



Changes in the verbal system in Middle English and New English



OUTLINE

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General characteristics

The evolution of the verb system was ***a more complicated process*** (as compared to the evolution of the nominal system).

The morphology of the verb displayed **2 distinct tendencies of development:**

- it underwent considerable **simplifying changes**, which affected the synthetic forms;
- It became far **more complicated** owing to the growth of new, analytical forms and new grammatical categories.



General characteristics

Simplifying changes:

1. the decay of inflectional endings affected the verb system, though to a lesser extent than the nominal system.
2. the simplification and levelling of forms made the verb conjugation more regular and uniform;
3. the OE morphological classification of verbs was practically broken up.

General characteristics

Complication:

4. The paradigm of the verb grew, as new grammatical forms and distinctions came into being.

5. The number of verbal grammatical categories increased, as did the number of forms within the categories.

6. The verb acquired the categories of Voice, Time Correlation (or Phase) and Aspect.

7. Within the category of Tense there developed a new form — the Future Tense;

8. In the category of Mood there arose new forms of the Subjunctive.

General characteristics

9. The infinitive and the participle had ***lost many nominal features*** and ***developed verbal features***: they acquired
- ***new analytical forms*** and
 - ***new categories*** like the finite verb.
10. The changes ***in the verb system*** extended over ***a long period***: from Late OE till Late NE (unlike the changes in the nominal system, the new developments in the verb system were not limited to a short span of two or three hundred years).
- Even in the age of Shakespeare the verb system was in some respects different from that of Mod E.

General characteristics: changes in syntax

- the rise of new syntactic patterns of the word phrase and the sentence;
- the growth of predicative constructions;
- the development of the complex sentences and of diverse means of connecting clauses.
- Syntactic changes are mostly observable in Late ME and in NE in periods of literary efflorescence.

Morphological classification of verbs in ME and NE: general remarks

- The decay of OE inflections was apparent in the conjugation of the verb.
- Many markers of the grammatical forms of the verb were reduced, levelled and lost in ME and Early NE.
- The reduction, levelling and loss of endings resulted in the increased neutralisation of formal oppositions and the growth of homonymy.

Morphological classification of verbs in ME and NE: general remarks

- ME forms of the verb reflect dialectal differences and tendencies of potential changes.
- The intermixture of ***dialectal features in the speech of London*** and in the ***literary language of the Renaissance*** played an important role in the formation of the verb paradigm.
- The Early ME dialects supplied a store of parallel variant forms, some of which entered literary English and were accepted as standard.
- The simplifying changes in the verb morphology affected the distinction of the grammatical categories to a varying degree.

Conjugation of Verbs in Middle English and Early New English

	Strong		Weak	
	ME	Early NE	ME	Early NE
<i>Infinitive</i>	finde(n)	find	looke(n)	look
Present tense				
<i>Indicative</i>				
Singular 1 st	finde	find	looke	look
2 nd	findest/finde	finde	lookest /lookes	loo
3 rd	findeth/finde	finds/findeth	looketh/lookes	looks/looket
Plural	finde(n)/findeth /finde	find	looke(n) /looketh /lookes	look
<i>Subjunctive</i>				
Singular	finde	find	looke	look
Plural	finde(n)		looke(n)	
<i>Imperative</i>	find(e) findeth/finde		find	

<i>Participle I</i>	finding(e)/-ende /findind(e) /findand(e)	finding	looking(e) /-ende/- /-ande	lookin
Past tense				
<i>Indicative</i>				
Singular 1 st	fand ²	found	looked(e)	looke
2 nd	founde/fand /fandes		lookedest	
3rd	fand		looked(e)	
Plural	founde(n)		looked (en)	
<i>Subjunctive</i>				
Singular	founde	found	looked(e)	looke
Plural	founde(n)		looked(en)	
<i>Participle II</i>	founden	found	looked	looke

¹ In the lists of variants the London form comes first.

² By the end of the 15th c. the two stems of the Past tense of strong verbs fell together: *fand* and *founde(n)* was replaced by *found*.

Strong verbs

- **7 classes** of strong verbs in OE

- underwent multiple grammatical and phonetic **changes.**
- The most important change in the system of strong verbs was **the reduction in the number of stems from four to three**, by removing the distinction between the two past tense stems.
- One of the most important events in the history was **the transition of the strong verbs into weak.**

STRONG VERBS: REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF STEMS

- In OE the two past tense stems had the same gradation vowels only in Classes 6 and 7 (the vast majority of English verbs – which were weak – had a single stem for all the past forms).
These circumstances facilitated analogical levelling, which occurred largely in Late ME. Its direction depended on the dialect, and on the class of the verb.
- In ME the final syllables of the stems, like all final syllables, were weakened. In Early NE most of them were lost.
 - the OE endings **-an**, **-on**, **-en** (of the 1st, 3rd, 4th principal forms) were all reduced to ME **-en**;
 - consequently, in Classes 6 and 7, where the infinitive and the participle had the same gradation vowel, these forms fell together;
 - in Classes 1 and 3a it led to the coincidence of the 3rd and 4th principal forms.
 - In the ensuing period, the final **-n** was lost in the infinitive and the past tense plural, but was sometimes preserved in Participle II, probably to distinguish the participle from other forms. Thus, despite phonetic reduction, **-n** was sometimes retained to show an essential grammatical distinction:
NE *stole* – *stolen*, *spoke* – *spoken*, but *bound* – *bound*.

