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A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: *FROM ANGLES TO ALGORITHMS*

A COURSEBOOK



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Харківський національний педагогічний університет
імені Г.С. Сковороди

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**ІСТОРІЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ:
*ВІД АНГЛІВ ДО АЛГОРИТМІВ***

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Підручник призначено для студентів філологічних спеціальностей першого (бакалаврського) рівня вищої освіти в рамках дисципліни «Історія англійської мови». Видання структуровано у двох взаємопов'язаних блоках: теоретичному та практичному. Теоретична частина охоплює вісім тематичних розділів (PACEs 1–8), що послідовно розкривають еволюцію англійської мови від її зародження на Британських островах до сучасного глобального статусу. Матеріал висвітлює ключові історичні періоди (давньо-, середньо- та новоанглійський), системні зміни в фонології, морфології та синтаксисі, а також соціолінгвістичні чинники формування мовної ідентичності та регіональної варіативності. Практичний блок містить дев'ять *skill-building tutorials* з автентичними текстами, термінологічним апаратом та аналітичними завданнями, що забезпечують інтеграцію діяхронічного та синхронічного підходів. Блок простежує шлях англійської мови від германських коренів до глобальної *лінгва франка*, розкриваючи трансформації звукової системи, граматичних структур, синтаксису та лексики в контексті історичних подій та культурних зрушень. Методологія курсу орієнтована на активне засвоєння матеріалу через критичний аналіз першоджерел, компаративні дослідження та дискусійне обговорення.

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Наукове видання

THE COURSE ROADMAP

The course *A History of the English Language* reveals how the English language has morphed and reinvented its systems (phonological, lexical, grammatical, and syntactic) over the centuries. The course is designed to equip learners with a theoretical knowledge, analytical abilities, and the core competencies needed to investigate the structural development of English from the remnants of Celtic speech and Roman written records to layers of French influence and the emergence of contemporary global forms. Framed by the wider historical context of the British Isles and surrounding regions, the course explores how wars, migrations, conquests, colonization, and cultural collisions have left their fingerprints on English.

Through comparative-historical approaches, students will explore English both as a series of fixed historical stages and as an ongoing process of transformation. This dual perspective highlights the complex interaction among language, culture, geography, and the emergence of regional dialects and linguistic varieties.

By the end of the course, students will be equipped to:

- Demonstrate broad and critical understanding of the diachronic development of English, from the Old English period to contemporary sociolinguistic practices.
- Develop advanced linguistic competencies necessary for analyzing lexical choices, syntactic configurations, and discourse-level features as they appear in both historical and contemporary language.
- Critically examine the varied historiographical frameworks that have defined the field of English historical linguistics, using textual evidence as the basis for evaluation.
- Employ primary and secondary sources to trace language change and to understand the underlying principles guiding its evolution.

Evaluation Benchmarks. Upon successful completion of the course, students will be expected to demonstrate the ability to:

- Identify and articulate the changes that have taken place across the semantic, lexical, phonological, syntactic, and orthographic dimensions of the language.
- Situate these linguistic developments in meaningful relation to their historical and socio-political contexts.
- Demonstrate scholarly independence when assessing the diversity of linguistic theories and research methodologies that the course has addressed.

The course is grounded in a range of foundational philological disciplines, including *The Practice of Oral and Written English*, *Practical Phonetics*, *Practical English Grammar*, *Introduction to Linguistics*, and *Cross-Cultural Studies*. Together, these subjects ensure the development of English communicative competence necessary for mastering the course, which is taught in English, and provide a thorough understanding of the structure of Modern English. In addition, *Lexicology* and *Stylistics* of the English Language furnish students with knowledge of the origin and current state of the English lexical system, thereby supporting deeper diachronic analysis.



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Language systems and dialects:

ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME	ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME
Angl.	Anglian	OIceI	Old Icelandic
IE	Indo-European	OLFr	Old Low Franconian
Goth.	Gothic	OLG	Old Low German
Gr.	Greek	ON	Old Norse
Lat.	Latin	ONorw	Old Norwegian
Lith.	Lithuanian	OS	Old Saxon
ME	Middle English	OSw	Old Swedish
ModE	Modern English	PDE	Present Day English
NE	New English	PG	Proto-Germanic
OCS	Old Church Slavonic	PIE	Proto Indo-European
ODan	Old Danish	Russ.	Russian
OE	Old English	Skr.	Sanskrit
OFris.	Old Frisian	Ukr.	Ukrainian
OHG	Old High German	WS	West Saxon

Grammatical concepts:

ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME	ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME
NP	noun phrase	neut./n	neuter
VP	verb phrase	pl.	plural
V	verb	sg.	singular
Vinf	infinitive	Nom.	Nominative
Vaux	auxiliary verb	Gen.	Genitive
S	Subject	Dat.	Dative
O	Object	Acc.	Accusative
N	noun	Instr.	Instrumental
Pr	pronoun	Obj.	Objective
Adj.	adjective	Poss.	Possessive
masc./m	masculine	1st p.	first person
fem./f	feminine	2nd p.	second person
Wv	weak verb	3rd p.	third person
Sv	strong verb		

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



THE GENESIS OF ENGLISH: LINGUISTIC TOPOGRAPHY AND CULTURAL CODIFICATION IN EARLY BRITAIN

1. *British DNA before the installation of the Anglo-Saxon code.*
2. *Anglo-Saxon colonization and the stratification of native and foreign linguistic influences.*
3. *The evolution of orthographic conventions.*
4. *Danish expansion and the dynamics of bilingual accommodation.*
5. *The closing of an era. Linguistic and Historical Outcomes.*

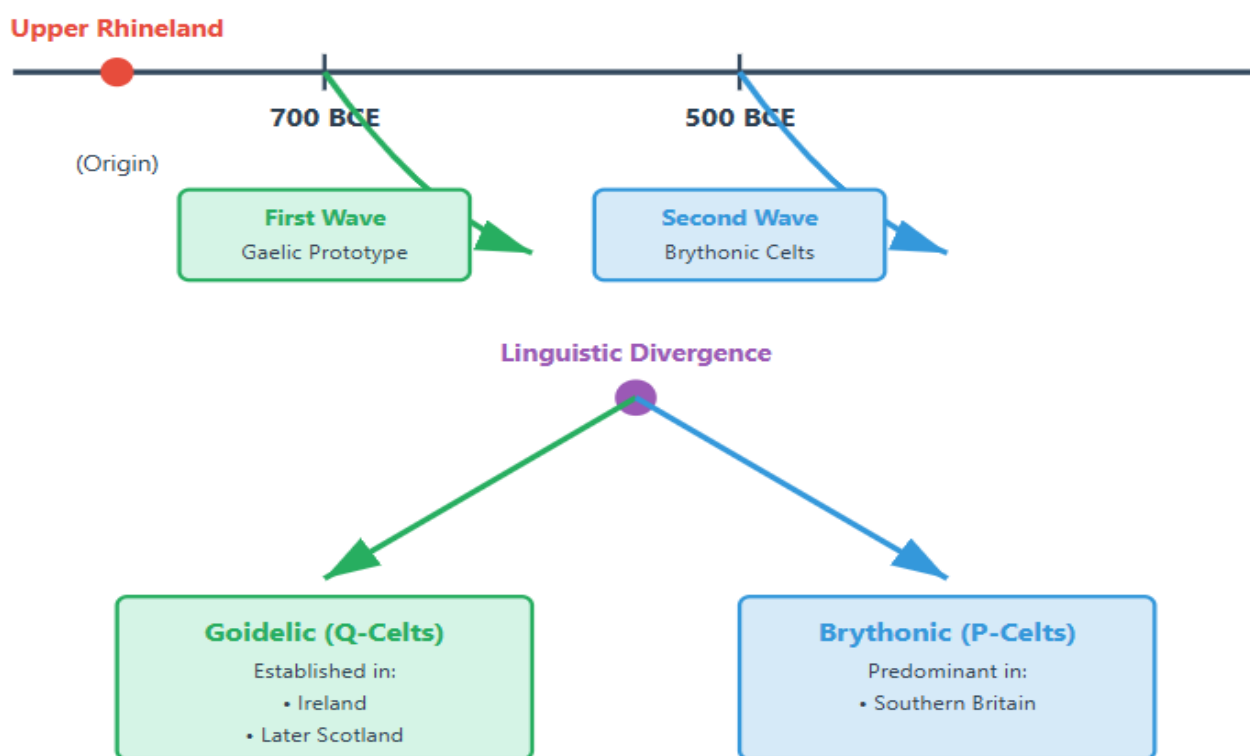
Despite being naturally cut off from mainland Europe by the surrounding seas, the British Isles have never operated a fully isolated or self-contained linguistic world. Long before any recognizable form of English took root in the British archipelago, the land was home to a succession of peoples with no connection to the English genome. These included the ghost of the early Iberians, followed by the bold and resistant Celts, then the methodical and administratively sophisticated Romans, later the Celts once more briefly reclaiming their freedom, before ultimately being overwhelmed by the incoming tribal societies that historians would come to label *the Anglo-Saxon peoples*. Consequently, the language map of the British Isles tells a tangled narrative, shaped by the overlapping influences of numerous ethnic groups whose successive settlements planted the seeds of the regional dialects that would later take shape across the territory.

The horizon of ancient British history collides with references to the Iberians, whose roots were mapped by the geologist and archaeologist William Boyd Dawkins (1837-1929), who discovered their remains in present-day Spain and Portugal. Although these people lived on the British Isles, their linguistic influence added little (if any) flavour to the complex dish that became British English. Though their presence can still be felt through remarkable cultural remains such as *Stonehenge* and echoes in

mythology, their contribution to the linguistic foundation of future England left no meaningful trace.

The first firm and recognizable linguistic marks that persisted into today's English and its regional varieties were of Celtic nature (See Appendix 1). Stretching their umbilical cord to the Upper Rhineland, Celtic peoples began pushing outward around 700 BCE, leaving the earliest Gaelic imprint on British territory. The following centuries saw a second significant movement, as the Brythonic Celts, also known as the Brythons, arrived in the islands around 500 BCE. Far from a homogeneous group, the Celtic population displayed a noticeable internal variety, as evidenced by its speakers' dispersal across the region. Over time, Celtic speech diverged into two major dialectal branches: *Brythonic*, or *P-Celtic*, which took hold predominantly across southern Britain, and *Goidelic*, or *Q-Celtic*, which became lodged deep in Ireland and eventually spread into Scotland.

Pic. 1 – Celtic Migration to the British Isles in the Pre-Germanic Period.

