Spain. But it was not until the mid-17th century that **Spanish terms** entered the English vocabulary through French: *sherry, cargo, infant, renegade, creole, toreador, armada, escalade, grenade*, etc. Some words were borrowed from the Spanish Americas: *ananas, banana, cannibal, mosquito, potato*, etc.

English continued to borrow from **Dutch** (*brandy, yacht, smack* [fishing boat], *filibuster, wagon, frolic, snip, sputter*, etc.), **Arabic**(*alchemy, admiral, alembic, azimuth, cotton, elixir, alcohol, algebra, apricot, hashish, arsenal*, etc.), the**languages of India**(*curry, pariah, nabob, arsenic, check, chess, lilac*, etc.), **Persian** (*bazaar, dervish, shah*, etc.), and **Turkish** (*caviar, coffee, dolman, horde, janissary*).

During the 16th and 17th centuries, English took canoe, lama, manioc, tobacco, chocolate, condor, tomato, moccasin, sachem, squaw, and others. from **aboriginal languages**.

English Transformed

These contributions show without a doubt that the English lexicon was undergoing quite a transformation with the introduction of foreign terms. English was even forsaking its Germanic heritage of short words in favour of long words passed down by Latin and Greek, and even French (or Franco-Norman). Moreover, this was a fashion followed by most English writers—Chaucer in the 14th century, Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Bacon in the 16th, and Ben Jonson and Milton in the 17th. If some in England reacted "badly" to the intrusion of foreign words—especially Latin and Greek ones—others believed the English language had also grown richer with thousands of new words, and that it had acquired a remarkable lexical flexibility. It is easy to understand the reaction of someone like Edmund Spenser (1552–1599) at the influx of these foreign terms into English. Writing to the poet Gabriel Harvey (1550–1631), he lamented that they had made the English language a gibberish and a mishmash of all other languages. This flood of new words from approximately fifty different languages must have made a similar impression on many in England. Still, the majority of loan words came from Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and Spanish, giving the language of this "northern country" a curious and unique " Mediterranean flavour."

It is also around this time that concerns were raised about spelling. The introduction in 1476 of the printing press by William Caxton played a role in standardizing spelling. There were two opposing camps—"revolutionaries" and "reformers." The former wanted to completely overhaul the writing system, while the latter merely wanted to tidy up the spelling. The reformers won, which left English spelling in a rather complex state. In the mid-17th century, a major campaign was waged aimed at founding an English Academy modelled after the French *Académie française* (1635) and the Italian Accademia della Crusca (1582). The proponents of the idea wanted to set out and impose a series of norms that would stabilize the English language. But despite the support of such famous writers as Dryden, Defoe, and Swift, nothing came of the idea. A certain standardization did occur during the next period, but attempts at reform would remain half-hearted until the arrival of lexicographer Noah Webster (1758–1843). In 1828, Webster published his *American Dictionary of the English Language*, which included distinctive new American spellings. Webster's fame does not rest solely on his impressive body of work—he was the first to see the necessity of distinguishing American usage from its British model. As for grammar, despite numerous attempts since the 16th century, English has never been truly codified.

Late Modern English

As one would expect, the breach opened by the Latinizers of the preceding period widened during the 18th and 19th centuries during what is now called the Late Modern English period. Industrialization fostered a very large technical and scientific vocabulary taken mostly from Greco-Latin sources. The second period of Modern English (1750–1800) saw the first attempts at standardizing and regulating the English language by means of the first prescriptive grammars and dictionaries.

The Borrowing Continues

A new phenomenon arose near the end of the 17th century: genuine **Latin** words, borrowed directly and without phonetic or morphological alterations, entered the English language: *album, antenna, desideratum, lumbago, minimum, momentum, nebula, status, stimulus, viscera*, and others. This movement continued to a lesser degree into the 18th century: *humus, insomnia, locus, maximum, extra, prospectus, ultimatum, detritus, duplex, ego, excursus, sanatorium*, etc.

**French** continued to provide English with new words in the 18th century (*chaperon, etiquette, picnic, pirouette, roulette, valise, bouquet, pompon, pot-pourri, canteen, chaise, connoisseur, fauteuil, salon, denouement, vignette, bivouac, manoeuvre, route, glacier, hors d'oeuvre, police, soi-disant, vis a vis*, etc.) and in the 19th century (*format, cliché, beret, blouse, bain-marie, bonbon, gratin, mayonnaise, restaurant, sauté, coupé, acrobat, secretaire, morgue, bête noire, mirage*, etc.).