The transition of the strong verbs into weak

- In ME and Early NE many strong verbs began to form their Past and Participle II with the help of the dental suffix instead of vowel gradation.
- Therefore the number of strong verbs decreased.
- In OE there were about **300 strong verbs**. Some of them dropped out of use owing to changes in the vocabulary, while most of the remaining verbs became weak.
- Out of **195 OE strong verbs** preserved in the language only **67 have retained strong forms with root-vowel interchanges** roughly corresponding to the OE gradation series.
- **128** verbs acquired **weak** forms;
- most of these verbs belong nowadays to “**regular**” or “**standard**” verbs.

The transition of the strong verbs into weak

- NE *grip* (former Class 1),
bow, lock (Class 2),
climb, help, swallow (Class 3),
wash, fare (Class 6).
- The number of new verbs which joined the classes of strong verbs, was very small:
 - several former weak verbs
NE *wear, dig, stick*
 - three borrowings
take, thrive (from O Scand), *strive* (from O French)

Changes of the Principal Forms of Strong Verbs in ME and Early NE

Principal forms	OE	ME	NE	OE	ME	NE
	<i>Class 1</i>			<i>Class 2</i>		
<i>Infinitive</i>	wrītan	writen [i:]	write	cēosan	chesen [e:]	choose
<i>Past singular</i>	wrāt	wrote [ɔ]		cēas	chees [ʰ:]	
<i>Past plural</i>	writon	writen [i]	wrote	curon	chosen [ʰ:]	chose
<i>Participle II</i>	writen	writen [i]	written	coren	chosen [ʰ:]	chosen
<i>Class 3</i>						
<i>Infinitive</i>	findan	finden [i:]	find	drincan	drinken [i:]	drink
<i>Past singular</i>	fand	fand [a] or [a:]		dronc	drank [a]	
<i>Past plural</i>	fundon	founden [u:]	found	druncon	drunken [u]	drank
<i>Participle II</i>	funden	founden [u:]	found	druncen	drunken [u]	drunk

<i>Class 4</i>				<i>Class 5</i>		
<i>Infinitive</i>	beran	beren [ɛ:]	bear	sp(r)ecan	speken [ɛ:]	speak
<i>Past singular</i>	bær	bar [a]		sp(r)æc	spak [a]	
<i>Past plural</i>	bæ:ron	beren [ɛ:]	bore	spæ:con	speken [ɛ:]	spoke
<i>Participle II</i>	boren	boren [ɔ]	born	specen	speken [e:], spoken [ɛ:]	spoken
<i>Class 6</i>				<i>Class 7</i>		
<i>Infinitive</i>	scacan	shaken [a:]	shake	cnāwan	knowen [ou]	know
<i>Past singular</i>	scōc	shook [o:]		cnēow	knew [eu]	
<i>Past plural</i>	scōcon	shoken [o:]	shook	cnēowon	knewen [eu]	knew
<i>Participle II</i>	scacen	shaken [a:]	shaken	cnāwen	knowen [ou]	known

Weak verbs

- In Late ME the vowel [e] in unstressed medial and final syllables became very unstable and **was lost**.
- This change eliminated the differences between the two classes and also the distinctions between the 2nd and 3rd principal forms, thus **reducing the number of stems in the weak verbs from three to two**.
- The marker of the Past tense and Participle II employed by the weak verbs – **the dental suffix -d/-t** – proved to be very productive in all historical periods.
- This simple and regular way of form-building, employed by the majority of OE verbs, attracted hundreds of new verbs in ME and NE.

Changes of the Principal Forms of Weak Verbs in ME and Early NE

	OE	ME	NE
	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class I</i>	
Inf	dēm-an	deem-en	<i>deem</i>
Past	dēm-de	deem-de	<i>deemed</i>
Part. II	dēm-ed	deem-ed	<i>deemed</i>
		<i>Class II</i>	
Inf.	styr-ian	stir-en	<i>stir</i>
Past	styr-ede	stir-ede	<i>stirred</i>
Part. II	styr-ed	stir-ed	<i>stirred</i>
	<i>Class II</i>		
Inf.	lōc-ian	look-en	<i>look</i>
Past	lōc-ode	look-ede	<i>looked</i>
Part. II	lōc-od	look-ed	<i>looked</i>

Weak verbs

Weak verbs were becoming more and more numerous, as they:

- preserved in ME and NE almost all the verbs that were typical of the group in OE,

- added to their group **the majority of borrowed verbs** and about **70 verbs originally strong**:

to call

to want

to guess

Scandinavian borrowings

to pierce

to punish

to finish

French borrowings

to contribute

to create

to distribute

Latin borrowings

Strong / weak vs regular / irregular

- Late ME weak verbs are the immediate source of modern standard (regular) verbs.
- in NE due to different phonetic processes and changes on analogy the two principal groups of verbs that existed in OE, ***strong and weak***, gave us two principal groups of modern verbs: ***regular and irregular***.
- Neither ***regular*** nor ***irregular verbs*** were directly derived from either of the OE groups of ***strong and weak verbs***.