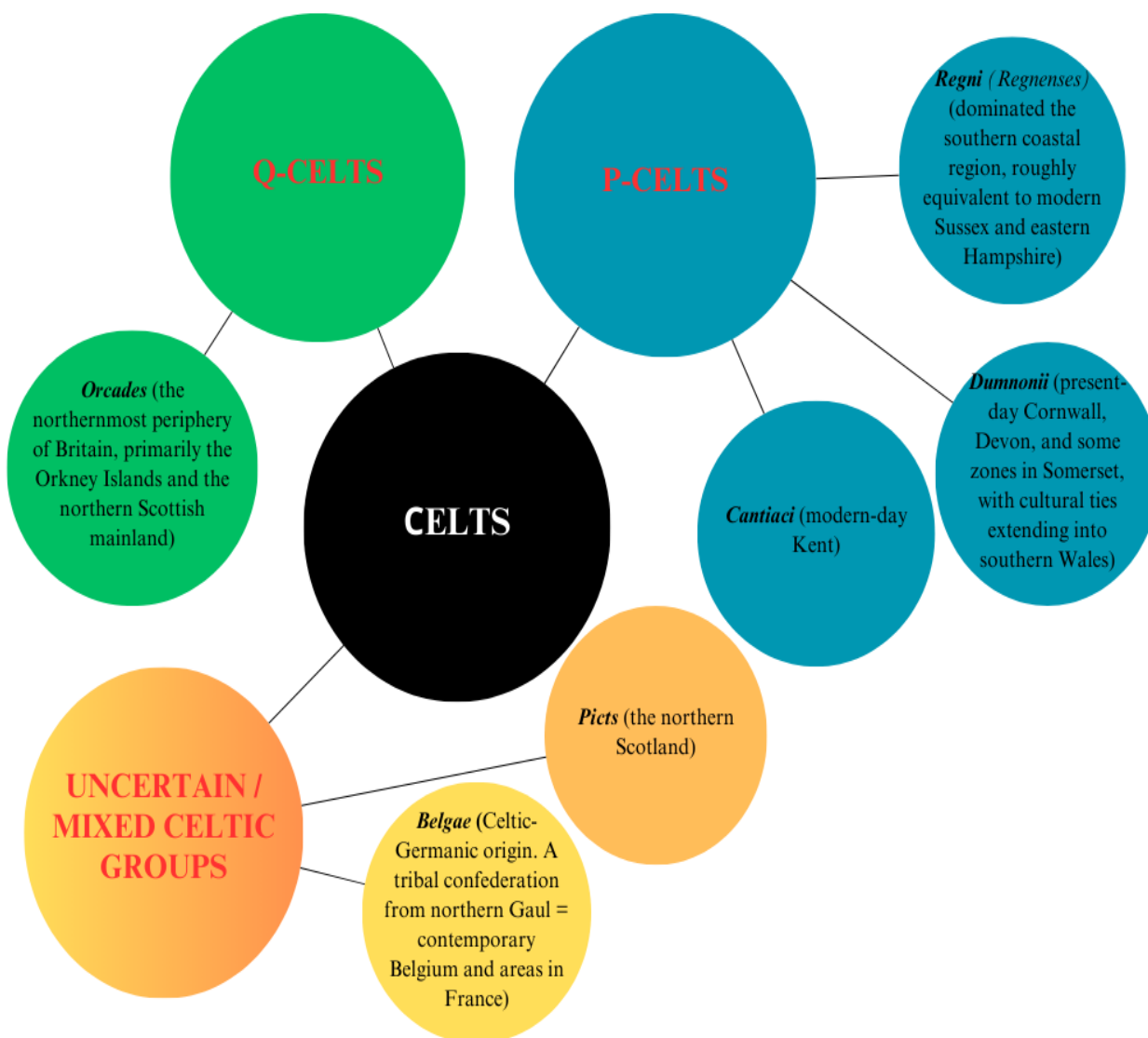


Celtic languages belong to their own distinct branch of the language family tree and shared no direct genetic relationship with English prior to the arrival of Germanic invaders. As such, the Celtic period in Britain predates the English entirely. Later,

Brythonic fragmented into the modern Brittonic languages (Welsh, Cornish, and Breton), whereas Goidelic seeded the Gaelic languages represented by Irish and Scottish Gaelic.

The Celtic tribes had various names and can be classified according to their linguistic sub-branch.

Pic. 2 – *Peripheral Celtic Tribes on the British Isles before Roman Invasion.*



The Orcades, Cantiaci, Dumnonii, and Regni inhabited the outer edges of the British Isles, settling in the extreme north, the southeastern corner, the southwestern peninsula, and the southern shoreline. They served as initial encounter zones for foreign forces, thereby controlling access to valuable mineral resources. The overall division is much more complex, with Celtic tribes scattered across the British Archipelago, dividing the land into distinct tribal areas.

Pic. 3 – Celtic Tribal Settlements of Pre-Roman Britain.



Celtic nature-centered polytheism revered the warrior ideal, characterized by a dominant psychological portrait of a fearless, tough, and skillful man, master of iron technology (e.g., *Cú Chulainn*, an Ulster warrior with superhuman powers, analogous to Achilles). Major deities enumerated the *Dagda* (the chief deity with control over life and death); the *Morrigan* (a triple goddess representing war, fate, and sovereignty, often appearing as a crow); *Lugus* (a multi-talented god skilled in a variety of arts, patron of crafts and warriors); *Cernunnos* (the lord of animals, wild nature, and fertility, often depicted with antlers); goddesses of fertility like *Epona* (Gaul), *Macha* (Ireland), and *Rhiannon* (Britain) embody childbirth, prosperity, and sovereignty. Mythology featured entities such as *selkies* (shape-shifting creatures who could transform from seals into humans); *kelpies* (water spirits often acquiring horse-forms, luring people to their doom); *tree spirits* (inhabiting oaks, ashes, hawthorn guardians); and *nature spirits* (dwelling in rivers, springs, hills, and forests). Consequently, sacred natural

elements included holly (a revered plant), mistletoe (used in ceremonies), oak (the primary sacred tree), ash (a dwelling for spirits), and hawthorn (a protected tree). The cultural legacy reflected in expressions like “*touch*” or “*knock on wood*” points to a belief in divine protection from tree spirits.

At the heart of ancient Celtic civilization lay *Druidism*, or *Druidry*, a spiritual tradition that bound together the ancient Celtic world, upheld by the *Druids*, an exclusive caste of priests and scholars who stood as the guardians of Celtic religious and intellectual life. It is through the pen of Julius Caesar, in his *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*, that this enigmatic tradition was committed to the historical record.

Battered by the tide of Roman conquest and Anglo-Saxon cultural dominance, Celtic languages did what empires rarely expect of the vanquished – they survived. Celtic vocabulary has been solidified through loanwords into Old English and is still evident in the names of regional landmarks and locations, such as *Kent*, *Devon*, *Cornwall*, and *Cumberland*. Even in toponymy, where Celtic influence is most visible, English place-names significantly outnumber Celtic ones, with Celtic forms persisting primarily in peripheral regions that were incorporated later into Anglo-Saxon control. Today, Celtic placenames leave their clearest mark in England’s rivers, with two-thirds retaining their ancient names, including the *Avon*, *Derwent*, *Severn*, *Tees*, *Trent*, *Tyne*, and *Thames*. Many hydronyms draw on Brittonic words for ‘water’ or ‘stream’, like *Wear*, *Don*, *Avon*, *Axe*, *Exe*, *Esk*, and *Usk*, all of which share this etymology. Hidden in plain sight, England’s rivers still whisper in Brittonic. *Derwent*, *Darent*, and *Dart* all share a single ancient root, each name conjuring the image of waters winding through dense oak woodland. The *Thames* runs darker, literally so, its name carrying the shadow of a “dark river” from antiquity. And the *Trent*, a rebel among rivers, its very name brands it a “trespasser,” a fitting label for a waterway with a long and unruly history of breaking its banks. Major cities echo these ancient foundations. *Carlisle*, *York*, and *Dover* all trace their origins to pre-Saxon settlements, while certain regional designations reflect the historical tribal territories. *Devon* comes from the Dumnonii, *Leeds* from the kingdom of Elmet. The toponym *Dublin*, signifying “black” or “dark pool,” preserves a semantic trace of early Celtic linguistic heritage. Geonyms

frequently bear Brittonic labels. The *Malvern* and *Cheviot* hill ranges carry this heritage, as do historic woodlands like *Arden* and *Wyre*. A notable proportion of highlands and forested areas later lent their names to human habitations, such as *Crick*, *Mellor*, *Penge*, and *Lytchett*. Where Brittonic tongues endured longest, it is in Cumbria and Cornwall. Wales and Scotland naturally preserve an even richer linguistic legacy, with most locations bearing Welsh and Gaelic appellations respectively. Celtic elements in placenames include a variety of morphemes: *dwr* / *dover* / *dor*, meaning ‘water’ (Dover), *glen* (‘valley’), *kil* (‘church’), *mor* / *maur* (‘great’). Celtic words that entered the English language enumerate: *bannok* (‘bit’); *bin* (‘bin’); *brock* (‘badger’); *luh/loch* (‘lake’); *cumb* (‘deep valley’); *dunn* (‘hill, dun’); *cross*; *clugge* (‘bell, clock’); *bratt* (‘cloak’); *carr* (‘rock’); *torr* (‘rock’).

The British Archipelago came under the watchful eye of the Roman Empire between 55 and 54 BCE due to a treble of factors: the web of trade that bound Britain and Gaul together and that revealed the richness of the lands, revenge for supporting Gaul in the Gallic Wars campaigned by Julius Caesar, and the ambition to test the waters with what amounted to an exploratory military venture. Two attempts were made, with the second one being relatively successful. Making landfall in Kent, Caesar wasted no time pushing further inland, forcing a crossing of the Thames before bringing Cassivellaunus’s capital to its knees. Though the British tribes eventually submitted, offering hostages and agreeing to pay tribute, Rome failed to establish a lasting grip on the island through permanent governance or a military presence. Britain was soon left behind as brewing unrest in Gaul summoned Caesar back, forcing him to suppress the rebellions spreading throughout the region. Britain was deemed a prize “*not worth the full cost of conquest*”, its wealth falling short of what Gaul offered. It would take another ninety years before Rome turned its sights back on the island, when Emperor Claudius, in 43 CE, dispatched General Aulus Plautius at the head of some 40,000 troops. Landing in Kent, they carved out a foothold that would serve as the launching pad for the broader subjugation of the island. By the first century AD, Celtic territories had been absorbed into the Roman Empire, triggering a process of cultural and social Romanization. James O’Driscoll, in his book *Britain: The Country and Its*

Throughout Roman rule in Britain, spanning the 1st to the 5th centuries CE, the province was divided into two distinct zones. The first was the *Civil Zone*, covering *Lowland Britain* across the southwestern and central regions, where Roman urban planning, economic integration, and cultural influence (*Latin above all*) took firmest hold. The second was the *Military Zone*, encircling *Upland Britain*, a frontier belt kept under constant armed control and spanning across Wales, the Pennines, and the lands reaching up to Hadrian's Wall, built between 122 and 128 CE. This heavily fortified and well-garrisoned boundary served as a hard geopolitical line between the Roman province and the untamed northern territories of Caledonia, a division so evocative that it would later inspire George R.R. Martin, who reimagined it as the legendary *Wall* separating the realm from the wilderness beyond in *A Game of Thrones* (1996), the opening volume of his *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, with the unconquered peoples of Caledonia finding their fictional echo in his savage and mysterious wildlings. David McDowall, in his *An Illustrated History of Britain*, stresses: "*The Romans could not conquer 'Caledonia', as they called Scotland, although they spent over a century trying to do so. At last, they built a strong wall along the northern border, named after the Emperor Hadrian, who planned it. At the time, Hadrian's Wall was simply intended to keep out raiders from the north. But it also marked the border between the two later countries, England and Scotland. Eventually, the border was established a few miles further north. Efforts to change it in later centuries did not succeed, mainly because on either side of the border, an invading army found its supply line overstretched. A natural point of balance had been found*" (McDowall, 2006, p. 9).

Upper Britain, known in Latin as *Britannia Superior* or *Britannia Prima*, was centered on Londinium (the Roman name for what is now London) and operated as the administrative and commercial core of Roman Britain. *Britannia Secunda*, by contrast, was anchored in the north, with Eboracum, today's York, serving as its likely capital. This northern province took in the greater part of present-day Yorkshire, stretches of County Durham, and reached westward into Lancashire, its northern edge pressing up against the boundary of Hadrian's Wall.

