



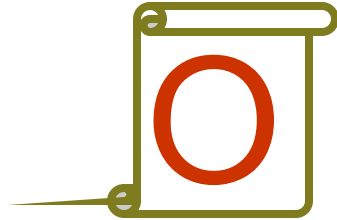
The HISTORY
of the
English Language



T

Three English Periods

- Old English
- Middle English
- Modern English
 - Early Modern English
 - Late Modern English



Old English

- Descendant of the German language
- Spoken by Angles and Saxons

HISTORY

- 5th Century AD: Angles and Saxons (Germanic tribes) invaded the Britain
 - Reunited, became Anglo-Saxons
- Their language is *Englisc*, which was where **the word** *English* originated
- Circa 890 AD: Anglo-Saxons invaded a land
 - Called it *Anglo-Land* (now called England), meaning *Land of the Angles*

MIGRATION

- Irish missionaries came to England
- Brought the Latin alphabet

ROMAN INVASION

- 597 AD: Roman invader Augustine attempted to Christianize England
- Established kingdoms all over England

RESULTS

- The Latin alphabet became the basis of English alphabet
- Romans spread and popularized English throughout England

CHANGES IN OLD ENGLISH

- æ

- Pronounced as *ai*
- Changed to *e*
- Example:** *næver* is now spelled *never*

- Feminine/Masculine word form dropped

- Indefinite articles, *a* and *an* were introduced

- Verb placement

- 755 AD:** verb is placed at the end of a sentence

- ðat he... na justise ne dide*

- Translation:** *that he no justice did* (Nielsen 203)

- 1137:** verb is placed after the pronoun

- til hi iafen up here castles*

- Translation:** *till they surrendered their castles* (Nielsen 203)



M

iddle English

(1100-1500)

HISTORY

- The Normans, who spoke French, invaded England
- Royalties and government officials began speaking French
- English became language of the poor (peasants, butchers, maids, servants)
- Also the language of poets and writers
- English kings began marrying Norman women
- More people adapted French language, causing the decline of English usage

RESULTS

- English children became bilingual
- Materials written in English became very scarce
- Many French words were borrowed
 - *tax, estate, trouble, duty, pay, table, boil, serve, roast, dine, religion, savior, pray, and trinity*
- French was England's official language up until the beginning of 14th century

French words in English

Baron, count, courtier, duchess, duke,
marchioness, marquis, noble, peer

Appetite, beef, biscuit, confection, plate,
raisin, supper, treacle, veal, vinegar

Ambush, army, battle, enemy, garrison,
lieutenant, moat, peace, sergeant

By heart, come to a head, have mercy on
hold one's peace, take leave

Words from Other Languages

- Latin: Alias, homicide, diocese, mediator, scripture, lucrative, tolerance
- Netherlands: poll, skipper
- Spanish: cork, savvy
- Portuguese: marmalade
- Arabic: saffron, admiral, mattress, algebra, alkali, zenith
- Persian: chess, rook, checkmate

CHANGES

- **Three different words with one meaning**

- *kingly* (Old English), *royal* (French), and *regal* (Latin). meaning of “relating to a king”

- **More French Influence**

- More borrowed words
- Borrowed words, *cellar* and *place* affected the way *c* was pronounced
- *Cene*, *cyssan*, and *cneow* (Old English)
- *Lice* and *mice*



M

Modern English

(1500- PRESENT)

TWO TYPES

- **Early Modern English**
 - From 1500 to 1800s
- **Late modern English**
 - 1800s until today



Early Modern English

- **Great Vowel Shift**

- Happened between 1400 and 1500
- Sudden and major change how vowels are pronounced
 - *a* is pronounced as /ei/
 - *e* as /ei/ and/or /i/
 - *i* as /ai/
 - *o* as /ou/ or /u/
 - and *u* as /au/

CHANGES AND DIFFICULTIES

- Many English words are not pronounced as they used to be
- A person born in 1400 would have difficulty understanding a person from the 1500s
 - Very careful listening and analysis of written documents were done for better understanding
 - Example: House and mouse used to rhyme with moose

OTHER FACTORS THAT CHANGED EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