Origin of modern irregular verbs

In OE most verbs were regular, although there were a number of irregular ones.

In ME not only the few OE irregular verbs were preserved, but also new irregular verbs appeared.

SOURCES:

1) the disappearance of the division of verbs into strong and weak: most strong verbs lost their regular pattern of conjugation and became irregular.

2) weak verbs of the Class 1: their irregularity was due to several reasons (today they employ various form-building devices: *the dental suffix, vowel and consonant interchanges*).

2.1. verbs with a long root vowel, the root ending in **-t / -d**

2.2. verbs with a long root vowel, the root ending in a consonant other than **-t / -d**

2.3. verbs with a short root vowel, the root ending in **-t / -d**

3) some loan words borrowed into the language in ME and NE.

2.1. Verbs with a long root vowel, the root ending in *-t* or *-d*:

OE *mētan* — *mētte* — *mētt*

ME *meten* — *mette* — *mett*

NE *meet* — *met* — *met*

- In ME the root vowel of the 2nd and 3rd forms is shortened due to the rhythmic tendency of the language requiring the shortening of all vowels if followed by two consonants. The vowel interchange in ME is **quantitative**.
- In NE the long root vowel in the first form due to the Great Vowel Shift is changed **qualitatively**, so now we have both **quantitative** and **qualitative** vowel interchange in the verb.

2.2. Verbs with a long root vowel, the root ending in a consonant other than *-t* or *-d*:

OE *cēpan* — *cēpte* — *cēpt*

ME *kepen* — *kepte* — *kept*

NE *keep* — *kept* — *kept*

- In ME the dental suffixation of the 2nd and 3rd forms is supplemented with a **quantitative vowel interchange** (similar to 2.1.)
- in NE we have both vowel interchange (**quantitative** and **qualitative**) and **suffixation** as form-building means.

2.3. Verbs with a short root vowel, the root ending in *-t* or *-d*:

OE settan — sette — sett

ME setten — sette — sett

NE set — set — set

- No changes took place in the root vowel, the ending disappeared due to the final reduction of unstressed vowels, and now the verb forms its forms without any material manifestation.

Origin of modern irregular verbs: sources

- Even in **the 2nd class** of weak verbs examples of irregularity can be found. One of them is the verb *to make*.

OE *macian* — *macode* — *macod*

ME *maken* — *made* — *maked*

NE *make* — *made* — *made*

Origin of modern irregular verbs: sources

Borrowings into the language in ME and NE

e.g. Scandinavian strong verb borrowings preserved their original vowel interchange and thus are nowadays irregular:

give — gave — given

take — took — taken

get — got — gotten.

e.g. the French borrowing ***to catch (caught, caught)*** which is irregular formed its forms on analogy with the verb ***to teach (taught, taught)***.

Minor group of verbs

- multiple changes in ME and Early NE:
 - phonetic** and **analogical** changes affected their forms,
 - semantic** changes which affected their functions.
- several preterite-present verbs died out.
- the surviving verbs lost some of their old forms and grammatical distinctions but retained many specific peculiarities.
- They lost the forms of the verbals and the distinctions between the forms of number and mood in the present tense.
- In NE their paradigms have been reduced to two forms or even to one.

Minor group of verbs: can

- **ME** *can* (from OE *cann*, Pres. Ind. sg 1st and 3rd p.) was used not only in the singular but also in the plural along with *cunnen*, the descendant of OE pl *cunnon*; the latter, as well as the Subj. Forms *cunnen*, *cunne* died out by the end of the ME period. The Past tense Ind. and Subj. appears in ME in two variants: *couth(e)* and *coud(e)*. *Couth* became obsolete in NE, but *coud* was preserved.
- The insertion of *l* in spelling (*could*) may be due to the analogy of *should* and *would* where *l* was etymologically justified.
- In ME the verb *can*, and especially its Past Participle is still used in the original meaning 'know'.
- However, *can*, *couth/coude* is much more common as a modal verb indicating physical or mental ability.
- Gradually it replaced OE *mæz*, ME *may* and OE *mōt* in these meanings.

Minor group of verbs: **may**

- ME **may** (from OE **mæZ**) was used as the main form of the Present tense, alongside **mowen/mowe**, and as the only form of the Present in Early NE.
- Its Infinitive and Participle I went out of use;
- its Past tense **might** (from OE **meahte, mihte, ME mighte**) was retained as the Past form, Indicative and Subjunctive.
- The ME **may** has narrowed its meaning, for some of its functions, i.e. indication of physical and mental ability, have passed to the verb **can**.

