


Formation of the British nation and the English language in the Early New English period.

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The end of the Middle English period and the beginning of New English is marked by the following events in the life of the English people:

1. The end of the war between the White and the Red Rose – 1485 and the establishment of an absolute monarchy on the British soil with Henry Tudor as the first absolute monarch – the political expression of the English nation.
2. The introduction of printing – 1477 by William Caxton (1422 – 1490)




The War of the Roses (1455 – 1485) was the most important event of the 15th century which marked the decay of feudalism and the birth of a new social order. It signified the rise of an absolute monarchy in England and political centralization, and consequently a linguistic centralization leading to a predominance of the national language over local dialects.




The introduction of printing – 1477 by William Caxton (1422 – 1490).

Printing was invented in Germany by Johan Gutenberg in 1438. It quickly spread to other countries and England was among them. The first English printing office was founded in 1476 by William Caxton, and in 1477 there appeared the first book to be printed in England called The ***Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*** .



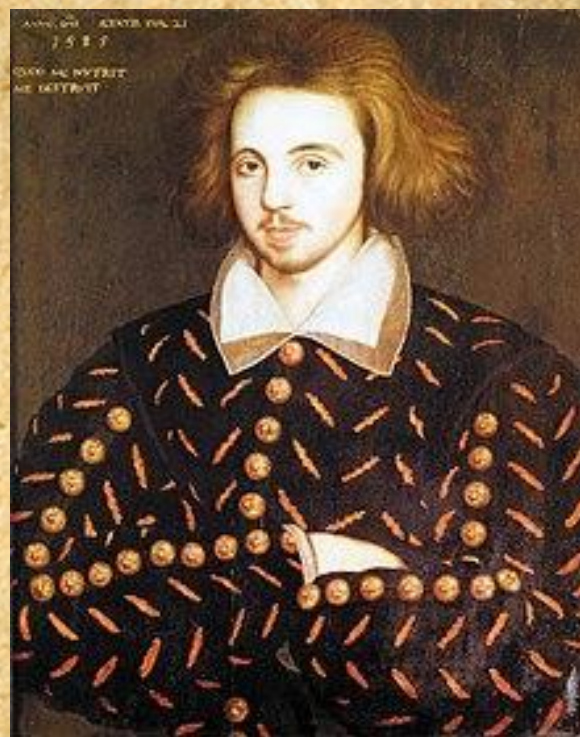
Since that time – the end of the 15th century the English language began its development as the language of the English nation. A notable feature of the Middle English period is the dialectal variety that finds expression in the written documents. It was only late in the 14th century that **the London dialect**, itself a mixture of the southern and south-eastern dialects, **began to emerge as the dominant type.**



The importance of the London dialect as the foundation of the English national language grew also because of the fact that many of the best writers of the 14th-15th centuries, and Geoffrey Chaucer among them, whose poetry achieved tremendous contemporary prestige and popularity, were Londoners or used the London dialect in their writings. As we have said, the 15th century is generally referred to as the time of the beginning of the English national language. But the literary norm of the language was established later, already in Early New English, many English authors of the forthcoming centuries contributing to it, among them such as Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Johnson, finally, William Shakespeare.



William Shakespeare



Christopher Marlowe



Edmund Spenser

Thank you
for watching