William Shakespeare

- Began writing his sonnets and novels
- Created words, such as *critical*, *leapfrog*, *majestic*, *pedant*, and *dwindle*
- Created clichés, such as *flesh and blood*, and *vanish into thin air*

William Caxton

- Introduced the printing press to England in 1476
- Began printing English textbooks
 - Were sold at cheap prices
 - English grammar, spelling, and vocabulary were standardized
 - 1604: dictionary was published



L

Late Modern English

- Began in the 1800s and is the English that we speak today
- Same as Early Modern English, but has richer vocabulary

BRITISH EMPIRE

- Colonized many nations
 - Words were borrowed (i.e. *pajamas* and *shampoo* from Hindi, *tycoon* from Japanese, and *sauna* from Finnish) and added to the English vocabulary
 - Other words have Latin or Greek roots (i.e. *biology*, *oxygen*)

World War I and World War II

- American soldiers collaborated with British soldiers
 - Military slang words were created
 - *blockbuster*, *nosedive*, *camouflage*, *radar*, *roadblock*, *spearhead*, and *landing strip*

**EXAMPLES OF TEXTS WRITTEN
DURING DIFFERENT ENGLISH
PERIODS**

Beowulf

Originally written in Old English

Da wæs on burgum Beowulf Scyldinga,
leof leodcyning, longe þrage

55 folcum gefræge (fæder ellor hwearf, aldor of earde),
oþþæt him eft onwoc

heah Healfdene; heold þenden lifde,
gamol ond gudreow, glæde Scyldingas.
ðam feower bearn forð gerimed

60 in worold wocun, weoroda ræswan,
Heorogar ond Hroðgar ond Halga til;
hyrde ic þæt wæs Onelan cwen,
Heaðoscilfingas healsgebetta.
þa wæs Hroðgare heresped gyfen,

65 wiges weorðmynd, þæt him his winemagas
georne hyrdon, oðð þæt seo geogoð geweox,
magodriht micel. Him on mod bearn
þæt healreced hatan wolde,
medoærn micel, men gewyrcean

70 þonne ylde bearn æfre gefrunon,
ond þær on innan eall gedælan
geongum ond ealdum, swylc him god sealde,
buton folcscare ond feorum gumena.
ða ic wide gefrægn weorc gebannan

75 manigre mægþe geond þisne middangeard,
folcstede frætwan. Him on fyrste gelomp,
ædre mid yldum, þæt hit wearð ealgearo,
healærna mæst; scop him Heort naman
se þe his wordes geweald wide hæfde.

80 He beot ne aleh, beagas dælde,
sinc æt symle. Sele hlifade,
heah ond horngeap, heaðowylma bad,
laðan liges; ne wæs hit lenge þa gen
þæt se ecghete aþumsweorum

85 æfter wælniðe wæcnan scolde.

ða se ellengæst earfoðlice
þrage geþolode, se þe in þystrum bad,
þæt he dogora gehwam dream gehyrde
hludne in healle; þær wæs hearpan sweg,

90 swutol sang scopes. Sægde se þe cupe
frumscaft fira feorran reccan,
cwæð þæt se ælmihtiga eorðan worhte,
wlitebeorhtne wang, swa wæter bebugeð,
gesette sigehrepig sunnan ond monan

95 leoman to leohte landbuendum
ond gefræt Wade foldan sceatas
leomum ond leafum, lif eac gesceop
cynna gehwylcum þara ðe cwice hwyrfaþ.
Swa ða drihtguman dreamum lifdon

100 eadiglice, oððæt an ongan
fyrene fremman feond on helle.
Wæs se grimma gæst Grendel haten,
mære mearcstapa, se þe moras heold,
fen ond fæsten; fifelcynnes eard

105 wonsæli wer weardode hwile,
siþðan him scyppend forscifen hæfde
in Caines cynne. þone cwealm gewræc
ece drihten, þæs þe he Abel slog;
ne gefeah he þære fæhðe, ac he hine feor forwræc,

110 metod for þy mane, mancynne fram.
þanon untydras ealle onwocon,
eotenas ond ylfe ond orcneas,
swylce gigantas, þa wið gode wunnon
lange þrage; he him ðæs lean forgeald.