Minor group of verbs: shall, should

- ME **shall** (OE **sceal**) has lost many of its old forms: the plural forms, the forms of Pres. Subj., the Inf.,
- it has retained only two forms **shall** and **should** (ME **sholde, sholde(n)** – Past Ind. and Subj.
- In ME it was no longer used as a notional verb of full predication but was widely used, in both forms, as a modal verb, to express necessity, obligation and order.
- The form **sholde** also occurred in Pres. tense contexts as the Subj. of **shall**;
- Eventually it lost its ties with **shall** and became a separate modal verb with its own sphere of meanings.
- In Early NE **should** the Past tense form of **shall**, **should** has acquired the meaning of the present and has turned into a new modal verb - **should**

Minor group of verbs: must

Mōste, mōstest, mōsten were Past forms of the OE preterite-present *mōt* 'can'.

- The Present tense forms have been lost while *must* has acquired the meaning of obligation and is now treated as a Present tense form.

Minor group of verbs: ought

OE *āZte*, *āZton*, *āZten* were Past tense forms of OE *āZan*, which have acquired the meaning of the present and developed into a new modal verb,

ME *ought(e)*

- the original meaning 'possess' is preserved in the other descendant of the OE verb, NE **owe**, and also in **own** related to the same root.

Minor group of verbs: dare

- **dare** is a preterite-present by origin;
- unlike other verbs it has lost most of its peculiarities characteristic of preterite-presents and of modern modal verbs: it usually takes -s in the 3rd p. and has a standard Past form **dared**.
- The only traces of its origin are the negative and interrogative forms, which can be built without the auxiliary **do**.

Minor group of verbs: will

- The OE verb *willan* has acquired many features typical of the group of preterite-present verbs.
- In ME it was commonly used as a modal verb expressing volition.
- In the course of time it formed a system with *shall*, as both verbs, *shall* and *will* (and also *should* and *would*), began to weaken their lexical meanings and change into auxiliaries.

Minor group of verbs: go

- OE **Zān** has had a most unusual history.
- In OE its Past form was built from a different root and had a weak ending: **ēode**; its Part. II ended in *-n*, similarly with strong verbs (**Ze**) **Zān**.
- In ME the verb acquired a new Past tense **wente**, which came from an entirely different verb, OE **wendan** (ME **wenden**, NE **wend**).
- Its OE Past form **wente** had entered the paradigm of **goon** (NE **go, went**), while **wend** acquired a new past form **wended**.
- Thus the verb **go** remained a suppletive verb, though its OE Past was replaced by a new form.

Minor group of verbs: be

- ME **ben** (NE **be**) inherited its suppletive forms from the OE and more remote periods of history.
- It owes its variety of forms to suppletion and to the dialectal divergence in OE and ME and to the inclusion of various dialectal traits in literary English.
- The Past tense forms were fairly homogeneous in all the dialects. The forms of the Pres. tense were derived from different roots and displayed considerable dialectal differences.
- ME **am** and **are(n)** came from the Midland (Anglian) dialects and replaced the West Saxon **eom**, **sint/sindon**.
- In OE the forms with the initial *b-* - from **bēon** – were synonymous and interchangeable with the other forms but in Late ME and NE they acquired a new function: they were used as forms of the Subj. and the Imper. Moods or in reference to the future and were thus opposed to the forms of the Pres.

Conjugation of OE *bēon*, ME *ben*, NE *be*

	OE		ME	NE
<i>Infinitive</i>	wesan	bēon	been	be
<u>Pres. Indicative</u>				
1 st p. sg	eom/am	bēo/biom	am	am
2 nd p. sg	eart	bist/bis	art	-
3 rd p. sg	is	bip	is	is
Plural	sint/sindon earon/aron	bēop	been/ are(n)	are
<u>Pres. Subjunct.</u>				
Singular	sīe, sy	bēo	be	be
Plural	sīen, syn	bēon	been	be
<i>Imperative</i>				
Singular	wes	bēo	bee	be
Plural	wesa	bēop	beeth	
<i>Participle I</i>	wesende	bēonde	beyng(e) beande	being
<u>Past Indicative</u>				
1 st p. sg		wæs	was	was
2 nd p. sg		wære	were	-
3 rd p. sg		wæs	was	was
Plural		wæron	weren	were
<u>Past Subjunct.</u>				
Singular		wære	were	were
Plural		wæren	weren	
<i>Participle II</i>		----	been	been

