

## OLD ENGLISH

### The OE consonant system:

PLOSIVES	Short voiceless	p t k	
	Short voiced	b d g	Palatalized: k' sk'
	Long voiceless	p: t: k:	
	Long voiced	b: d: g:	k': g':
FRICATIVES	Short	f – v, θ – ð, s – z, x – x', γ – γ'	palatalized
	Long	f: θ: s: x:	x':
SONORANTS	Short	r l m n w j	
	Long	l: m: n:	

HARDENING: fricative > plosive

PC	OE	Gt.	OE	NE
ð	d	Gt blōb	blōd	blood
v	b	Gt brobar	b rōbor	brother
ɣ	g	Gt guma	ʒuma	'man

VOICING / DEVOICING

PG	OE	Gt.	OE	NE
v	v f	sibun (v] hlaifs	seofon hlāfas	seven loaves
f	v f	wulfos wulfs	wulfas wulf	wolves wolf
θ	ð θ	siuþan sauþ	seoþan sēað	seethe seethed
ɣ	ɣ x	dagos baurgs	dazas buruh	days borough
s	z s	kiusan kaus	cēosan cēas	chosen chose

RHOTACISM [z] > [ʒ] > [r]

PG (Gt)	OE	NE
z	r	
maiza	māra	more
auso	eare	ear

GEMINATION:

Doubling or lengthening of consonants after a short vowel before [j]

Gt.	OE	NE
satjan	settan	set
skapjan	scyppan	shapen
saljan	sellan	sell

PALATALISATION AND SPLITTING OF VELAR CONSONANTS IN OE

Phonetic condition	Change	Examples	NE
Before and after front vowels	$k > k'$ $g > g'$ $g: > g':$ $x > x'$ $\gamma > j$	cinn, birce sengan ec3, bryc3 neaht, niht dæ3, 3eard	chin, birch sing edge, bridge night day, yard
In other positions	$k$ $g$ $x, h$ $\gamma$	can 3ān, 3rētan hors, hlaf da3as	can go, greet horse, loaf days

## MIDDLE AND NEW ENGLISH

### DEVELOPMENT OF SIBILANTS AND AFFRICATES

OE	ME	OE	ME	NE
CHANGE		EXAMPLES		
k'	tʃ	cild	child	child
g':	dʒ	brycʒe	bridge	bridge
sk'	ʃ	fisc	fish	fish

ME	NE	ME	NE
CHANGE		EXAMPLES	
sj	ʃ	condi'cioun	con'dition
zj	ʒ	ple'sure	'pleasure
tj	tʃ	na'ture	'nature
dj	dʒ	sol'dier	'soldier
Modern English			
sj	ʃ	issue ['isju: > 'iʃu:]	
dj	dʒ	educate ['edjukeit > 'edʒəkeɪt]	

### VOICING OF SIBILANTS, FRICATIVES AND AFFRICATES IN NE

They were voiced if preceded by an unstressed vowel (and followed by a stressed vowel). Consonants were also voiced in form-words.

ME	NE	ME	NE
s	z	foxes ['fokses]	foxes
f	v	of [of]	of
θ	ð	there ['θɛ:re]	there
ks	gz	anxietie [ænkɛsɪ'e'tiə]	anxiety
tʃ	dʒ	knowleche ['knouletʃ]	knowledge

LOSS OF CONSONANTS IN OE, ME, NE

Phonetic condition	Consonants lost	EXAMPLES			
		Gt	OE	ME	NE
<i>In OE:</i>					
Before fricatives	nasal sonorants	fimf uns	fif ūs		five us
Between vowels	fricatives x, γ	saihwan	sēon		see
Unstressed final	semi-consonants w, j	fulljan triwa sæwə	fyllan treo (nom) sæ		fill tree sea

<i>In ME:</i>		OE	ME	NE
Followed by a sonorant	<b>h</b>	hlystan	listen	listen
<i>In NE:</i>		ME		NE
Before a vowel	<b>h</b>	hit ho'nour [ho'nu:r]	it honour	
In unstressed syllables	<b>h</b>	shepherd Chatham	['ʃepəd] [ˈtʃætəm]	
In clusters stn, stl, stm, ftn	<b>t</b>	listen whistle Christmas often	[lisn] [wisl] [krisməs] [ɔfn]	
skl	<b>k</b>	muscle	[mʌsl]	
dnz, nds, ndm, ndk, and others	<b>d</b>	Wednesday handsome grandmother handkerchief	[nz] [ns] [nm] [nk]	
Before k, m, f, v	<b>l</b>	talk palm calf calves	[tɔ:k] [pɑ:m] [kɑ:f] [kɑ:vz]	
Unstressed syllable after a consonant	<b>w</b>	answer Greenwich	['ɑ:nsə] ['gri:nɪdʒ]	
Initially before r before n	<b>w</b> <b>k, g</b>	wrong write known gnat	[rɔŋ] [rait] [knəʊ] [næ̃t]	
Finally after m after m, l	<b>b</b> <b>n</b>	lamb autumn miln	[læ̃m] [ˈɔ:təm] mill [mil]	