

Words from other parts of the world



17-19 centuries - British imperialism. Borrowings from languages around the world. Development of American English. By 19th century, a standard variety of American English develops, based on the dialect of the Mid-Atlantic states. Establishment of English in Australia, South Africa, and India, among other British colonial outposts.

Sanskrit

- avatar, karma, mahatma,
swastika, yoga

Avatar

- the incarnation of a Hindu deity (as Vishnu)
- an incarnation in human form
- an embodiment (as of a concept or philosophy) often in a person
- a variant phase or version of a continuing basic entity
- an electronic image that represents and is manipulated by a computer user (as in a computer game)

Origin

Sanskrit *avatāraḥ* descent, from *avatarati* he descends, from *ava-* away + *tarati* he crosses over

Hindi

- bandanna, bangle, bungalow, chintz, cot, cummerbund, dungaree, juggernaut, jungle, loot, maharaja, nabob, pajamas, punch (the drink), shampoo, thug, kedgereee, jamboree

Shampoo

- *archaic* : massage
- to wash (as the hair) with soap and water or with a special preparation
- to wash the hair of

Origin

Hindi & Urdu *cāpo*, imperative of *cāpnā* to
press, massage

First Known Use: 1762

Dravidian

- curry, mango, teak, pariah

Mango

- a tropical usually large ovoid or oblong fruit with a firm yellowish-red skin, hard central stone, and juicy aromatic pulp; *also* : an evergreen tree (*Mangifera indica*) of the cashew family that bears mangoes
- Sweet pepper

Origin

Portuguese *manga*, probably from Malayalam *māñña*

First Known Use: 1582

Persian (Farsi)

- check, checkmate, chess

Chess

- a game for 2 players each of whom moves 16 pieces according to fixed rules across a checkerboard and tries to checkmate the opponent's king

Origin

Middle English *ches*, from Anglo-French *escheks*, *eschés*, plural of *eschec* check at chess

First Known Use: 14th century

Arabic

- bedouin, emir, jakir, gazelle, giraffe, harem, hashish, lute, minaret, mosque, myrrh, salaam, sirocco, sultan, vizier, bazaar, caravan

Bazaar

- a market (as in the Middle East) consisting of rows of shops or stalls selling miscellaneous goods
- a place for the sale of goods
- department store
- a fair for the sale of articles especially for charitable purposes

Origin

Persian *bāzār*

First Known Use: 1612

African languages

- banana (via Portuguese),
banjo, boogie-woogie, chigger,
goober, gorilla, gumbo, jazz,
jitterbug, jitters, juke(box),
voodoo, yam, zebra, zombie

Zombie

- the supernatural power that according to voodoo belief may enter into and reanimate a dead body
- a will-less and speechless human in the West Indies capable only of automatic movement who is held to have died and been supernaturally reanimated
- a person held to resemble the so-called walking dead; *especially* : automaton
- a person markedly strange in appearance or behavior
- a mixed drink made of several kinds of rum, liqueur, and fruit juice

Origin

Louisiana Creole or Haitian Creole *zonbi*, of Bantu origin; akin to Kimbundu *nzúmbe* ghost
First Known Use: circa 1871

American Indian languages

- avocado, cacao, cannibal, canoe, chipmunk, chocolate, chili, hammock, hominy, hurricane, maize, moccasin, moose, papoose, pecan, possum, potato, skunk, squaw, succotash, squash, tamale (via Spanish), teepee, terrapin, tobacco, toboggan, tomahawk, tomato, wigwam, woodchuck

- (plus thousands of place names, including Ottawa, Toronto, Saskatchewan and the names of more than half the states of the U.S., including Michigan, Texas, Nebraska, Illinois)

Chocolate

- a beverage made by mixing chocolate with water or milk
- a food prepared from ground roasted cacao beans
- a small candy with a center (as a fondant) and a chocolate coating
- a brownish gray

Origin

Spanish, from Nahuatl *chocolātl*, probably alteration of eastern Nahuatl dialect *chikolātl*, from *chikolli* hook (probably used to refer to the beater used to mix chocolate with water) + *ātl* water, liquid
First Known Use: 1604

Chinese

- chop suey, chow mein, dim sum, ketchup, tea, ginseng, kowtow, litchee

Ketchup

- a seasoned pureed condiment usually made from tomatoes

Origin

Malay *kěchap* fish sauce

First Known Use: circa 1690

Japanese

- geisha, hara kiri, judo, jujitsu, kamikaze, karaoke, kimono, samurai, soy, sumo, sushi, tsunami

Karaoke

- a device that plays instrumental accompaniments for a selection of songs to which the user sings along and that records the user's singing with the music; *also* : a form of entertainment involving the use of a karaoke machine

Origin

Japanese, from *kara* empty + *ōke*, short for *ōkesutora* orchestra

First Known Use: 1979

Pacific Islands

- bamboo, gingham, rattan, taboo, tattoo, ukulele, boondocks

Tattoo

- a rapid rhythmic rapping
- a call sounded shortly before taps as notice to go to quarters
- outdoor military exercise given by troops as evening entertainment

Origin

alteration of earlier *taptoe*, from Dutch *taptoe*, from the phrase *tap toe! taps shut!*

First Known Use: circa 1627

Australia

- boomerang, budgerigar, didgeridoo, kangaroo (and many more in Australian English)

Boomerang

- a bent or angular throwing club typically flat on one side and rounded on the other so that it soars or curves in flight; *especially* : one designed to return near the thrower
- an act or utterance that backfires on its originator

Origin

Dharuk (Australian aboriginal language of the Port Jackson area) *bumariny*

First Known Use: 1825