Grammatical categories of the English verb

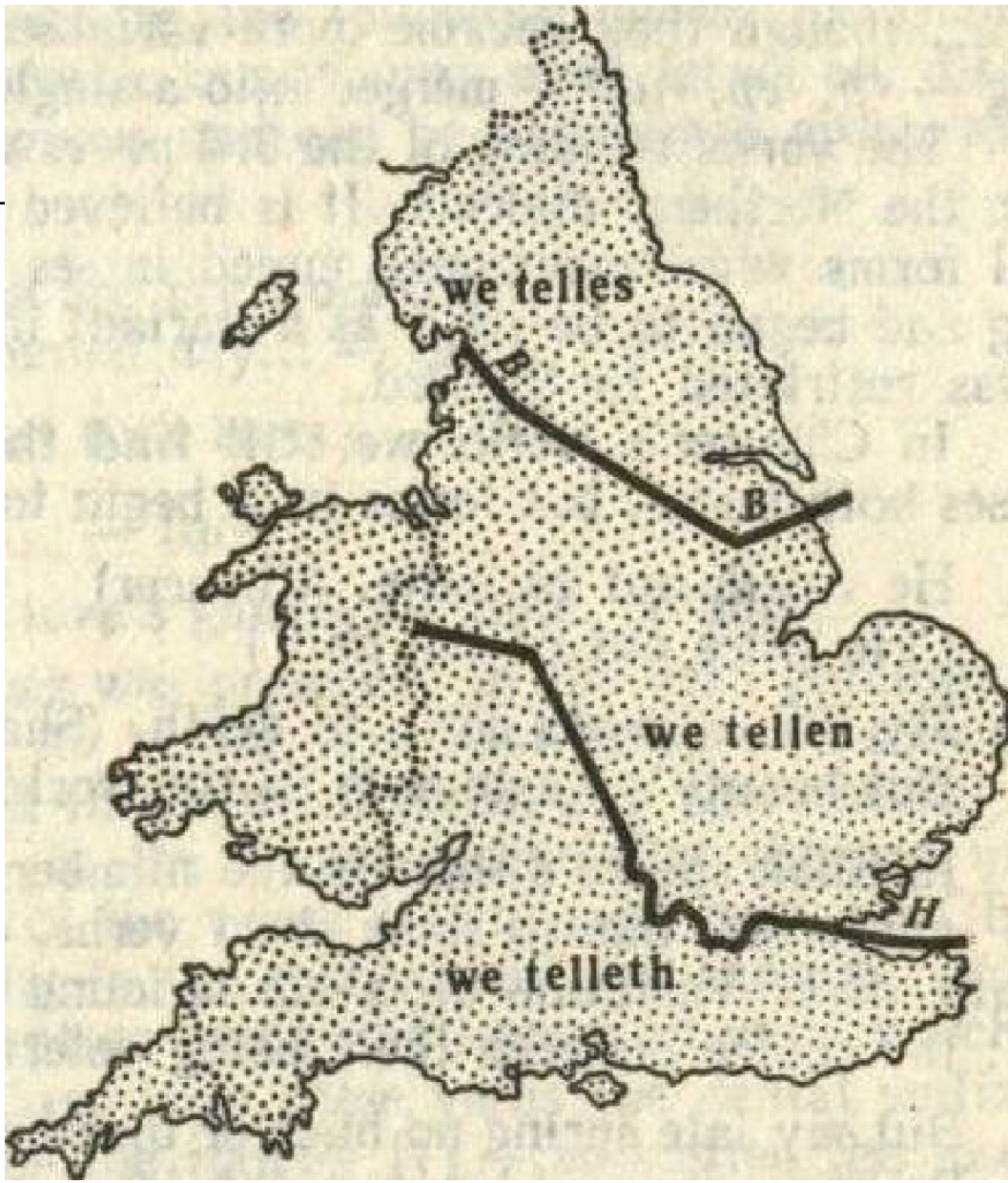
- In OE the verb had **4 categories**:
 - person,**
 - number,**
 - tense,**
 - mood.**
- In Middle English and New English there gradually developed **3 more grammatical categories**:
 - order,**
 - voice,**
 - aspect.**

Grammatical categories of the English verb

- These grammatical categories used a new grammatical means for the formation - **analytical forms**.
- These analytical forms developed from free word combinations of the OE verbs:
***habban, beon/wesan* + an infinitive / participle.**
- In the free word combination ***habban, beon/wesan* + an infinitive (or participle)** the first element was gradually losing its **lexical meaning**, the second — its **grammatical** one, thus tending to become notionally and grammatically inseparable, idiomatic.

Evolution of the category of number

- distinctions were preserved in ME and became more consistent and regular;
- towards the end of the period— in the 15th c. — they were neutralised in most positions.
- In the 13th and 14th c. the ending **-en** turned into the main, almost universal, marker of the plural forms of the verb: it was used in both tenses of the Indicative and Subjunctive moods (the variants in *-eth* and *-es-* in the Present Indicative were used only in the Southern and Northern dialects).
- In most classes of strong verbs (except Class 6 and 7) there was an additional distinctive feature between the singular and plural forms in the Past tense of the Indicative mood: different root-vowels (see *fand*, *fandest*, *fand* and *founden* in the table). But both ways of indicating plural turned out to be very unstable.
- The ending *-en* was frequently missed out in the late 14th c. and was dropped in the 15th;
- the Past tense stems of the strong verbs merged into one form (e.g. *found*, *wrote*).
- All number distinctions were thus lost with the exception of the 2nd and 3rd p., Pres. tense Indic. mood:
the singular forms were marked by the endings -est and -eth/-es and were formerly opposed to the forms of the plural.



Evolution of the category of person

The differences in the forms of **Person** were maintained in ME, though they became more variable.

