



# **AMERICAN ENGLISH: BRIEF HISTORY**

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# *Have you ever thought about the questions:*

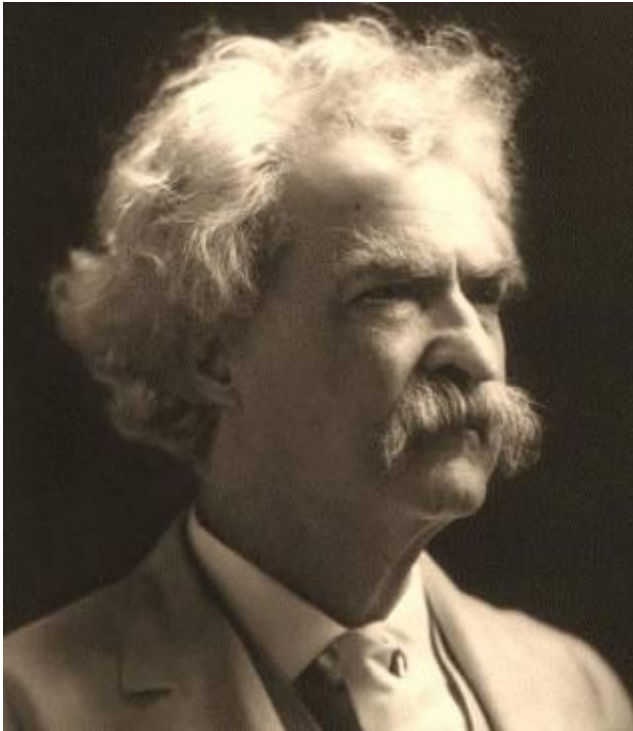
- Are AmE and BrE different languages or two variants of English?
- How did American English come into being?



Barack Obama (USA)

*When I speak my mother tongue  
an Englishman can't understand me at all.*

Mark Twain



# STANDARDS OF ENGLISH

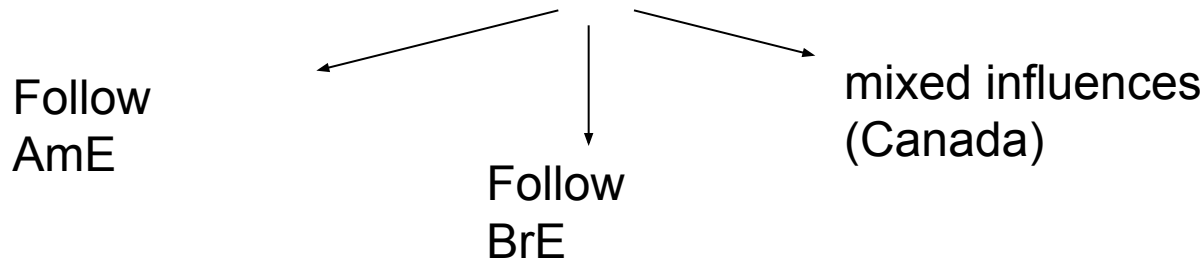
**Standard English (SE)** appeared in 1980s. This prestige accent in Britain is known as Received Pronunciation (RP).