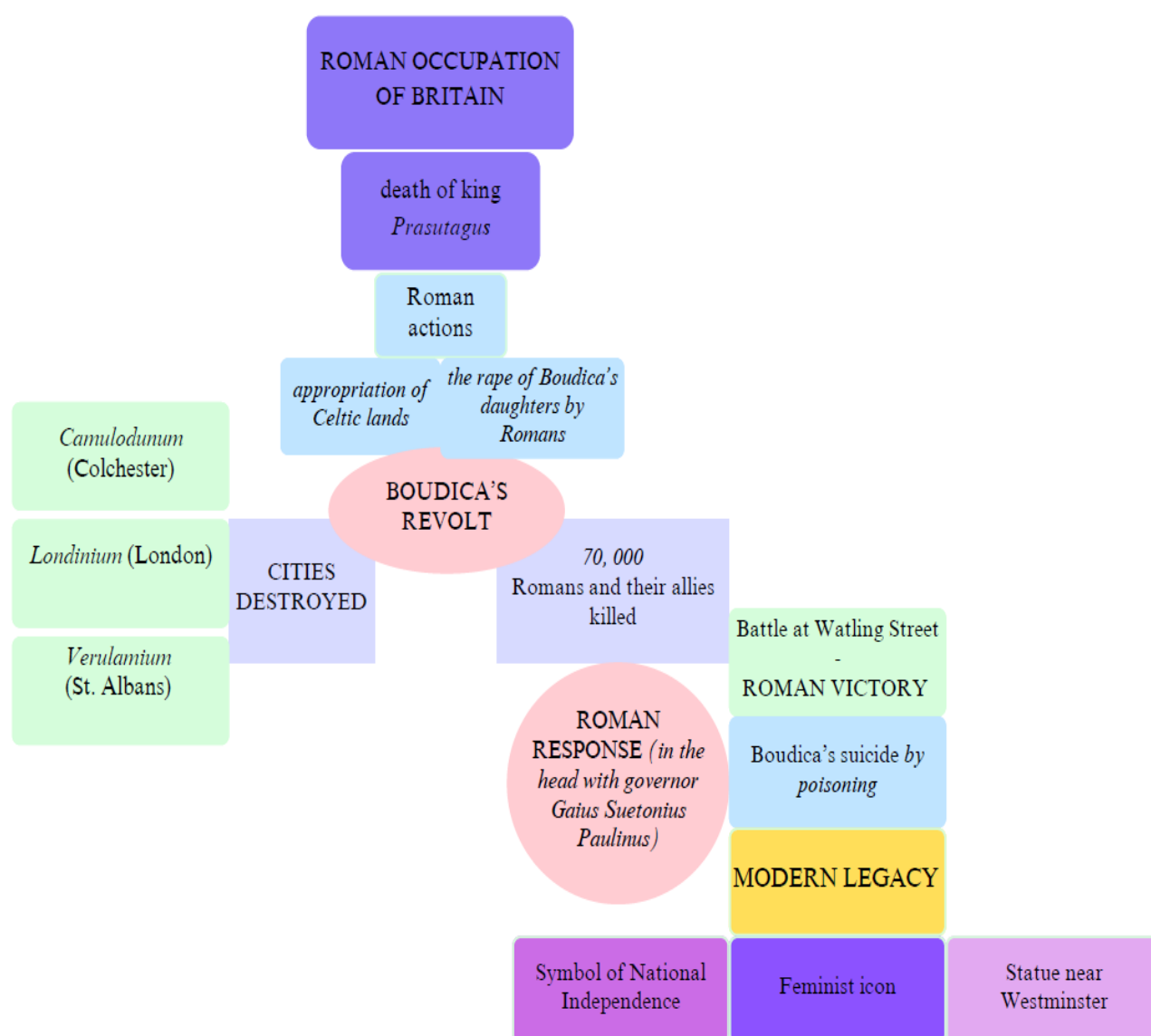
Pic. 5 – The Administrative Divisions of Roman Britain.



Roman rule in Britain was punctuated by repeated uprisings, none more remarkable or hard-fought than the rebellion led by Boudica between 60 and 61 CE. Boudica (her name variously rendered as *Boudicca* or *Boadicea*) was queen of the Iceni, who took up arms against Rome in one of the most ferocious revolts the empire would face on British soil. The spark was deeply personal. Following the death of her husband, King Prasutagus, a Roman ally, the empire seized Iceni lands, flogged Boudica herself, and subjected her daughters to assault. Her retribution was swift and devastating, when leading her forces against Camulodunum, Londinium, and Verulamium, she razed all three to the ground. Tacitus, in his *Annals*, records that her army cut down some 70,000 Romans and pro-Roman Britons in the process. The uprising was finally crushed by Roman governor Gaius Suetonius Paulinus, who regrouped his troops and used superior tactics to turn the tide against Boudica's

massive but ill-disciplined army at Watling Street, a battle whose exact site on the map continues to elude historians. Tacitus records that Boudica, unwilling to suffer the humiliation of capture, took her own life by poison. As the centuries have passed, her legend has only deepened and transformed into a potent symbol of both national resistance and the enduring power of women, with her spirit given permanent form in a commanding statue that watches over the streets near Westminster in the heart of London.

Pic. 6 – *Boudica's Uprising against Roman Occupation.*



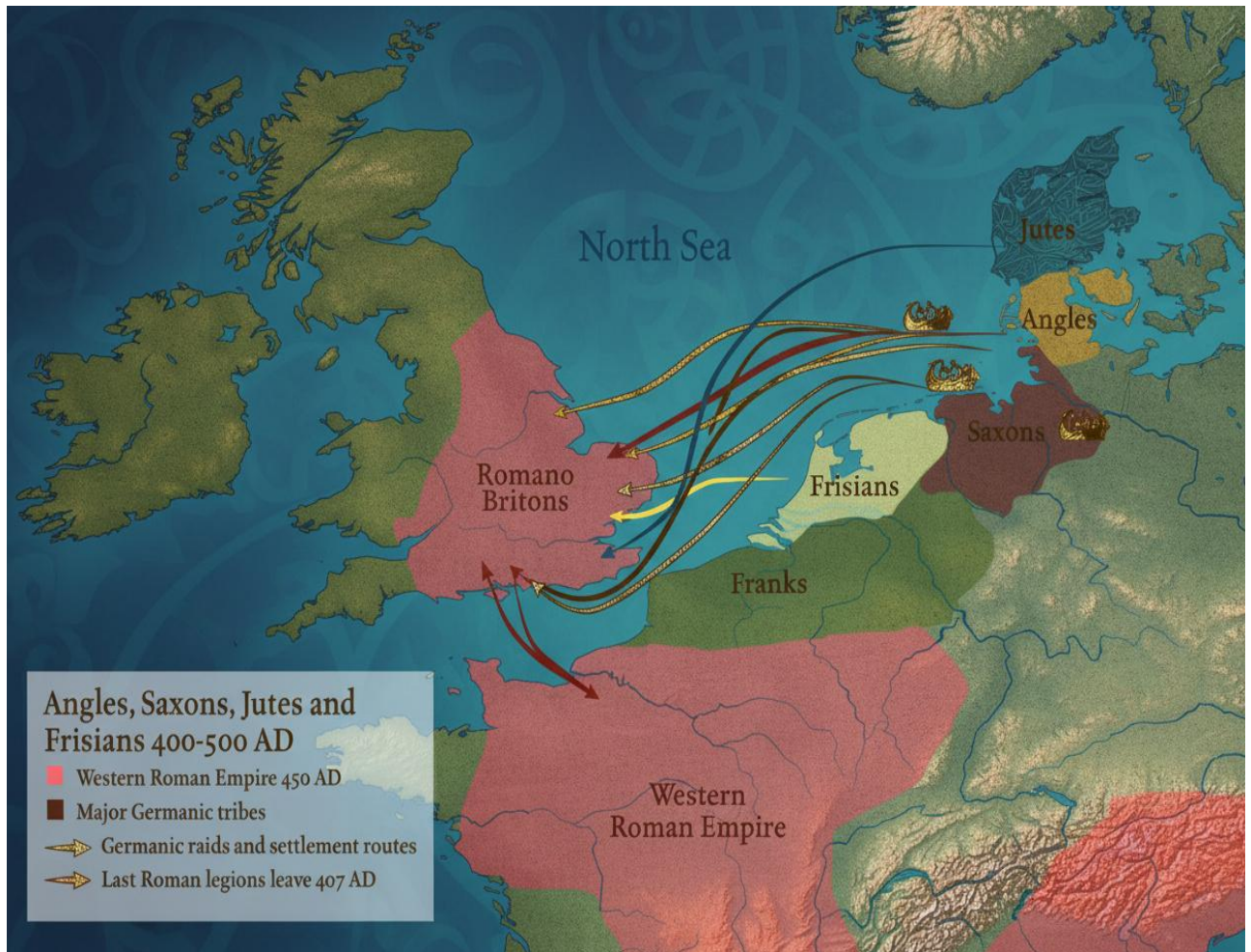
Four centuries of Roman dominion, spanning 43 to 410 CE, left more than roads and ruins in its wake. As the empire's grip on Britain slowly loosened, it left behind a substantial vein of Latin vocabulary that would work its way deep into the linguistic bedrock. These borrowed words didn't pass into English cleanly or directly; they were

first absorbed and reshaped by the Celtic linguistic system, emerging transformed in both sound and meaning before crossing over into English through Celtic hands. The clearest fingerprints of this remarkable journey survive today in the place names scattered across the British landscape (e.g., *strata* → ‘street’; *castrum* → ‘-caster/chester’ in toponyms like *Lancaster* and *Gloucester*; *portus* → ‘port’; *Londinium* → ‘London’). Beyond this, a layer of Latin borrowings that had taken root even before the first Anglo-Saxon set foot on British soil continued to pulse through everyday speech, living on in the language of trade and common goods (*vinum* → ‘wine’, *piper* → ‘pepper’), foodstuffs (*caseus* → ‘cheese’, *pisum* → ‘pea’), agricultural terms (*planta* → ‘plant’, *beta* → ‘beet’), and material culture (*discus* → ‘dish’, *sericum* → ‘silk’, *cuprum* → ‘copper’). This sediment of Latin adoptions bears witness to the reach of Roman cultural influence while simultaneously tracing the living thread of continuity that connected Late British Latin to the early Insular Celtic dialects. The legacy Rome left behind in Britain was etched in stone, in its roads cutting across the landscape, its bathhouses, its fortified towns, and its garrison walls. But as the Western Roman Empire lurched toward collapse, its administrative hold on Britain began to slip. The breaking point came in 409 CE, when Emperor Honorius, hemmed in by the relentless advance of barbarian forces, was left with no choice but to strip Britain of its Roman troops and funnel them back to shore up Italy and the crumbling imperial core. The native population, by now shaped by generations of Romanization and Christianization, was left to fend for itself against a gathering storm of raiders from multiple fronts, with the Scotti crossing the Irish Sea, the Picts pressing down from the north, and Saxon war bands striking in from across the North Sea. It was a watershed moment, one that set the stage for the great Germanic migrations that would sweep across Britain in the centuries to come, carrying with them the seeds of what would eventually grow into *the English language*.

Subsequent to Rome’s 410 AD retreat, Latin gradually disappeared from common usage, finding its last refuge in Church liturgy. *The HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND PEOPLE* started when the Germanic tribes docked at the British Isles. Peel back the veneer of nation-building, and the Anglo-Saxon story

reveals itself as something far less flattering, featuring a relentless pattern of dispossession, of land torn from indigenous hands, a drama first staged in the British Isles and then exported wholesale to Australia, North America, New Zealand, Canada, and wherever else the tide of Anglo-Saxon expansion ultimately reached. **The push factors** for migration were as follows: 1) *rising demographic burden, caused by a prolonged stretch of favorable climate, which had driven populations beyond what their homelands could comfortably absorb* (which is seen from later sources, when the monks, writing their chronicles, mention grapes growing in England – something later confirmed by Geoffrey Chaucer in his “*Canterbury tales*”); 2) *the unstoppable westward march of the Huns (a nomadic force whose roots are traced to the steppes of Turkestan, with disputed ties to the ancient Xiongnu), whose advance sent shockwaves through the European continent, setting other displaced tribes into motion and deepening the instability already spreading across the region*; 3) *the gradual rise of the sea levels engulfed coastal territories, a catastrophe that affected the Angles and Frisians with particular intensity, as their low-lying homelands provided scant protection against the advancing waters*. Over the three to four centuries following Tacitus’s composition of *Germania (De Origine et Situ Germanorum, 98 AD)*, the Germanic world was marked above all by instability; the Germanic tribes were locked in a prolonged and far-reaching pattern of migration. **The pull factors** for invasion were 1) *the promise of Britain’s fertile soil and temperate climate, a stark contrast to the harsher conditions of Scandinavia*; 2) *the gaping vulnerability left behind by Rome’s departure, which had stripped Britain of the defensive infrastructure that once guarded its shores*; 3) *the lure of invitation from Celtic rulers themselves, most notably Vortigern, who allegedly enlisted Saxon mercenaries to help repel the Picts*. It was a fateful decision that unfolded against the Celtic society, increasingly torn from within, its ancient web of intertribal alliances, already fluid and shifting long before Rome’s arrival, now fracturing ever more sharply along the fault line between those who had accepted Romanisation and those who had not.

Pic. 7 – *The Germanic Trek from the Continent to the British Isles.*



While the Venerable Bede, the Northumbrian monk and scholar, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (731 CE) chronicles the large-scale migration of Germanic peoples into Britain in 449, the archaeological record hints at something far more complex beneath the surface, one in which the Germanic presence in British soil can be tracked back well before that date, as groups had already established a foothold within Roman Britain as recruited warriors, known as *foederati*, from as early as the 3rd century onward. The *Notitia Dignitatum* (c. 400 CE) documents the Germanic units deployed in the British Archipelago. By the mid-fifth century, Germanic forces had begun crossing the English Channel to pillage the island, dismantling the remnants of Roman-British civic life. If contemporary scholarship, ever cautious, prefers to dress this up as a cocktail of migration, labelling it as a “*mix of migration*”, “*elite takeover*”, and “*cultural assimilation*”, the legends are less diplomatic. Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his 12th-century *Historia Regum Britanniae*, renders it as “*Treachery of the Long Knives*”, in which, during the feast, on a secret signal, “*Nemet oure Saxas!*” = “*Take*

out your knives!” Saxons unleashed blades upon an unsuspecting and unarmed British nobility. What followed was no organic cultural blending; it was a systemic and deliberate conquest, rolling eastward across Britain and pushing the Celts ever further toward the western margins.