The OE endings of the 3rd person singular — **-þ, -eþ, -iaþ** — merged into a single ending **-(e)th**.

- **The variant ending of the 3rd p. -es** was a new marker first recorded in the Northern dialects.
- It is believed that **-s** was borrowed from the plural forms which commonly ended in **-es** in the North.
It spread to the singular and began to be used as a variant in the 2nd and 3rd person, but later was restricted to the 3rd.
- In Chaucer's works we still find the old ending **-eth**.
Shakespeare uses both forms, but forms in **-s** begin to prevail.

He *rideth* out of halle. (Chaucer)

('He rides out of the hall')

My life ... *sinks* down to death. (Shakespeare)

but also: But beauty's waste *hath* in the world an end.
(Shakespeare)

Evolution of the category of mood

- The category of *mood* in OE was represented by 3 mood forms, one for each of the moods:

Indicative, Subjunctive, Imperative

- The formal differences between the moods were greatly obscured owing to the reduction of endings and levelling of forms.
- In OE only a few forms of the Indicative and Subjunctive mood were homonymous:
the 1st p. sg of the Pres. Tense and the 1st and 3rd p. sg of the Past.
- In ME the homonymy of the mood forms grew.
The Indicative and Subjunctive moods could no longer be distinguished in the plural, when *-en* became the dominant inflection of the Indicative plural in the Present and Past.
- The reduction and loss of this ending (*-en*) in Early NE took place in all the forms irrespective of mood.
- In the 15th c. after the two Past tense stems of the strong verbs merged, all the forms of the moods in the Past tense fell together with the exception of the verb *to be*, which retained a distinct form of the Subjunctive in the Past singular – *were* as opposed to *was*.

- The grammatical category of mood acquired new categorial forms
 - The Subjunctive **in OE** did not show whether the events were probable or contrary to fact, but **it had two tense forms — past and present**, which in the course of history developed into 2 Subjunctive Moods:
 - *I/he **be** present* — out of the OE present tense form of the Subjunctive Mood;
 - *I/he **were** present* — out of the OE past tense form of the Subjunctive Mood.
 - The difference between these 2 Subjunctive Moods now is **in the shade of probability**, and not in the tense, the second one denoting events which are contrary to fact. At the end of ME and the beginning of NE 2 more Subjunctive Mood forms appeared making use of the analytical form building means:
 - *I/he **should be** present* — to show events which are probable, though problematic;
 - *I **should be** present* — to show imaginary events,
*he **would be** present* — contrary to fact.
- OE *sculan* > **should**, *willan* > **would**

Evolution of the category of tense

- The distinction of *tenses* was preserved in the verb paradigm through all historical periods.
the Past tense was shown with the help of the dental suffix in the weak verbs, and with the help of the root-vowel interchange - in the strong verbs:

OE

cuman – cuom - cōmon

(differ in the root-vowels and endings)

NE

come - came

- The grammatical category of tense acquired **new categorial forms**.

In ME a special form for the future tense appeared out of the free combination:

OE ***sculan / willan + infinitive***.

This free combination of words was split into **2 groups**:

- 1) in the ***free word group***, the modal meaning is preserved:

You shall do it — necessity

I will do it — volition

- 2) ***in the fixed word combination*** the independent meaning is lost and the combination is perceived as ***the future tense form***:
I shall go there. *You will go there*

The category of order / time-correlation

- the category of **order** was formed in ME

- SOURCES of the Perfect forms:

- 1) the OE “possessive” construction **habban** + **past participle** of a transitive verb, which served as an attribute to the object.

Hīe hæfdon hīera cyninZ āworpēnne

‘They had already overthrown their king’.

- 2) the OE phrase OE **bēon** + **Past Participle** of intransitive verbs
> **to be** + **Participle II**. In these phrases the participle usually agreed with the subject.

The younge sonne hath in the Ram his halve course y-runne

‘The young sun has run its half-course in the Ram’.

- The same idea of order is sometimes expressed with the help of the combination:

This gentleman is happily arrived. Now he is gone.

The category of *voice*

- In OE the finite verb had **no category of Voice**.
- There was **no regular opposition of forms** in the verb paradigm to show the relation of the action to the grammatical subject.
- Only in the system of verbals the **participles** of transitive verbs (**Present** and Past) were contrasted as having an **active** and a **passive** meaning.
- The analytical passive forms developed from OE verb phrases consisting of OE *b^{eo}on* (NE *be*) and *weor^ðan* ('become') and **Part. II** of transitive verbs.

weor^ðan (b^{eo}on) + Past Participle

OE *hē wēarþ ofslæzen* 'he was slain'

ME *engendered is the flour* 'the flower is generated [born]'

- OE *b^{eo}on* was used as a link-verb with a predicative expressed by Part. II to denote **a state resulting from a previous action**;
- the construction with OE *weor^ðan* 'become' indicated **the transition into the state expressed by the participle**.