**General American (GA)** – the speech of native speakers of American English that is typical of the United States.

**World Standard English (WSE)** – a totally uniform, regionally neutral, and prestigious variety that exists worldwide.

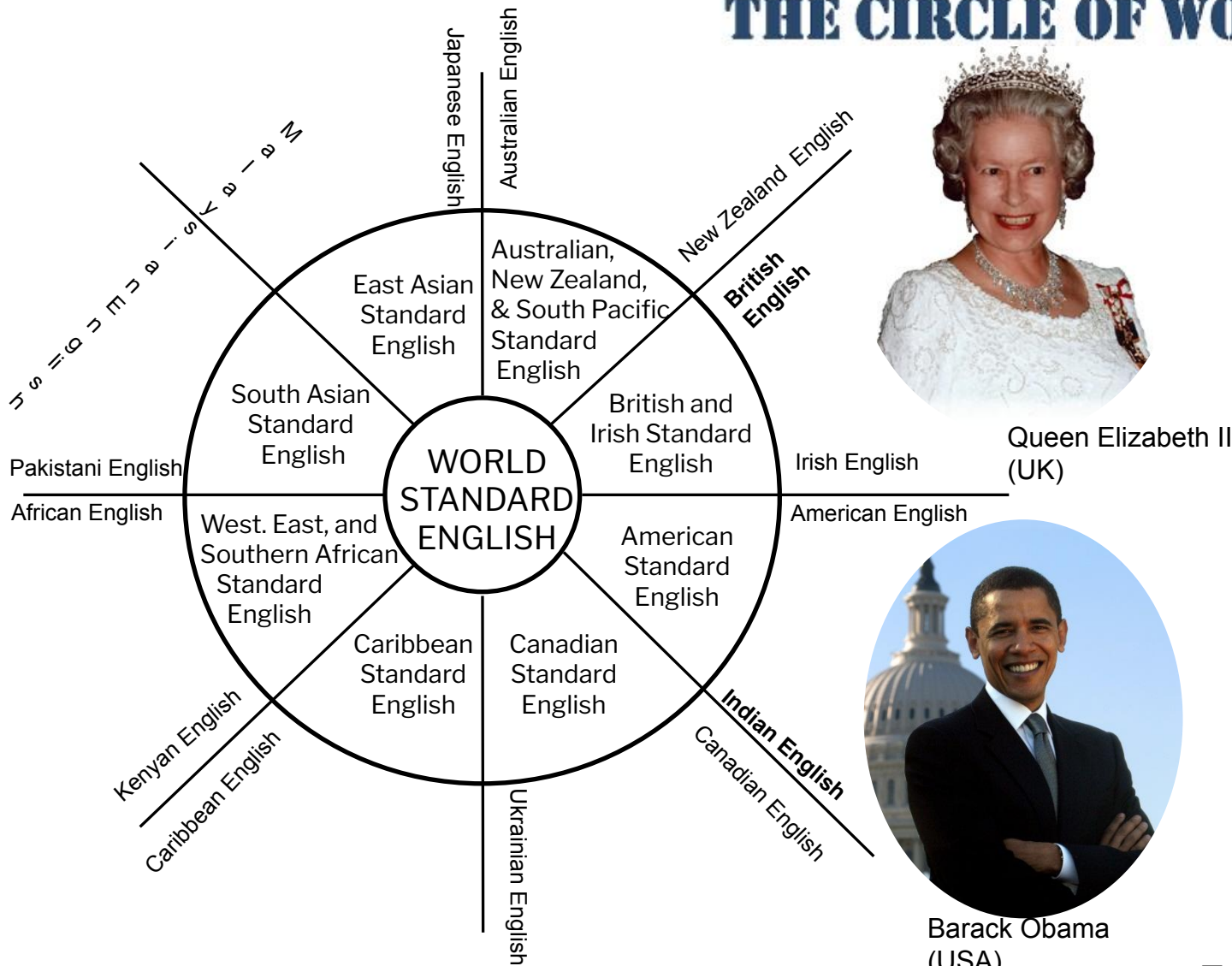
Two trends:

- each country where English is official language tries to preserve its linguistic identity (Canadians do not want to be Americans);
- other countries fall into three groups:





# THE CIRCLE OF WORLD ENGLISH



From T. McArthur,  
1987



# THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

started with the arrival of three Germanic tribes, the **Angles**, the **Saxons** and the **Jutes**, in Britain during the 5th century AD.

The three stages of the development of the English language:

Old English (450-1100 AD)

Middle English (1100-1500)

Modern English (1500-the Present)