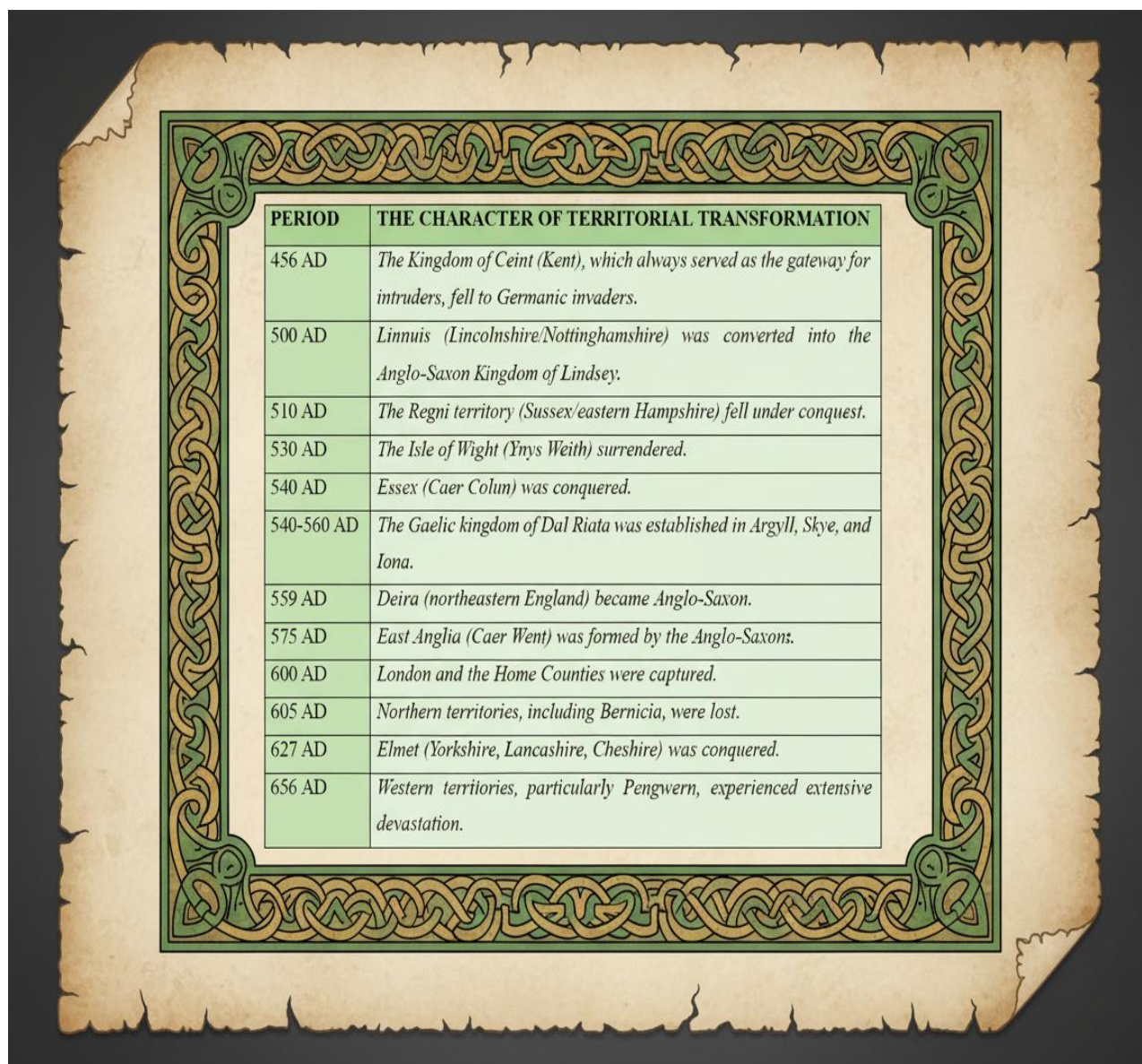
Pic. 8 – *The Establishment of Germanic Groups in the British Isles.*



By the dawn of the eighth century, the Anglo-Saxons had planted their flag across nearly the entire breadth of England, leaving only the rugged lands of Cornwall and a few stubborn northwestern corners beyond their reach. Their merciless advance northward had also carved deep into the heart of southern Scotland, while Wales stood firm as the last great refuge of the ancient Britons, a proud Celtic heartland refusing to be swallowed by the tide of change. In the wake of the conquest, the political contours of Britain were utterly transformed. From the ashes of conflict and migration, the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms rose and took root, while a sharp cultural divide emerged between the emerging world of *Angle-land* and the fiercely Celtic worlds of Wales, Cornwall, and Scotland, with two civilizations sharing one island yet worlds apart. The

dramatic erosion of Celtic territories and the crumbling of their once-mighty fortifications are mapped out in the table below.

Pic. 9 – *The Collapse of Celtic Realms in the Face of Anglo-Saxon Advance.*



PERIOD	THE CHARACTER OF TERRITORIAL TRANSFORMATION
456 AD	<i>The Kingdom of Ceint (Kent), which always served as the gateway for intruders, fell to Germanic invaders.</i>
500 AD	<i>Linnuis (Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire) was converted into the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Lindsey.</i>
510 AD	<i>The Regni territory (Sussex/eastern Hampshire) fell under conquest.</i>
530 AD	<i>The Isle of Wight (Ynys Weith) surrendered.</i>
540 AD	<i>Essex (Caer Colum) was conquered.</i>
540-560 AD	<i>The Gaelic kingdom of Dal Riata was established in Argyll, Skye, and Iona.</i>
559 AD	<i>Deira (northeastern England) became Anglo-Saxon.</i>
575 AD	<i>East Anglia (Caer Went) was formed by the Anglo-Saxons.</i>
600 AD	<i>London and the Home Counties were captured.</i>
605 AD	<i>Northern territories, including Bernicia, were lost.</i>
627 AD	<i>Elmet (Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire) was conquered.</i>
656 AD	<i>Western territories, particularly Pengwern, experienced extensive devastation.</i>

The Celtic territories of Wales, Cornwall, and Scotland maintained their unique cultural and linguistic traditions. Meanwhile, in the regions under Anglo-Saxon occupation, Old English took hold as the dominant language, pushing aside the previously established Celtic and Latin tongues and transforming Britain's linguistic character. J. Derrick McClure, in his chapter "*English in Scotland*," composed for *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, Volume five: "*English in Britain and overseas: Origins and Development*" (1994), edited by Robert Burchfield, argues that the linguistic variety found in early medieval northern Britain was a direct reflection

of its political fragmentation: the Britons in the border regions spoke Brythonic, the Scots of Dal Riada used a Gaelic variety indistinguishable from Irish, while the Pictish language remains mysterious. Though most Pictish place-names appear Celtic, some undeciphered inscriptions and river names hint at an earlier, non-Celtic but Indo-European language; its historical period is uncertain. By the late 700s and 800s, Northumbrian English had spread throughout the Lothians and eastern Borders. However, Viking raids disrupted both Dal Riada's connections to Ireland and Northumbria's dominance, allowing the previously minor Scots of Dal Riada to seize former Northumbrian lands and reshape the region's balance of power" (McClure, 1994, p. 25).

Pic. 10 – *The Distribution of Languages in Britain during Ancient and Early Old English Times.*

AREA	PRE-ROMAN (CELTIC)	ROMAN PERIOD	POST-ROMAN (Vth-VIth c.)
SOUTHERN BRITAIN	BRYTHONIC CELTIC	BLENDING OF LATIN + CELTIC	OLD ENGLISH (ANGLO-SAXON)
WALES	BRYTHONIC	BLENDING OF BRYTHONIC + LATIN	WELSH
CORNWALL	BRYTHONIC	BLENDING OF BRYTHONIC + LATIN	CORNISH
SCOTLAND	PICTISH/ GAELIC	BLENDING OF GAELIC + PICTISH	BLENDING OF GAELIC + OLD ENGLISH (LATER)
IRELAND	GOIDELIC CELTIC	UNROMANIZED GAELIC	OLD IRISH

The twilight of Roman rule and the turbulent post-Roman age were more vividly reflected in the *Arthurian legends* than in the historical documents that have survived to this day. Among the earliest written references to King Arthur can be found in the *Historia Brittonum*, a sixth-century Latin historical compilation traditionally credited to Nennius.

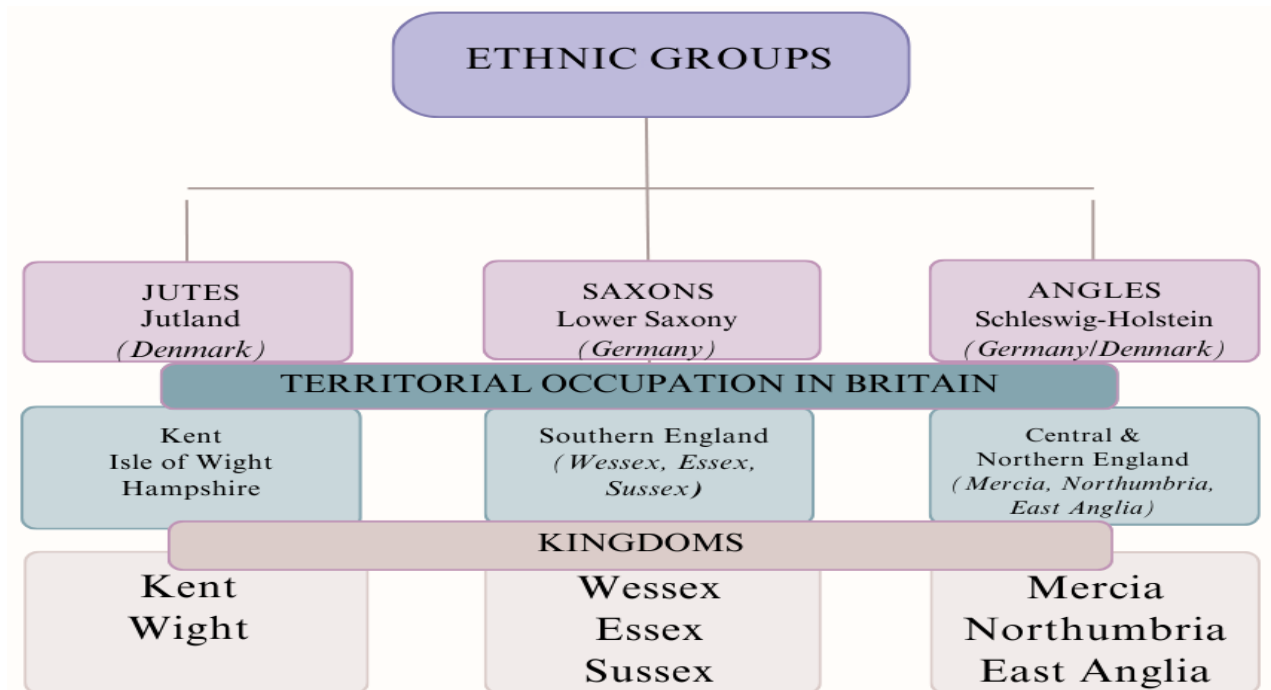
Old English (also known as *Ænglisc* and *Englisc*) is the oldest recorded form of the English language. It was spoken throughout much of England and portions of southern and eastern Scotland from roughly the 5th to the 11th centuries. The language developed from a cluster of closely related Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Britain by Germanic peoples, most notably the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. This early linguistic foundation would go on to shape both Middle and Modern English, and it already displayed significant regional variation that mirrored the complex political and social landscape of early medieval Britain.