**Italian**enriched English in the 17th and 18th centuries with *impresario, largo, pergola, presto, solo, sonata, soprano, virtuoso, casino, concerto, prima do nn a, trio, imbroglio*, etc., and in the 19th with *intermezzo, scenario, studio, tremolo, mafia, vendetta*, etc.

English continued to borrow from foreign languages throughout the 20th century and will most likely continue to do so indefinitely. In fact, in a July 2003 editorial, a journalist for the prestigious *Wall Street Journal* wrote, "What makes English so strong, after all, is its openness to new words from the four corners of the world. While English is a crucible of languages, the French seem to think of their language as a *soufflé—*extremely delicate and always in danger of falling." The writer ridiculed the decision by the French Minister of Culture to ban the word *e-mail* (*courriel* in Quebec), calling it "très stupide" (in French). He did not mention, however, that in March 2003, following France's refusal to participate in the Iraq war, an Ohio Republican decreed that *French fries* would henceforth be rechristened *freedom fries* in all cafeterias and annexes of the House of Representatives. In the same patriotic spirit, *French toast* w as now *freedom toast*. Is this what they call taking French leave?

The Spread of the English Language

The middle and especially the end of the 18th century witnessed a general interest in British civilization, especially in its politics and social customs, and English was to play an increasingly important role in international affairs. The British had spread their language around the globe and English was now the language of economic and political relations. As a result, it acquired great influence, and began bequeathing vast numbers of words to other languages. In fact, of all European languages, English now borrowed least while lending most; it had gone from word borrower to word lender. This gave a real boost to the prestige of English on its continent of origin. Later the British and the Americans would show they had the determination and the means to spread their language—and their goods of trade—far and wide.

Contemporary English

Compared to other languages, contemporary English may appear something of a hybrid, given all its non-genetic pairings (*eye/ocular, mind/mental, mouth/oral, nose/nasal, sun/solar*, etc.), but this rather shows its tremendous flexibility. Its immense vocabulary is officially estimated at over 500,000 words, most likely closer to a million.

Today, English presents fewer noticeable variations in spelling and stress. Nonetheless, written American English tends to have a more rigid grammar and syntax, but is more tolerant in its use of neologisms. This could be a result of the United States' colonial role in the late 19th century, when it arrived in Southeast Asia (the Philippines), then in the Caribbean (Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, etc.), and after World War II in vast stretches of the Pacific. Since then, the United States has played a predominant role in the spread of English because of its political, military, economic, and cultural power. Despite minor variations, English is easily understood everywhere in the world.

Canadian English

With the exception of varieties of English spoken in the Maritimes, there are almost no regional variants of English in Canada. What regional peculiarities do exist are usually derived from occupations typical of the region or province, and are not a genuine internal variant of English. This is the case for *highrigger*, a word used in forestry in British Columbia to designate someone who works in tree tops, while in the Prairies, the verb *sodbust* is a farming term.

However, there do exist non-geographical variations, which is why researchers have become increasingly interested in variations that would help to identify Canadian English. For example, it has been shown that the differences in spoken English between women and men appear far greater than previously thought. Researchers are attempting to verify a widespread hypothesis that women, faced with a choice between regular English and divergent forms, are far more likely than men to choose standard English. Moreover, a study conducted in Ottawa has shown the relationship between certain language habits and the speaker's social class. Two similar studies (in Toronto and Vancouver) showed that the "rising inflection" (vowels) peculiar to Canadians is becoming increasingly uncommon in young people. In other words, Canadian English is changing.

The situation is somewhat different in the Maritimes. The English of this region of Eastern Canada has more in common with the language spoken in southwest England than with the one spoken by Loyalists who once settled in Ontario. But the distinct nature of Maritime English stems in particular from the influence of Scottish and, to a lesser degree, Irish. Even at that, Maritime English presents few variations from the standard norm when compared to varieties found in other anglophone countries; moreover, it is almost never found in cities. This variety of English does, however, present many fascinating characteristics. It contains expressions current in Scotland, such as *stormstayed* (kept home by a storm), and Ireland (*clart*: "bad housekeeper"). Other words come from the Micmac (*pung*: "horse-pulled sleigh"), Acadians (*aboiteau*: "dike with sluices"), and Loyalists (*double runner,* different kinds of sleighs). It is also not surprising that some words are related to fishing: *fiddler* ("small salmon"), *flake* ("drying platform"), *lolly* ("soft ice"). Finally, the distinctive pronunciation of words such as *aunt, calm, vase*, and *wash* in the Maritimes constitutes something of a genuine regional accent. The situation in Newfoundland differs even more: its variety of English has its roots in the English of southwest England and Ireland . After almost 400 years of separation from the homeland, Newfoundland English has acquired a regional character very different from current Canadian English. Nevertheless, in cities, everyone tends to speak a kind of standard Canadian English. As with Canadian French, one of the major causes of the standardization of English has surely been an increase in education, but the development of electronic media and international communications has also contributed to narrowing the gap between varieties of English. However, it took state intervention—especially by the Canadian federal and Ontario governments—to foster the collective identity of English-language Canadians.