The category of aspect

- no category of aspect in OE
 - was formed in ME on the basis of the free combination of
-

ben (b + on) + Present Participle

Singinge hē was ... al the dai 'he was singing all the day'

- The development of Aspect is linked up with the growth of the Continuous forms.
- In the 15th and 16th c. **be + Part. I** was confused with a synonymous phrase – **be + the prep. on + a verbal noun**.
- By that time the Present Participle and the verbal noun had lost their formal differences:
 - **Part. I** was built with the help of **-ing**
 - **the verbal noun** had the word-building suffix **-ing**, which had ousted the equivalent OE suffix **-un**.
- She wyst not... whether she *was a-wakyng* or *a-slepe*. (Caxton)
(*'She did not know whether she was awake (was on waking) or asleep.'*)
A Knyght ... *had been on huntynge*. (Malory)
(*'A knight had been hunting (lit. "on hunting").*)

The analytical way of form-building was

- a new device, which developed in **Late OE** and **ME** and came to occupy a most important place in the grammatical system.
- Analytical forms developed from free word groups (phrases, syntactical constructions).
- **The first component** of these phrases gradually weakened or even **lost its lexical meaning** and **turned into a grammatical marker**,
- **the second component retained its lexical meaning** and **acquired a new grammatical value in the compound form**.
- The growth of analytical forms of the verb is a **common Germanic tendency**, though it manifested itself a long time after PG split into separate languages. The beginnings of these changes are dated in Late OE and in ME.
- The growth of compound forms from free verb phrases was a long and complicated process which extended over many hundred years and included several kinds of changes.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ANALYTICAL FORMS

1. a stable structural pattern different from the patterns of verb phrases;

2. consist of several component parts:

1) an auxiliary verb, sometimes two or three auxiliary verbs, which serve as a **grammatical marker**

2) a non-finite form – Infinitive or Participle, - which serves as a **grammatical marker** and expresses the **lexical meaning** of the form:

NE *would have been taken*

3. Idiomatic meaning

The analytical form should be **idiomatic**: its meaning is not equivalent to the sum of meanings of the component parts.

- *The development of these properties is known as the process of "grammatisation". Some verb phrases have been completely grammatised (the Perfect forms).*
- *Some of them have not been fully grammatised to this day and are not regarded as ideal analytical forms in modern grammars (the Future tense).*

CHARACTERISTICS OF ANALYTICAL FORMS

4. A specific meaning

In order to become a member of a grammatical category and a paradigm the new form had to acquire another important quality: **a specific meaning** of its own which would be contrasted to the meaning of its opposite member within the grammatical category (e. g. Past is opposed to Present, plural is opposed to singular).

It was only at the later stages of development that such semantic oppositions were formed.

5. Co-existence of old and new

Originally the verb phrases and the new compound forms were used as synonyms (or "near synonyms") of the old synthetic forms; gradually the semantic differences between the forms grew: **the new forms acquired a specific meaning while the application of the old forms was narrowed.**

6. Unrestricted use

The new analytical forms should be **used unrestrictedly in different varieties** of the language and should **embrace verbs of different lexical meanings.**

Non-finite forms. Verbals

- The system of verbals in OE consisted of **the Infinitive** and **two Participles**.
- Their **nominal features** were more pronounced than their verbal features. The *Infinitive* was a sort of *verbal noun*, *Participles I* and *II*, *verbal adjectives*.
- Trends of the evolution in ME and NE:
 - 1) gradual **loss of most nominal features** (except syntactical functions) - loss of *case distinctions in the infinitive* and of *forms of agreement in the Participles* can be accounted for by the simplifying changes in the verb paradigm, and the decay of the OE inflectional system
 - 2) **growth of verbal features.**

The Infinitive

lost its inflected form (the so-called "Dative case") in Early ME.

OE *writan* and *tō writanne* > ME *(to) writen* > NE *(to) write*.

- *tō* was placed in OE before the inflected infinitive to show direction or purpose.
- In ME *tō* lost its prepositional force and changed into a formal sign of the Infinitive.

The Infinitive with *to* does not necessarily express purpose. In order to reinforce the meaning of purpose *for* was sometimes placed before **the *to*-infinitive**.

To lyven in delit was evere his wone (Chaucer)

‘To live in delight was always his habit’.

- *It may have been important to preserve the Infinitive marker **to** in order to distinguish the infinitive from other forms built from the Present tense stem, which had lost their endings.*

The Infinitive

Compound forms of the infinitive appeared in OE:

- **the Passive Infinitive = *bēon* + Part. II** (its semantic contrast to the simple form is not consistent)

- **the Active Infinitive** could sometimes have a passive meaning:

1) **hwelce þā hæpnan Zodas sindon tō weorþianne**

'which heathen gods were to be worshipped' - **active form, passive meaning**;

2) **Sceolde witedōm bēon Zefyllod.**

'The prophesy should be fulfilled' - **passive form and meaning**

○ In ME texts different types of compound Inf. are found:

the Pass. Inf., the Perf. Inf. in the Active and Pass. forms:

3) **þey beþ to ben blamed eft þarfore** (c. 1300)

'they are to be blamed for that again'

4) He moste *han knowen* love and his servyse

And *been* a feestlych man as fressh as May (Chaucer)

'He must have known love and its service and (must have) been a jolly man, as fresh as May'.