The Germanic tribes who settled Britain carried with them a vocabulary largely inherited from Proto-Indo-European. This vocabulary operated on two main levels: *a broad Indo-European base* and *a more specific Germanic layer*. The Indo-European core covered essential everyday concepts, including kinship terms, natural phenomena, basic anatomy, numbers, and fundamental grammatical functions. The language continued to grow during the Proto-Germanic period, adding new words through both internal development and contact with neighboring non-Germanic languages. Notably, the strategies used to form words evolved over time, reflecting broader structural changes in the language. The intricate derivational morphology that characterized Proto-Indo-European was significantly reduced in Proto-Germanic. In its place, word formation began to rely less on complex morphological patterns and, instead, on compounding (the combination of existing words to create new lexical items), which became the most distinctive and productive strategy for expanding the vocabulary.

The *source regions of the Germanic tribes* were diverse. Jutland, which corresponds to present-day Denmark, is widely regarded as the original homeland of the Jutes, while the Saxons are thought to have originated from Lower Saxony. The

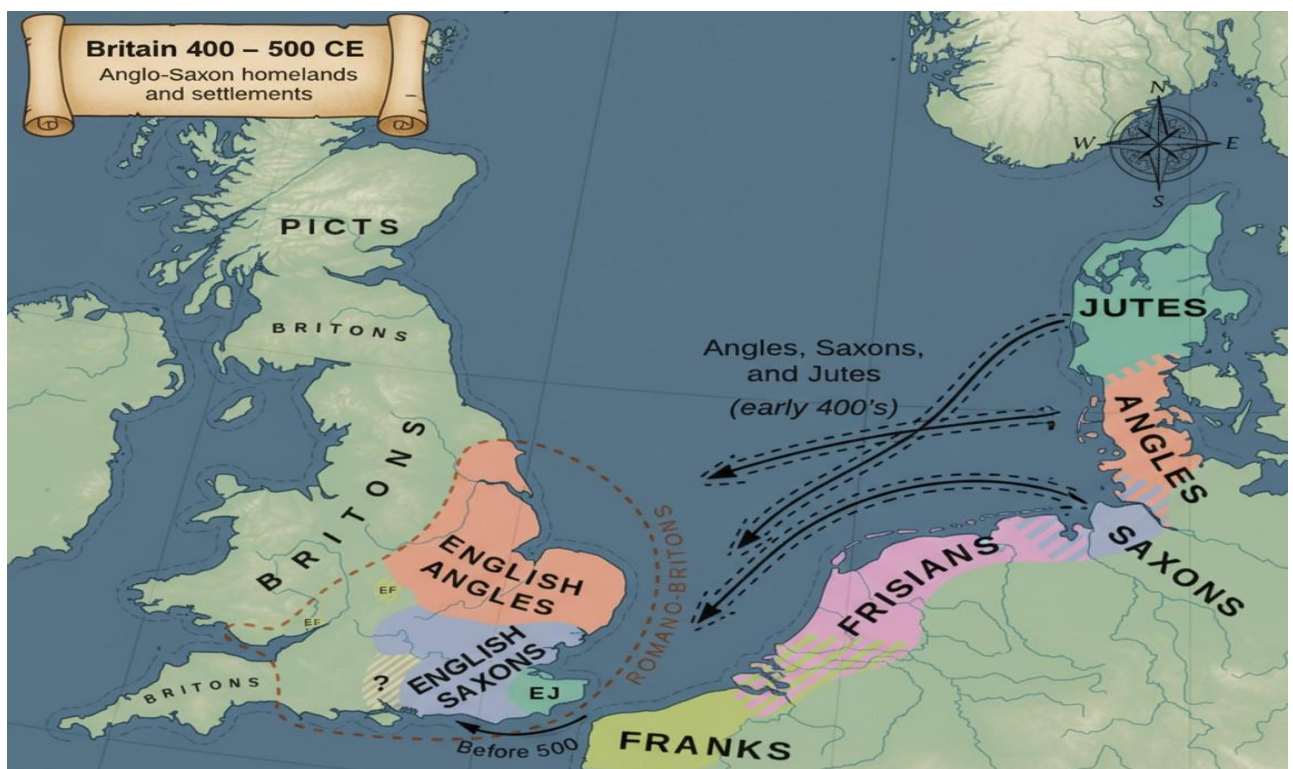
Angles, on the other hand, are generally linked to Schleswig-Holstein, a region situated along the modern border between Germany and Denmark. Once in Britain, these three major Germanic tribes settled in different parts of the island.

Pic. 11 – *The Homelands of the Germanic Tribes and Their Areas of Settlement in Britain.*



Consequently, the migration map captures the direction and reach of their historic displacement through a series of powerful migration vectors.

Pic. 12 – *The Routes of Germanic Tribal Migration.*



The word “*Britain*” and its related forms may owe their origins to how early Germanic peoples saw and described the native Celtic population, the Picts above all others, who had a well-documented practice of coating their bodies with a deep blue pigment derived from the woad plant. Observing this custom firsthand, incoming Germanic-speaking groups are believed to have referred to these people as *prитай*, a term thought to mean “the painted ones.” (See Appendix 3). Over time, this name is theorized to have gradually evolved into the modern words *Britain* and *British*. Some alternative sources, however, link the word to the Proto-Celtic tribal name *prитай*, which means “tattooed people.” As early as the 5th century BCE, the Greek historian Pytheas of Massalia used the name *Prettanikē nēsos* or *Brettaniai* to refer to what we now know as Britain and Ireland. From the 1st century BCE onwards, Roman writers Latinised the name to *Britannia*, using it specifically to denote the island of Great Britain. The word eventually found its way into Old English as *Bryten* or *Bryttene*, shaped by both Latin influence and Germanic tribal terminology.

The Anglo-Saxon movement into Britain was a phenomenon of an entirely different magnitude than the Norman conquest that followed centuries later. Where the Normans simply installed a new ruling class atop an existing society, the Anglo-Saxons fundamentally repopulated the land itself. The sheer weight of this demographic reality ensured that their language would come to dominate. Celtic tongues did not so much fall in battle as they were gradually edged out by the slow arithmetic of demographic pressure.

The uneven distribution of Germanic tribes across Britain gave birth to a patchwork of small, fragmented kingdoms, which in turn bred a wide variety of regional dialects. The linguistic diversity that emerged was deeply tied to the tribal identities of these groups, with its roots stretching back to their continental origins. By the 7th century, the shape of seven Germanic kingdoms had solidified: *the Saxons* retained Wessex, Essex, and Sussex; *the Angles* held East Anglia, Northumbria, and Mercia; and the *Jutes* kept Kent. The first volume of *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, “*The Beginnings to 1066*,” edited by Richard M. Hogg, notes that three of these kingdoms extended their reach well beyond their original borders during

successive periods of growing power with Northumbria from roughly 625 to 675 AD, Mercia from approximately 650 to 825 AD, and Wessex from around 800 to 1050 AD. Throughout this entire period, Kent carved out its own particular significance, largely on account of Canterbury's standing as a center of ecclesiastical authority (Hogg, 2008, c. 416).

Pic. 13 – *Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms in the period of Heptarchy.*



Five major dialect regions have traditionally been identified across Britain: *Northern, Midland, East Anglian, South-Eastern, and South-Western*. The Northern dialect zone covers the territory stretching from mid-Yorkshire upward through the Scottish Lowlands. The Midland region spans from London to Gloucestershire,

dividing into East and West Midlands, each distinguished by its own phonological and lexical characteristics. East Anglian stands as a dialect area in its own right, supported by a body of texts that display forms strikingly different from those found in East Midlands English. The South-Eastern dialects echo the patterns of the Old English Kentish dialect, while the South-Western region finds its roots in the Old English West Saxon tradition. Some dialectologists have gone further, proposing the recognition of a Middle South dialect category placed between the South-Eastern and South-Western zones, defined by its transitional linguistic features.

Pic. 14 – *An Outline of the Major Dialectal Regions in Old Britain.*



The later Old English period was defined, in literary terms, by the dominance of West Saxon, a dialect whose imprint can be traced across a substantial corpus of early English writing. Yet the direct linguistic ancestor of Modern English is not West Saxon. That role belongs to the Mercian dialect, spoken in the regions further north, which would go on to form the primary root of both Middle and Modern English. *The*

Peterborough Chronicle stands as a key surviving record of late Mercian, capturing the dialect at the very point of its gradual shift toward Middle English.

The Heptarchy period was defined by the division of England into a cluster of rival kingdoms locked in a contest for dominance, which stretched from the Roman withdrawal and the Germanic resettlement of the 5th century to the early 9th century, when Ecgberht of Wessex finally brought his rivals to heel in 829, imposing a measure of unity over a long-divided land. Throughout this era, political authority was constantly negotiated, shifting, fracturing, and realigning, and the diversity of speech that emerged across these kingdoms moved in step with every turn of power, reflecting in language what the battlefield expressed in blood. As Wessex tightened its grip on political supremacy and Winchester became the beating heart of a newly unified England, West Saxon came to serve, quite organically, as the language of authority and record-keeping. Under the reign of King Alfred the Great, from 871 to 899, *the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was started. As a running, year-by-year account of unfolding historical events, it ranks among the most remarkable works ever produced in the Old English tongue, forming a written tradition that stretched across the 9th to the 11th century, two hundred years during which the West Saxon dialect dominated the documentary landscape almost without exception. History, however, had other plans as the descendants who would carry England forward had shaped their speech from Mercian clay, not West Saxon, and found themselves oddly disconnected from the written records of their own past. With that, the oldest surviving English manuscript, a relic dating to around 700 AD, was penned not in West Saxon but in the Northumbrian dialect, a reminder that the early story of English was written by many hands and shaped as much by chance as by design. Just as biological survival favors only those organisms best equipped to withstand the physical trauma of warfare and the pathogenic pressures of a pre-antibiotic world, so too did manuscript durability operate according to its own logic of selection, governed by the consuming destruction of fire, the successive waves of conquest that erased what they found on their way, the share of neglect of successive generations, and the gradual but unstoppable molecular breakdown that time inflicts on all organic matter. The temporality filter was largely

indifferent to historical or linguistic value; instead, a text's longevity was linked to the rigor of those who copied and preserved it, as well as to the institutional stability of the places that housed it. What we know today as the Old English corpus is a fractured and incomplete set of evidence, preserved in isolated charters, homilies, poetic works, riddles, and ecclesiastical documents, with each surviving piece representing no more than a faint signal from a linguistic system of far greater breadth and intricacy than the extant record can fully capture. These texts constitute an irreplaceable repository of cultural and linguistic data, anchored within the intellectual substratum of a civilization in much the same way that fossil specimens are fixed within sedimentary deposits, incomplete and unevenly distributed, yet of immeasurable analytical worth.

Among the polytheistic and pre-Christian Germanic tribes, literacy was sporadic rather than widespread, with the secret knowledge of reading and inscribing surfacing in the ritual sphere of religious life (mysticism) or in ruling contexts. The oldest remnants of the Germanic writing system were found in runes engraved on various objects. Runes served as the written medium for a range of early Germanic languages, including Gothic, Old English, and Scandinavian dialects, and the archaeological record traces their use back to the 2nd century AD. As a script designed principally for carving into wood or metal, the runic alphabet developed a formal character defined entirely by straight lines, with no curves to complicate the stylus's cutting against the grain. The earliest known runic system, *the Elder Futhark*, consisted of 24 signs arranged in a particular sequence. It exhibited regional variation, complicating efforts to identify a unified standard form. The precise origins of the runic script remain uncertain. Runic inscriptions have been discovered as far as 30 kilometers from Kovel. Among the most significant finds is the *Kovel spearhead*, extracted from the ground in 1858 and dated to the early third century AD. It bears one of the earliest known Gothic runic inscriptions, *tilarids*, commonly interpreted as meaning "target rider." Although the original artifact was lost during World War II, it remains a crucial piece of evidence for early East Germanic literacy, predating the development of the Gothic alphabet.

Etymologically, the word *rune* derives from Old Norse *rún*, holding the meaning of "secret" or "runic letter," and earlier from Proto-Norse **rūnō*. Over the centuries

and across significant geographic distances, runes adapted and evolved. England saw them fall out of use by the 11th century, with Germany and the Low Countries abandoning them even sooner. In Scandinavia alone, the tradition held firm, enduring into the closing centuries of the medieval period. *The Elder Futhark* is regarded as the oldest form of the runic alphabet, practiced among Germanic peoples and rooted most firmly in Scandinavia. It is generally held to have provided the foundation for later runic variants. The letter names are recorded in *Common Germanic*, the reconstructed proto-language that served as the common root from which the entire Germanic language family branched. The *Anglo-Saxon Futhorc* (See Appendix 2) developed as an outgrowth of *the Elder Futhark*, adapted to address the specific phonological demands of Old English. Broadening the original set of 24 characters to 28-33 symbols, it functioned as a working writing system across England and parts of Frisia from the 5th to the 11th century¹¹. Its gradual decline ran in parallel with the Christianisation of the Anglo-Saxon world, as the Latin script steadily displaced it, first within ecclesiastical settings and eventually across secular life as well.