The Internationalization of English

The internationalization of national economies and the expansion into outside markets have created the need for common international languages, and English has benefited the most, along with French, Russian, Spanish, and Chinese. Songs, movies, and scientific research continue to spread English, as do communications and information technology. But it is especially from Latin and Greek that Anglo-American continues to draw for the scientific and technical vocabulary vital to the greater scientific and economic communities.

Since the mid-19th century, the importance of English in the world has continued to grow . The decline of the British Empire was not a setback for English—Great Britain simply handed the torch off to the United States. English is not an international language in the way that French, Spanish, Arabic, or Russian are; it is a genuine world language, a super-language above all others! It is the medium of science and technology, medicine, computer science, finance, and international trade. English appears to be continually evolving toward a kind of borderless standardization, yet without abandoning its national, regional, and social variants. English has adapted by taking diversified local forms.

The future

Of course it remains possible some day for the English language to fragment and break down into dialects, insofar as the final result of territorial expansion is always implosion. The more a language is spoken over a vast territory, the more it tends to diversify and fragment. Here are a few possible scenarios:

1. English will continue to retain (over many centuries) its present status as world medium in international, economic, and scientific relations.
2. Alliances among large language families—such as francophones, hispanophones, lusophones, arabophones, etc—will limit the expansion of English. Such a scenario implies the vigorous political intervention of all governments and organizations concerned. Would nationalist countries undertake such international struggles?
3. New technologies, especially the Internet, will allow languages to develop freely. However, it is almost certain that only a few languages—including English—would benefit from such an advantage.

Whatever the scenario, English must perish some day. As with Phoenician, Greek, or Latin, English will surely be replaced by another language, although it is impossible to know which one, let alone when exactly this will occur. What is certain is that an important international language does not die out quickly, especially in written form; sometimes it continues to be used for many centuries after the last speakers have disappeared, as in the case of Greek and Latin. As for knowing if English will dialectify, this is unlikely to happen soon, as technological discoveries such as radio, telephone, television, the Internet, and others have halted linguistic fragmentation. On the contrary, standardization of the English language—spoken and especially written—is increasing, albeit certain local forms continue to coexist. In short, it is very difficult to predict the future!

**Similarities Between English and French**

From a historical linguistics viewpoint, especially in comparing English to other Germanic languages such as German, Dutch, or Danish, English is obviously much more Romanized due to the influence of French and Latin, which played a big role in the evolution of the language. Moreover, French was greatly Germanized by Francisque during the Romance era, contrary to the other Romance languages (Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, etc.). In other words, English is to Germanic languages what French is to Latin languages: languages influenced by another genetically different one. If English remains a distinct language among Germanic languages, the same can surely be said for French among Romance languages.

Moreover, throughout its history, English (following the example of French) has drawn heavily from Latin and Greek for the new words it has needed. It also inherited spelling irregularities from French. In addition, linguists estimate that roughly 60% of English words come from both French and Latin, while French owes English only 3% to 5% of its vocabulary. Yet English and French share more than 3,200 words. For instance, *abandon, bizarre, fiancé, important, moustache, objection*, and *troglodyte* have exactly the same spelling and meaning, while other words are close cousins: *mushroom* (< F mousseron), *laundry* (< F lavandier),  *powder* (< F poudre), *school* (< F escole: école), etc. All of this explains in part certain stunning resemblances between the two languages.

Linguist Henriette Walter, in *L'aventure des mots français venus d'ailleurs* (Paris: éditions Robert Laffont, 1997, p. 177), is eloquent on the subject of the shared history of English and French, which remain "old travelling companions." In fact for nine centuries, their relationship has been "intimate" and their exchanges unbalanced, advantageous at first for French, then today for English. Between the 11th and the 18th centuries, French bequeathed thousands of words to English . This was reversed in the mid-18th century, when English words nourished the French language. From the mid-20th century, the process increased significantly, this time in the United States. In other words, French and English have always been "mutual borrowers." In the end, we can say the two official languages of Canada certainly share similarities they have inherited from the shared history of France and Great Britain.