The Participle

- The distinctions between the two participles were preserved in ME and NE.
- **Participle I** had an active meaning and expressed a process or quality simultaneous with the events described by the predicate of the sentence.
- **Participle II** had an active or passive meaning depending on the transitivity of the verb, and expressed a preceding action or its results in the subsequent situation.

The Participle

- **The form of Participle I** in Early ME is of special interest.
- It displayed considerable **dialectal differences**:
 - 1) the Southern and Midland forms were derived from the present tense stem with the help of **-ing(e)**,
 - 2) other dialects had forms in **-inde**, **-ende** and **-ande**.The first of these variants – **finding(e)**, **looking(e)** – became the dominant form in the literary language.
- Participle I coincided with **the verbal noun**, which was formed in OE with the help of the suffixes **-ung** and **-ing**, but had preserved only **-ing** in ME.
- The forms of Part. I made **a balanced system**:
 - Passive vs Active
 - Perfect vs non-Perfect
- **Participle II** remained outside this system, correlated to the forms of Part. I through formal differences and certain semantic affinities and oppositions .

The ing-forms

The analytical forms of Participle I began to develop later than the forms of the Infinitive.

The first compound forms are found in the records in the 15th c. **The *seid* Duke of Suffolk *being most trostid* with you...**
(Paston Letters)

‘The said Duke of Suffolk being most trusted by you’.

- In the 17th c. **Part. I** is already used in all the four forms which it can build today: **Perf.** and **non-Perf.**, **Passive** and **Active**:

1) Now I must take leave of our common mother, the earth, so worthily called in respect of her great merits of us; for she receiveth us *being born*, she feeds and clotheth us *brought* forth, and lastly, as *forsaken* wholly of nature, she receiveth us into her lap and covers us. (Peacham, 17th c.)

2) Julius Caesar, *having spent* the whole day in the field about his military affairs, divided the night also for three several uses ... (Peacham)

The Gerund

- The Gerund was **the last to appear** in the system of the Verbals.
- The Gerund is associated with compound forms of the **-ing-form** used in the functions of a noun.
- The Gerund appeared as a result of a **blend** between **the OE present Participle** ending in ‘-ende’ and **the OE verbal noun** ending in ‘-inge’:
 - from **the verbal noun** the Gerund acquired the form (the ending ‘-ing(e)’),
 - under the influence of **the Participle** it became more “verbal” in meaning.
- The earliest instances of analytical forms of the Gerund are found in the age of **the Literary Renaissance**, - when the Inf. and Part. I possessed already a complete set of compound forms. The formal pattern set by the Part. was repeated in the new forms of the Gerund.

The Gerund

- The following quotations illustrate compound forms of **the Gerund** in the texts of **the 17th and 18th c.:**

1) To let him spend his time no more at home,
Which would be great impeachment to his age
In *having known* no travel in his youth.

(Shakespeare)

2) Yet afraid they were, it seemed: for presently
the doors had their wooden ribs crushed in pieces
by *being beaten* together.

(Th. Dekker, early 17th c.). 3)

This man, after *having been* long buffeted by
adversity, went abroad.

(Smollett, 18th c.)

Non-finite forms: summary

1. The formal distinctions which had developed in the system of the verbals towards the 17th and 18th c. are practically the same as in NE.
2. The forms of **the Infinitive** and the **-ing-form (Participle I and Gerund)** make up grammatical categories similar to those of the finite verb:
 - Voice,
 - Time-Correlation,
 - Aspect.
3. The relations between the members of these grammatical categories in the verbals roughly corresponded to those of the finite forms, both semantically and formally.

Non-finite forms: summary

4. Sometimes the semantic oppositions were less strict or neutralised.

4.1. The Active Infinitive could still express a passive meaning:

His noble free offers left us nothing to aske.
(Bacon, 17th c.)

4.2. The non-Perfect forms in many contexts acquired the meaning of the perfect form:

And so, *giving* her sufficient means and money, for his own reputation sake, to rid her from Bristol and ship her for London, on his wife he bestowed all those jewels.

(Dekker) (*giving* is
equivalent here to *having given*).

Development of Verbal Grammatical Categories in Middle English and Early New English

	Grammatical categories									
	Mood		Tense		Voice		Time correlation		Aspect	
	OE	Late ME	OE	Late ME	OE	Late ME	OE	Late ME	OE	Late ME
	or NE		or NE		or NE		or NE		or NE	
Finite verb	3	3	2	3	-	2	-	2	-	2
Non-Finite verb:										
Infinitive	-		-		-	2	-	2	-	2
<i>-ing-</i> form	-		-		-	2	-	2	-	



Summary

1. The system of conjugation in Middle English and New English has become more complicated
2. New non-finite forms appear (the gerund).
3. Conjugation of verbals and disappearance of their nominal categories.
4. New grammatical categories are formed.
5. The already existing grammatical categories acquire new forms.
6. The predominant regularity of the verbs and their conjugation in OE gives way to many diverse irregularities.