Pic. 15 – *The Structural Components of the Elder Futhark and Anglo-Saxon Futhorc.*

ELDER FUTHARK	ANGLO-SAXON FUTHORC	NAME	LATIN EQUIVALENT	PHONETIC	MEANING
ᚠ	ƿ	Fehu	F	[f]	<i>Cattle, wealth</i>
ᚢ	ƒ	Uruz	U	[u]	<i>Aurochs, strength</i>
ᚦ	ƿ	Thurisaz	Þ (TH)	[θ]	<i>Giant, thorn</i>
ᚨ	ƿ	Ansuz / Os	A / O	[a] [o]	<i>God, mouth</i>
ᚱ	ƿ	Raidho / Rad	R	[r]	<i>Riding, journey</i>
ᚷ	ƿ	Kenaz / Cen	K / C	[k]	<i>Torch, knowledge</i>
ᚹ	ƿ	Gebo / Gyfu	G	[g]	<i>Gift</i>
ᚺ	ƿ	Wunjo / Wynn	W	[w]	<i>Joy</i>
ᚫ	ƿ	Hagalaz / Haegl	H	[h]	<i>Hail</i>
ᚬ	ƿ	Nauthiz / Nyd	N	[n]	<i>Need, necessity</i>
ᚭ	ƿ	Isaz / Is	I	[i]	<i>Ice</i>

¹¹ For more information, check *Appendix 1*.

𐌲	ᚦ	Jera / Ger	J / Y	[j]	<i>Year, harvest</i>
𐌷	ᚷ	Eihwaz / Eoh	I	[i:]	<i>Yew tree</i>
𐌵	ᚱ	Pertho / Peorth	P	[p]	<i>Unknown / lot cup</i>
𐌹	ᚹ	Algiz	Z / X	[z]	<i>Elk, protection</i>
𐌺	ᚺ	Sowilo / Sigel	S	[s]	<i>Sun</i>
𐌹	ᚹ	Tiwaz / Tir	T	[t]	<i>Tyr (god), victory</i>
𐌶	ᚶ	Berkano / Beorc	B	[b]	<i>Birch</i>
𐌼	ᚼ	Ehwaz / Eh	E	[e]	<i>Horse</i>
𐌽	ᚾ	Mannaz / Man	M	[m]	<i>Man, human</i>
𐌻	ᚿ	Laguz / Lagu	L	[l]	<i>Water, lake</i>
𐌴	ᛀ	Ingwaz / Ing	NG	[ŋ]	<i>Ing (God), fertility</i>
𐌶	ᚶ	Dagaz / Daeg	D	[d]	<i>Day</i>
𐌶	ᚶ	Othala / Ethel	O	[o:]	<i>Ancestral property</i>
—	ᚱ	Ac	A	[a]	<i>Oak tree</i>
—	ᚱ	Aesc	Æ	[æ]	<i>Ash tree</i>
—	ᚱ	Yr	Y	[y]	<i>Bow, yew</i>
—	ᚱ	Ior	IO	[io]	<i>Eel / serpent</i>
—	ᚱ	Ear	EA	[æa]	<i>Earth / grave</i>

Physical departure from Britain did not mean a complete abandonment of Roman interest in the island. In the late 6th century, Pope Gregory I, who held the papacy from 590 to 604, sent the monk Augustine to evangelize England, which was carried out through the Celtic wife of the Kentish king, whose faith was itself a remnant of the Christianized Celtic left behind by Rome's former colonial presence. The arrival of St. Augustine in 597 CE and the subsequent Christianisation of Anglo-Saxon England prompted the assimilation of further Latin-derived lexemes into the English language. These borrowings primarily concerned ecclesiastical titles, liturgical rites, and related domains. Notably, several terms, such as *church*, *bishop*, *baptism*, *monk*, *eucharist*, and *presbyter*, entered English via Latin, tracing their etymological origins to Greek. St. Augustine was installed as the inaugural Archbishop of Canterbury, then the political center of Kent. Nevertheless, it was the Celtic Church that played a pivotal

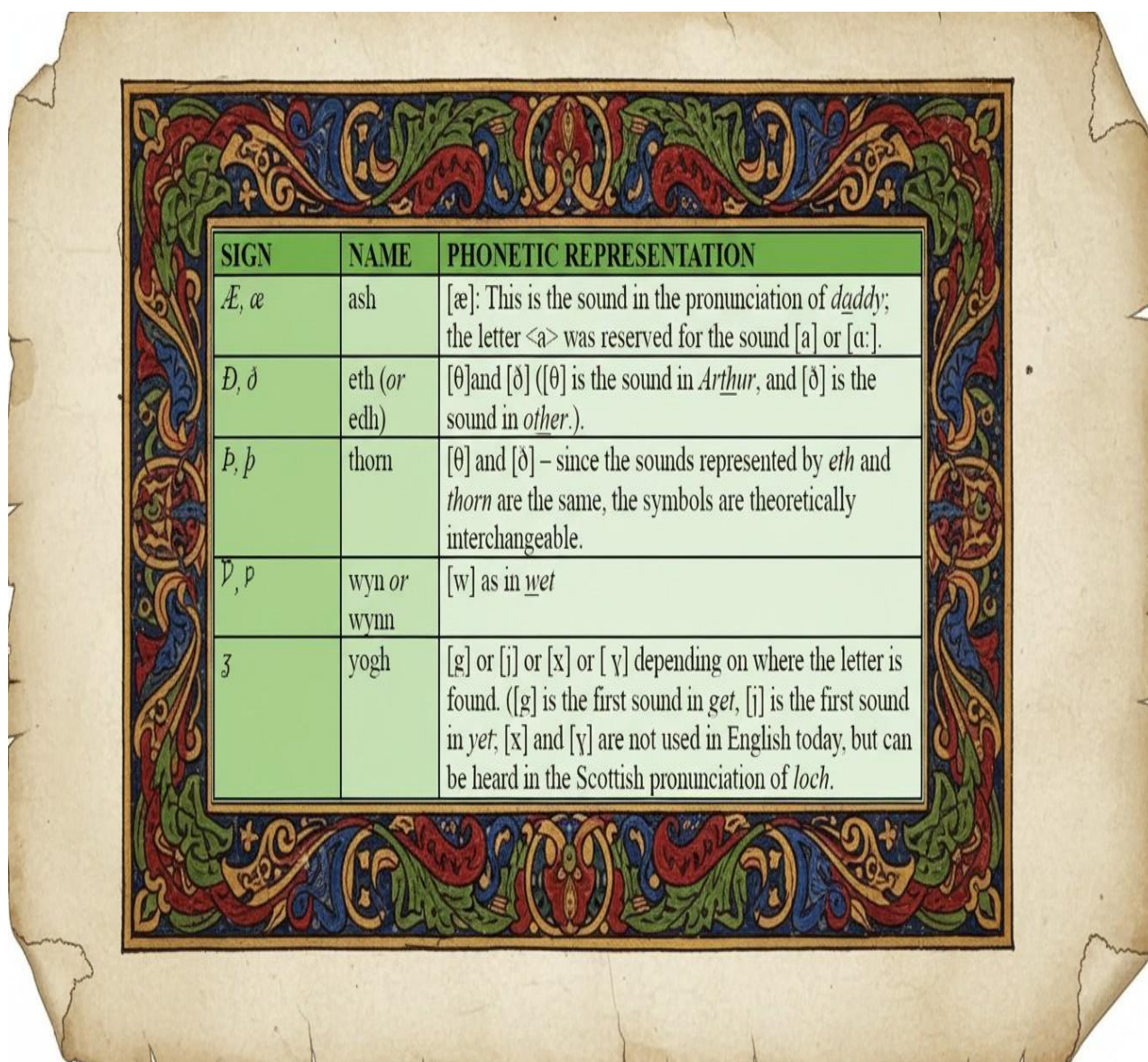
role in establishing Christianity among the broader British public. Monastic institutions emerged as pivotal hubs of intellectual and scholarly activity, fostering the preservation and transmission of knowledge. The spread of Christianity among the Germanic peoples moved in step with the advance of Latin literacy, and together they steadily eroded the runic writing traditions that had preceded them. The Anglo-Saxon historian Bede, who lived from 673 to 735 CE and spent his life as a monk at the recently founded monastery of Jarrow in Northumbria, wrote his defining work, *the Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (the Ecclesiastical History of the English People), in Latin in 731 CE. The text contains Bede's account of Britain's ethnolinguistic diversity, in which he identifies five peoples sharing the island (the English, the Britons, the Scots, the Picts, and the Latins), each pursuing the study of divine truth through its own distinct dialect. *The Death Song* by Bede, composed at his deathbed in 735, stands among the earliest surviving specimens of Old English verse. Preserved in numerous manuscript copies and extant in both Northumbrian and West Saxon dialect versions, the poem belongs to *the gnomic tradition* (a form characterized by brevity and moral instruction) and urges its readers to turn their minds toward divine judgment; the capacity for moral reckoning still lies within their grasp.

The earliest Germanic words to appear in Latin script were restricted to proper nouns (place names and personal names), with marginal annotations in manuscripts later providing supplementary evidence of vernacular language use. It was the process of Christianisation that functioned as the primary channel through which Latin script was adopted as a means of representing Germanic languages graphemically. Paleographic analysis indicates that West Germanic languages began producing written records in this orthographic system between the 7th and 11th centuries. North Germanic languages exhibited a delayed chronology, with Latin-based written production emerging only in the 12th and 13th centuries, a gap that reflects the later penetration of Christianity into Scandinavia.

As the Latin script was applied to Germanic languages, it became necessary to adapt the orthographic system to account for sounds that Classical Latin had never needed to represent. This required the introduction of new graphemes, several of which

were lifted directly from the runic tradition. The characters adopted through this process included the following:

Pic. 16 – *Runic Graphemes That Persisted into the Latin Orthographic Tradition.*



SIGN	NAME	PHONETIC REPRESENTATION
Æ, æ	ash	[æ]: This is the sound in the pronunciation of <i>daddy</i> ; the letter <a> was reserved for the sound [a] or [ɑ:].
Ð, ð	eth (or edh)	[θ] and [ð] ([θ] is the sound in <i>Arthur</i> , and [ð] is the sound in <i>other</i> .).
Þ, þ	thorn	[θ] and [ð] – since the sounds represented by <i>eth</i> and <i>thorn</i> are the same, the symbols are theoretically interchangeable.
ƿ, ƿ	wyn or wynn	[w] as in <i>wet</i>
ȝ	yogh	[g] or [j] or [x] or [ɣ] depending on where the letter is found. ([g] is the first sound in <i>get</i> , [j] is the first sound in <i>yet</i> ; [x] and [ɣ] are not used in English today, but can be heard in the Scottish pronunciation of <i>loch</i>).

NOTE: There was no letter *w* in Old English because Latin had no letter for [w]. The letter *p* ('wynn') was used instead. Alongside *p*, some late OE scribes *occasionally* used *uu* or *wu*. After the Norman Conquest (1066), scribes trained in continental (Carolingian) Latin traditions stopped using *p*. They replaced it with *uu*, which gradually fused into the single letter *w* ("double u"). By the 12th century, *w* had largely replaced *p*, and *wynn* fell out of use. In our text, we will use the *w* sign, as in most theoretical books on OE.

Not all graphemes survived the transition intact. Some fell into disuse because the adapted Latin script already provided phonological equivalents, rendering these characters orthographically redundant and ultimately obsolete across most Germanic writing systems.

Pic. 17 – Letters that Were Out of Use in Old English.