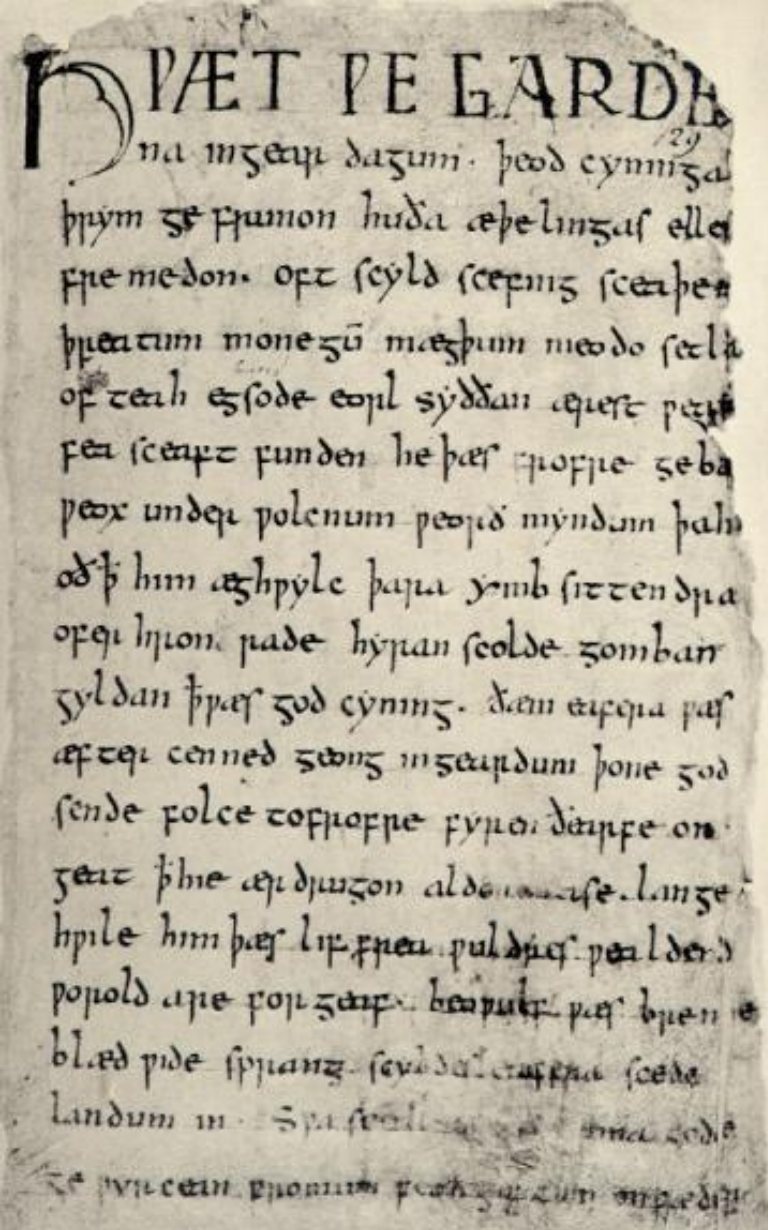


## OLD ENGLISH (450-1100)

The Germanic tribes spoke similar languages, which in Britain developed into Old English.

Old English did not sound like English today. Half of the most commonly used words in Modern English have Old English roots.

Old English engaged with the Scandinavian languages. Latinisms appeared in the English lexicon through the spread of Christianity in England. In the 8<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> centuries there was a transition to the Latin alphabet.





# MIDDLE ENGLISH (1100-1500)

In 1066 William the Conqueror conquered England. The Normans brought with them French, which became the language of the Royal Court.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century English became dominant in Britain again, but with many French words added.

The London dialect, the country's official language and the basis of modern literary English, was formed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.





# MODERN ENGLISH (1500-THE PRESENT)

**EARLY.** Towards the end of Middle English, a distinct change in pronunciation started (vowels pronounced shorter.)

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century new words and phrases entered the language. Printing brought standardization to English. Spelling and grammar became fixed, and the dialect of London became the standard. In 1604 the first English dictionary was published.

**LATE.** The main difference between Early Modern English and Late Modern English is vocabulary.

*Enter Hamlet.*  
*Cor.* Madame, will it please your grace  
To leaue vs here?  
*Que.* With all my hart. *exit.*  
*Cor.* And here *Ofelia*, reade you on this booke,  
And walke aloofe, the King shal be vnscene.  
*Ham.* To be, or not to be, I there's the point,  
To Die, to sleepe, is that all? I all:  
No, to sleepe, to dreame, I mary there it goes,  
For in that dreame of death, when wee awake,  
And borne before an euerlasting Iudge,  
From whence no passenger euer returnd,  
The vndiscovered countrey, at whose sight  
The happy smile, and the accur'd damn'd.  
But for this, the ioyfull hope of this,  
Whol'd beare the scornes and flattery of the world,  
Scorn'd by the right rich, the rich curld of the poore?



# IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA



## The New Colossus

...  
Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses,  
yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your  
teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless,  
tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the  
golden door!

Emma Lazarus (1849—1877)

1. 1620- the first pilgrims came on the ship Mayflower and founded New England;
2. The 18<sup>th</sup> century - a wave of immigrants from North Ireland and Scotland;
3. From 1840 to 1910 - 28 mln immigrants came to America;
4. From 1901 to 1930 - 1 mln Mexicans came to Texas and California;
5. 1975 - immigrants from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.
6. Immigration laws restricting the flow of immigrants into the US.





# 'CHILD OF THE AMERICAS'

I am a child of the **Americas**,

A light-skinned mestiza of the **Caribbean**,

A child of many diaspora, born into this continent at a crossroads.

I am a U.S. **Puerto Rican Jew**,

A product of the ghettos of New York I have never known.

An immigrant and the daughter and granddaughter of immigrants.

I speak English with passion: it's the tongue of my consciousness,

A flashing knife blade of crystal, my tool, my craft.

I am **Caribena**, island grown. Spanish is in my flesh,

Ripples from my tongue, lodges in my hips:

The language of garlic and mangoes,

The singing in my poetry, the flying gestures of my hands.

I am of **Latinoamerica**, rooted in the history of my continent:

I speak from my body.

I am not **African**. African is in me, but I cannot return.

I am not **Taina**. Taino is in me, but there is no way back,

I am not **European**. Europe lives in me, but I have no home there.

I am new. History made me. My first language was Spanglish.

I was born at the crossroads  
And I am whole.

Aurora Levins Morales [b. 1954], was written in 1986





# AMERICAN METAPHORS

- ❑ **Melting Pot;**
- ❑ **Cooking Pot;**
- ❑ **Salad Bowl;**
- ❑ **Pizza;**
- ❑ **Mosaic.**



# RACIAL BREAKDOWN IN THE US

Description	Number	Per cent
1) White (European/Caucasian)	198,176,991	66.19%
2) Hispanic or Latino	44,252,278	14.78%
3) Black or African American	36,434,530	12.17%
4) Asian	12,945,401	4.32%
5) Two or more (mixed race)	4,397,722	1.47%
6) American Indian and Alaska Native	2,035,551	0.68%
7) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	387,230	0.13%
TOTAL:	299,398,485	100.00%

Statistical source: 2006 American Community Survey



# A HOSPITABLE LANGUAGE

The major sources of early-borrowed words in English: Latin, French, and Scandinavian.

Modern English loans from Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Persian, and Russian.





# AMERICAN REALIA

## African

**banjo:** a musical instrument with four strings, a long neck, and a body like a drum, use to play a popular music;

## Dutch

**coleslaw:** a salad made from raw chopped cabbage;

## French

**prairie:** a wide, treeless grassy plain;

## German

**hamburger:** a sandwich made of a ground beef patty placed in a soft roll;

**pretzel:** a hard glazed and salty bread shaped like a loose knot;

## Native American

**moccasin:** a soft leather shoe;

**squash:** a gourd-like vegetable grown on a

## Spanish

**ranch:** a large farm where sheep, cattle, horses are produced;

## Yiddish

**bagel:** a hard glazed doughnut-shaped roll



# AMERICAN COINS - AMERICANISMS

indicate American lifestyle:

- brunch:** a late weekend breakfast (breakfast + lunch);
- cattle corn** – mixed corn: sweet and salted;
- dime:** a ten-cent coin;
- downtown:** the centre of the city;
- geek:** an uncool person (school slang);
- mall:** a huge shopping centre with restaurants and even cinemas;
- nuts:** crazy;
- pants:** trousers (BrE);
- potluck:** a party to which every family bring their own special dish to share it with the others.









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Раздаточны



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