Beowulf

Translation

Beowulf bode in the burg of the Scyldings,
leader beloved, and long he ruled in fame
with all folk, since his father had gone away
from the world, till awoke an heir, haughty
Healfdene, who held through life, sage and
sturdy, the Scyldings glad.

Then, one after one, there woke to him,
to the chieftain of clansmen, children four:
Heorogar, then Hrothgar, then Halga brave;
and I heard that -- was --'s queen, the
Heathoscyfing's helpmate dear.

To Hrothgar was given such glory of war,
such honor of combat, that all his kin obeyed
him gladly till great grew his band of youthful
comrades. It came in his mind to bid his
henchmen a hall uprear, a master
mead-house, mightier far than ever was seen
by the sons of earth, and within it, then, to old
and young he would all allot that the Lord had
sent him, save only the land and the lives of
his men.

Wide, I heard, was the work commanded, for
many a tribe this mid-earth round, to fashion
the folkstead. It fell, as he ordered, in rapid
achievement that ready it stood there, of halls
the noblest: Heorot he named it whose
message had might in many a land.

Not reckless of promise, the rings he dealt,
treasure at banquet: there towered the hall,
high, gabled wide, the hot surge waiting of
furious flame.

Nor far was that day when father and
son-in-law stood in feud for warfare and hatred
that woke again.

With envy and anger an evil spirit endured the
dole in his dark abode, that he heard each day
the din of revel high in the hall: there harps
rang out, clear song of the singer. He sang
who knew tales of the early time of man, how
the Almighty made the earth, fairest fields
enfolded by water, set, triumphant, sun and
moon for a light to lighten the land-dwellers,
and braided bright the breast of earth with
limbs and leaves, made life for all of mortal
beings that breathe and move.

So lived the clansmen in cheer and revel a
winsome life, till one began to fashion evils,
that field of hell.

Grendel this monster grim was called,
march-riever mighty, in moorland living, in fen
and fastness; fief of the giants the hapless
wight a while had kept since the Creator his
exile doomed.

On kin of Cain was the killing avenged by
soveran God for slaughtered Abel.

Ill fared his feud,⁶ and far was he driven, for
the slaughter's sake, from sight of men.

Of Cain awoke all that woful breed, Ettins and
elves and evil-spirits, as well as the giants that
warred with God weary while: but their wage
was paid them!

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Originally written in Middle English

- Written by an Anonymous person
- First published in 1925

Passus I

SIPEN þe sege and þe assaut watz sesed at
Troye, þe bor brittened and brent to bronde
and askez, þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun
þer wrot

Watz tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe:
Hit watz Ennias þe athel, and his highe kynde,
þat sipen depreced prouinces, and patrounes
bicome Welnee of al þe wele in þe west iles.

Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis hym swyþe,
With gret bobbaunce þat bure he biges vpon
fyrst,

And neuenes hit his aune nome, as hit now hat;
Tirius to Tuskan and teldes bigynnes,
Langaberde in Lumbardie lyftes vp homes,
And fer ouer þe French flod Felix Brutus

On many bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he settez wyth
wynne,
Where werre and wrake and wonder
Bi syþez hatz wont þerinne,
And oft boþe blysse and blunder
Ful skete hatz skyfted synne.
Ande quen þis Bretayn watz bigged bi þis burn rych,
Bolde bredden þerinne, baret þat lofden,
In many turned tyme tene þat wroten.
Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft
þen in any oþer þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.
Bot of alle þat here bult, of Bretaygne kynges,
Ay watz Arthur þe hendest, as I haf herde telle.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Translation

The siege and assault having ceased at Troy as its blazing battlements blackened to ash, the man who had planned and plotted that treason had trial enough for the truest traitor!

Then Aeneas the prince and his honored line plundered provinces and held in their power nearly all the wealth of the western isles.

Thus Romulus swiftly arriving at Rome sets up that city and in swelling pride gives it his name, the name it now bears; and in Tuscany Tirus raises up towns, and in Lombardy Langoberde settles the land, and far past the French coast Felix Brutus founds Britain on broad hills, and so bright hopes begin, where wonders, wars, misfortune and troubled times have been, where bliss and blind confusion have come and gone again.