CHARACTER	BASIS FOR OMISSION IN EARLY OE
k	"c" was already available for the [k] sound; <i>king</i> was, for example, <i>cynig</i> in OE.
q	the [kw] sound was represented by "cw"; <i>queen</i> was, for example, <i>cwene</i> in OE.
v	"f" was used instead. The [f] and [v] sounds were <i>allophonic</i> ; in other words, the [f] and [v] distinctions were never used to distinguish words. The phonetic realization depended on the location of "f" in the word structure. For example, <i>knave</i> was <i>cnafa</i> or <i>cnafe</i> in OE. Another instance can be observed in the word <i>of</i> , which is commonly pronounced [əv] or [ɒv].
z	"s" was used instead. The [s] and [z] sounds were <i>allophonic</i> ; in other words, the [s] and [z] distinctions were never used to distinguish words. The sound produced varied according to where the letter <i>s</i> appeared in the word. For example, <i>size</i> was <i>syse</i> or <i>sise</i> in OE. Modern English still retains some words where "s" in non-initial positions is articulated as [z], as seen in examples like <i>rise</i> , <i>houses</i> , <i>has</i> , and <i>is</i> .
g	"ȝ" was used instead.
j	This letter developed from the letter "i" much later.

Contemporary paleographic scholarship organizes the historical variants of the Latin alphabet into separate script families, defined by the morphological properties of their letterforms and their sequential development over time. Among the earliest documented forms is *Scriptura Capitalis*, or capital script, which provided the graphic foundation for certain modern majuscule characters. Between the 3rd and 6th centuries CE, this gave way to *Scriptura Uncialis*, or uncial script, which served as the progenitor of several contemporary minuscule forms. The Germanic tribes primarily used a subsequent development, represented by *Scriptura Minusculis*, or minuscule script, which later became the principal source of modern lowercase letterforms in the Latin alphabet.

The closing phase of the Old English period brought a third significant wave of external linguistic influence upon English. The relative calm that had settled over the British Isles between the 8th and 11th centuries was shattered by the arrival of a new

external force: Norwegian and Danish Vikings, driven to its shores by the pressing need for arable land and room to grow. The pulse of the planet is regulated by the fluctuation between warming phases and cooler intervals. Europe was entering the era of warming that would hold for several centuries, reshaping the conditions of life across the continent. Between the 10th and 13th centuries, temperatures rose to their highest levels, reshaping England's weather patterns into conditions more readily associated with southern France today. The period in question has traditionally been called *the Medieval Warm Period*, a label that modern scholarship displaced with the term *Medieval Climate Anomaly*. Reconstructed paleoclimatic data confirm that the abnormally elevated temperatures were witnessed in specific regions, most notably the North Atlantic, across the approximate period of 950 to 1250 CE. The growth of the Norse populace led to agricultural expansion northward to the Arctic Circle. However, the substantial geographic reach of the farming frontier could not keep pace with the land requirements of the multiplying population. Climatic shifts triggered Viking activity across Europe as they sought resources and additional living space. Navigable waters, freed from their ice, opened maritime routes to Iceland and Greenland. Tradition has it that Erik the Red, upon discovering Greenland, deliberately named it "*Green Land*," using it as a strategic maneuver intended to make the island appear more hospitable and thereby encourage colonists to come. Nevertheless, if any deception was involved, it was slight, as the climate was genuinely mild enough to support lush coastal grasslands, turning the place into something resembling present-day Ghent, Belgium, or Marseille, France. Viking ships reached American shores on a regular basis. In Newfoundland, which they referred to as *Markland* ("Forest Land"), timber was harvested for colonists in Greenland. Farther south in Vinland, a settlement existed in what is now Nova Scotia, Canada. Meanwhile, climatic conditions in Europe differed greatly from those of the modern period. Areas that are now arid, such as Turkey and Spain, received regular rainfall a thousand years ago, and the most impressive illustration of the region's varied environmental history can be seen in Sicily, Italy. The grand ancient bridges that today arch over little more than shallow puddles and minor trickles, easily crossed on foot, once spanned deep, navigable rivers

Viking contact with Britain, stretching back to around 750 CE, worked its way into the very structure of the English language, its word stock, and the daily habits of its people. Norwegians led the charge in the early years. The Danes, however, grew bolder with time, turning their attention to England's eastern flank and striking it with increasing regularity from 835 CE. The sons of Ragnar Lothbrok wrote their names into history early, their assault on Sheppey in Kent earning them a reputation for destruction that preceded them everywhere they went. A century later, Kent and East Anglia had fallen squarely into Danish hands.

The division of England into seven separate kingdoms left its defenders fractured and ineffective, clearing the way for permanent Danish colonization and the eventual establishment of the Danelaw across eastern and northeastern England, a territory administered according to Danish political and legal principles.

Pic 19 – *The Administrative Hubs of the Danelaw Region.*



As a people whose tongue belonged to the broader Germanic language family, the Vikings brought with them a speech that was not entirely foreign to the English ear. The contact between the two produced a web of shared forms and mutual intelligibility that gradually eased the absorption of the Viking settlers into the English population.

King Alfred the Great (849-899 CE) stands as a symbol of anti-Danish resistance, assuming leadership of the defense against the invaders by 871 CE. Over the next fifteen years (871-886 CE), he effectively cleared Wessex of Viking domination through a series of military expeditions. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and the *Parker Manuscript* in particular, a section bearing the name of Archbishop Matthew Parker, tracks the changing fortunes of this extended struggle.

The relative calm of the period between 886 and 892 CE gave Alfred the space to turn his attention inward, directing his energies toward the reform of education and governance, and toward the translation of religious texts into Old English. War returned in 892 CE, brought by additional Danish units that had been operating in northern France and were now turning their attention back to England. By 896 CE, the Viking advance ultimately failed to hold, and the territorial integrity of both Wessex and English Mercia was restored. As a result, the Danish forces, drawn from Normandy and East Anglia, were left with no choice but to accept territorial restriction within the boundaries of the Danelaw. Some among the Danish forces withdrew to Francia, while others put down permanent roots in England. Alfred, long regarded as the defining monarch of Anglo-Saxon England, died in 899 CE, leaving behind a legacy that would have an indelible impact on both the military and a cultural renaissance that would outlast him. The *Will* left by King Alfred offers a window into Old English as it functioned in formal and legal contexts, written in the West Saxon dialect, dense with legal terminology including *feoh* and *læn*, and rich in the inflectional forms of the period. It also preserves evidence of inheritance customs that predate the emergence of feudal structures. Its secular character sets it apart from the predominantly poetic and religious textual record, making it a valuable source for understanding 11th-century kinship networks and land-tenure practices. Its survival in a 12th-century cartulary leaves open the question of scribal modification, though the degree to which it aligns

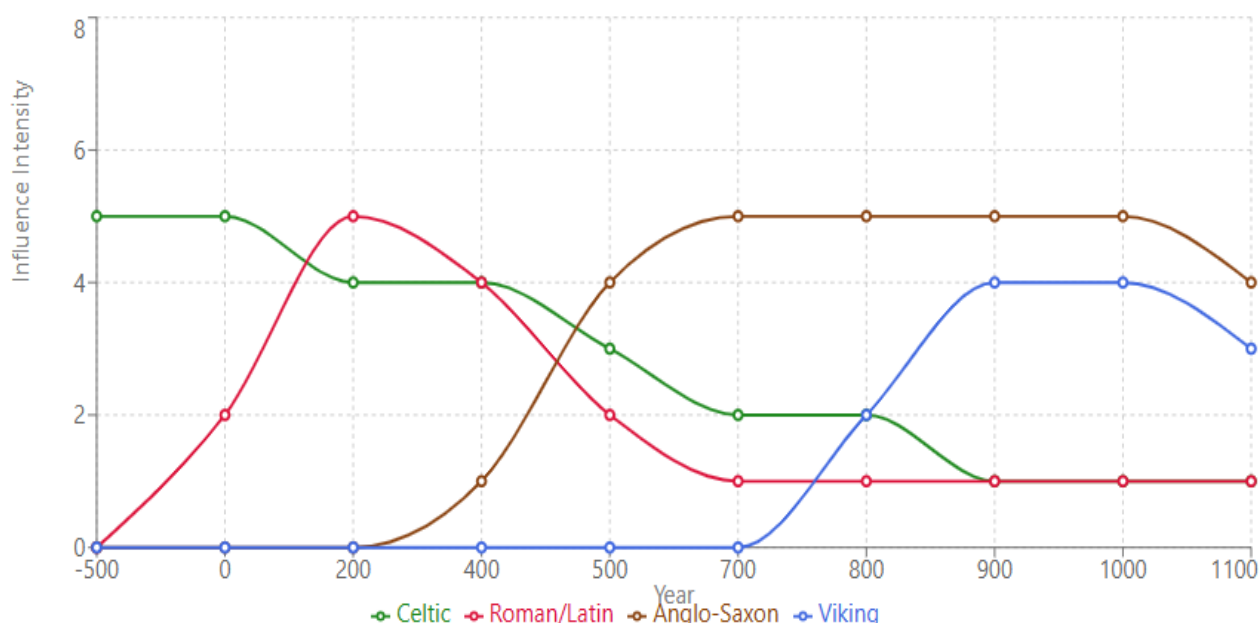
with the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* strongly argues for its genuineness. The *Will* stands at the intersection of linguistic and historical study, demonstrating the capacity of legal documents to deepen and enrich our understanding of how Old English developed over time.

Words do not need swords to take territory. Between 600 and 900, Scandinavian lexemes entered the fabric of Old English, not at its decorative edges but at its core, embedding themselves in everyday vocabulary. The Norse presence in Britain left a mark that is still visible today in hundreds of place names scattered across the British Isles. Endings like *-by*, *-ness*, and *-thorp*, heard in Whitby, Grimsby, and Formby, are unmistakably Scandinavian in origin, and their geographic distribution across the map serves as a quiet but reliable record of where Viking settlers actually put down roots. Thus, Scandinavian elements in place names include *-by* ('abode, village' in Danish and Norwegian, 'farm, town'); *-toft* ('hoamstead' in Danish, 'hedges place'); *-thorp(e)* ('village' in Danish); *-thwaite* ('field' in Norwegian), *-beck* ('stream, spring'). This double layer of influence, words borrowed into the living language, and names fossilized in the landscape, is one of the primary ways North Germanic tongues left their mark on the development of Old English. Among the words that English inherited from Scandinavian are: 1) the nouns: *bank, birth, booth, egg, husband, law, leg, root, sister, trust, wing, window, fjord, saga, smorgasbord*, and *Viking* + all the words that start with *sk*: *ski, score, skin*; 2) the adjectives: *awkward, flat, happy, ill, loose, low, odd, sly, ugly, weak, wrong*; 3) the verbs: *to cast, clip, crawl, cut, die, drown, gasp, give, lift, nag, scare, slalom, sprint, take, want*; 4) the pronouns: *both, same, they, them, their*.

Despite starting from the same Germanic roots, which meant Old Norse and Old English speakers could likely make themselves understood to one another, the regional variation visible in English during the 11th and 12th centuries owes a good deal to sustained contact with Scandinavian speech. The influence ran deeper than borrowed words, reshaping pronunciation and reorganizing grammatical structures, producing distinct regional dialects that set the Norse-influenced north and east apart from the West Saxon variety of English spoken elsewhere.

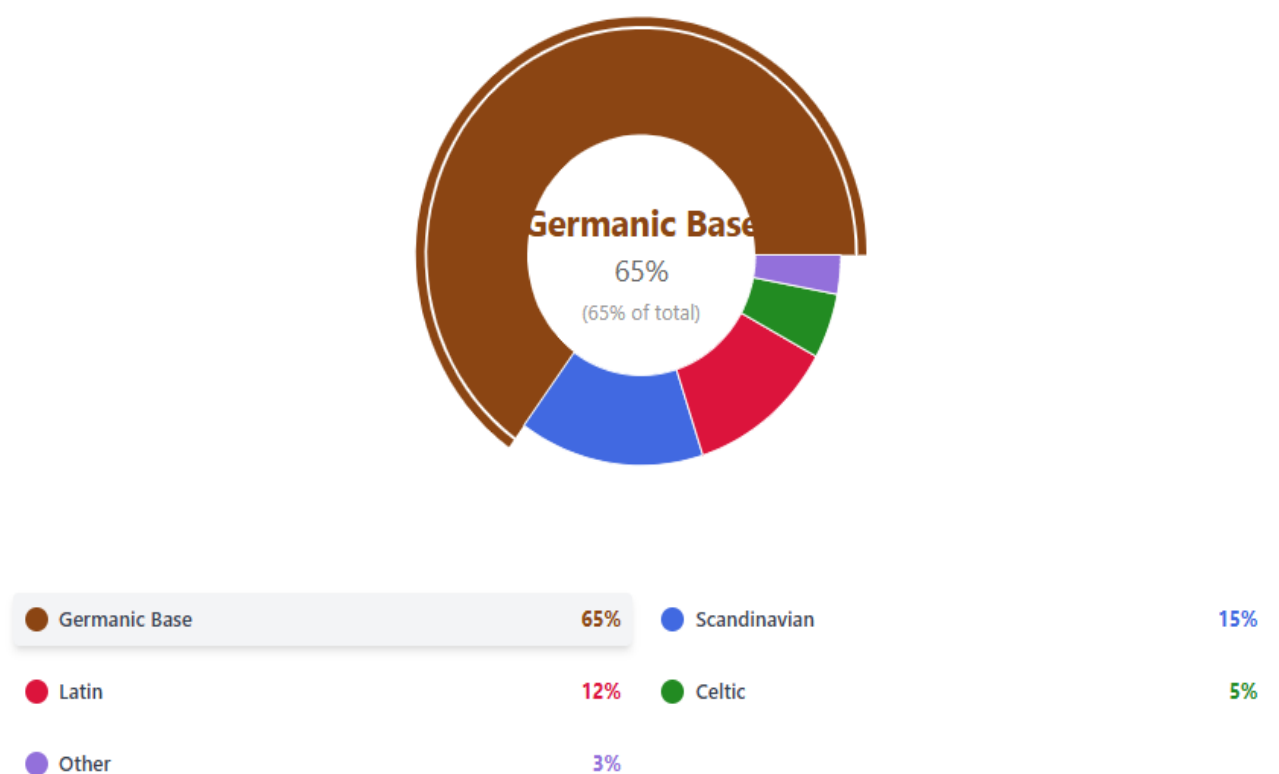
Thus, the lexical composition of the OE period became stratified. The linguistic influence on English during the Old English period can be visualized through a graph.

Pic. 20 – *The Linguistic influence on English between 500 BCE and 1100 CE.*



The Old English period played a significant role in shaping the English language, laying the groundwork for its development, which was further influenced by historical milestones. The lexical contribution to Old English is shown through a pie chart.

Pic. 21 – *The Vocabulary Sources and their Proportional Influence in 5th-11th Centuries CE.*



Contemporary English is the product of a long and turbulent history, and its sounds, grammar, and vocabulary bear the fingerprints of the major historical disruptions that have shaped England as a nation. The language has always been a faithful reflection of the country's experience, from the Norman Conquest to the era of colonial expansion; each great political and social turning point left something permanent behind, widening what English could express and reshaping the very way it was built.

By the close of the Old English period, the foundations of an English state had taken shape. When Alfred the Great died in 899, his son Edward the Elder began expanding Wessex's reach, bringing neighboring kingdoms under his control with crucial help from his sister Æthelflæd. This laid the ground for Alfred's grandson Æthelstan, who in 927 united the remaining Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, Northumbria among them, becoming the first king to rule a genuinely unified England. With that, the Heptarchy came to an end, and centralized English governance began.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Who was the only king in the history of Britain who was named the Great? What did he do to deserve that title?
2. Have a look at the map of modern Great Britain and find 5 placenames of Celtic origin, 5 toponyms of Anglo-Saxon origin, and 5 toponyms with traces from Latin. Justify your opinion.
3. There are different theories as to the origin of the name of the capital of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Have you heard any? If not, search the net for possible answers.
4. Which letters denoted two or more sounds in Old English? What did it depend on?
5. Supply examples of 5 Scandinavian borrowings that reveal the ferocious nature of Vikings.
6. Anglo-Saxon invaders called some Celtic tribes Welsh. Do you know what this name means? If not, look it up in the etymological dictionary. What does it say about the invaders?
7. It is not easy to read a manuscript in Old English, for instance, the letters are written very close together with very small intervals between words. Can you explain why? Can you name some other factors that make the reading difficult?
8. Why was the borrowing of the word school connected with the Christianization of Britain?

THE TOPICS FOR SELF-STUDY AND REPORTS:

1. The geological and archeological work carried out by William Boyd Dawkins.
2. The character and practical uses of the runic writing system.
3. The Latin Alphabet and the Insular Script.
4. Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*.
5. The Old English period. The Heptarchy. Old English dialects. Old English manuscripts.
6. The lives and works of Cædmon and Cynewulf as the earliest poets of the Old English tradition.
7. The role of kennings in Old English Poetry.
8. *The Epic of Beowulf* and the values of the eighth century.
9. The roles of women in Anglo-Saxon society and the roots of sexism in language.
10. Chronicles in stone and ink, or how Bede and *the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* shaped history through storytelling: voice, detail, dialogue, and the poetic art of persuasion.
11. Two battles, two poems in verse: glory, defeat, and the Anglo-Saxon art of heroic memory in *The Battle of Brunanburh* and *The Battle of Maldon*.

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH ERA: A LANGUAGE UNDER SIEGE

1. *The preconditions for the Norman Conquest. Succession crisis and the claimants for the English throne.*
2. *The conquest and the architecture of power in the French-speaking kingdom.*
3. *Norman-induced linguistic transformations.*
4. *Historical catalysts for the restoration of English.*

As far as the English are concerned, all of life's greatest problems can be encapsulated in one word – *FOREIGNERS*.

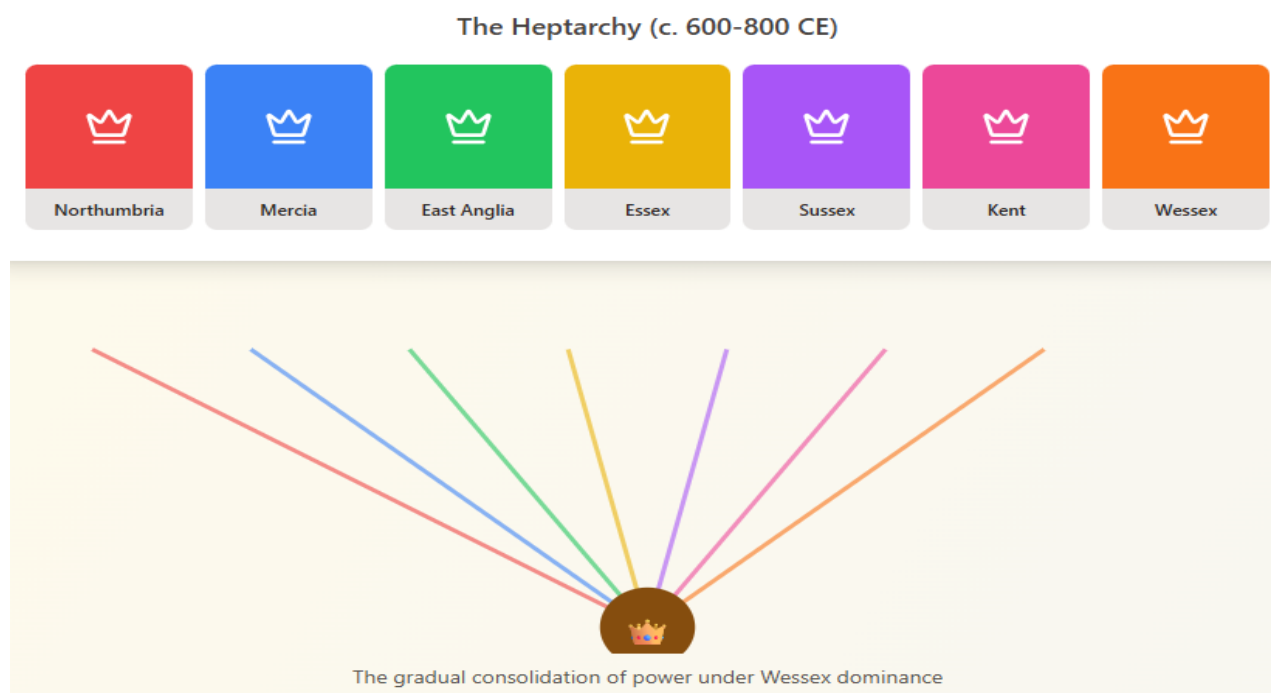
While the Germanic tribes were originally alien to the British Archipelago, centuries of unchallenged control enabled them to take root in the Isles. The remote location shielded the residents from the unrest on the big continent, a place that at different points in history served as a source of several invasions. The Norman conquest marked the last time Britain was successfully invaded from abroad. Though they put down roots in the land and made efforts to blend with the people already living there, full integration always remained out of reach. Subsequently, English spread beyond Britain, carrying the language worldwide.

In the eleventh century, English underwent a seismic shift, carried through its phonological and morphological systems as well as its vocabulary. No historical event proved a more catalyzing spur than the Norman Conquest, the foundations for which had been laid during the late Old English period.

The year 927 marks the decisive moment when England emerged as a single entity. Alfred the Great made Wessex a driving force, consolidating the shattered, fragmented Heptarchy in the face of the Viking threat. His grandson, King Æthelstan of Wessex, brought seven kingdoms under one crown by capturing York, thereby

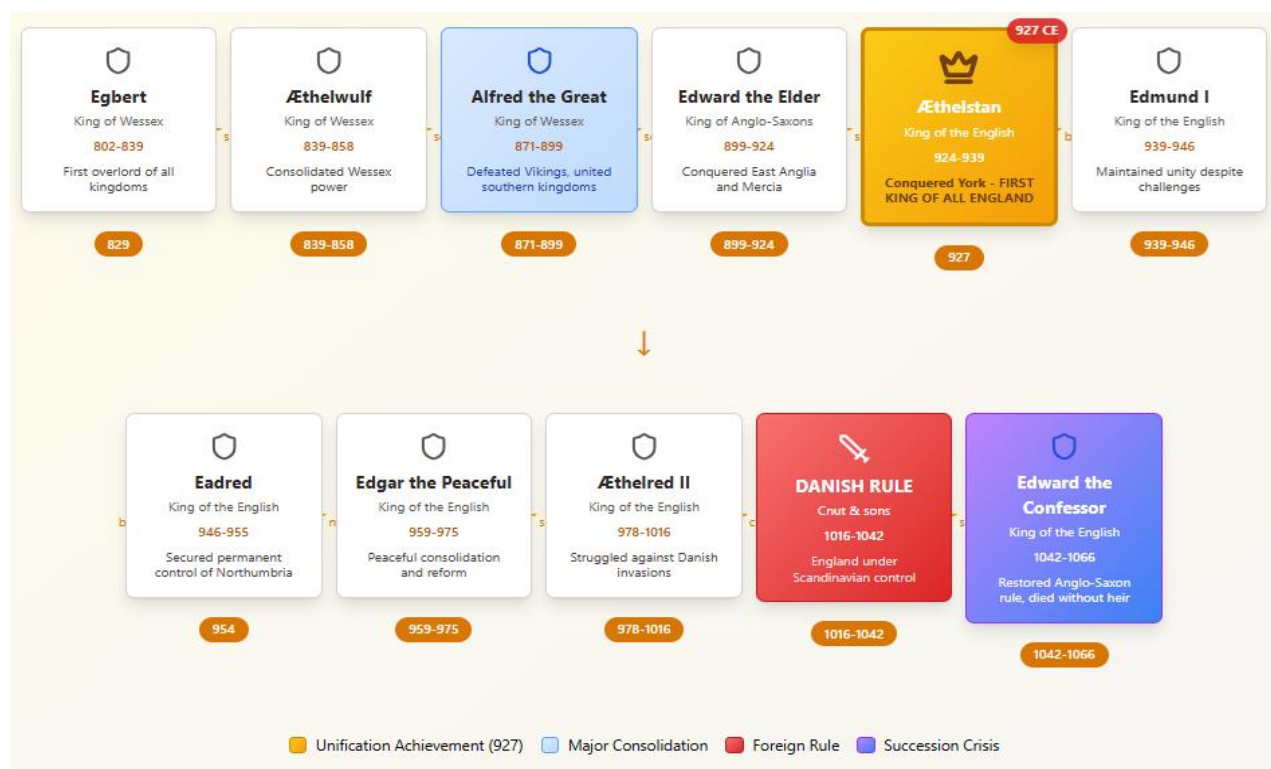
bringing Northumbria, the last autonomous Anglo-Saxon realm, under his authority and earning himself recognition as the first true monarch of England.

Pic. 22 – *The Unification of Anglo-Saxon England.*



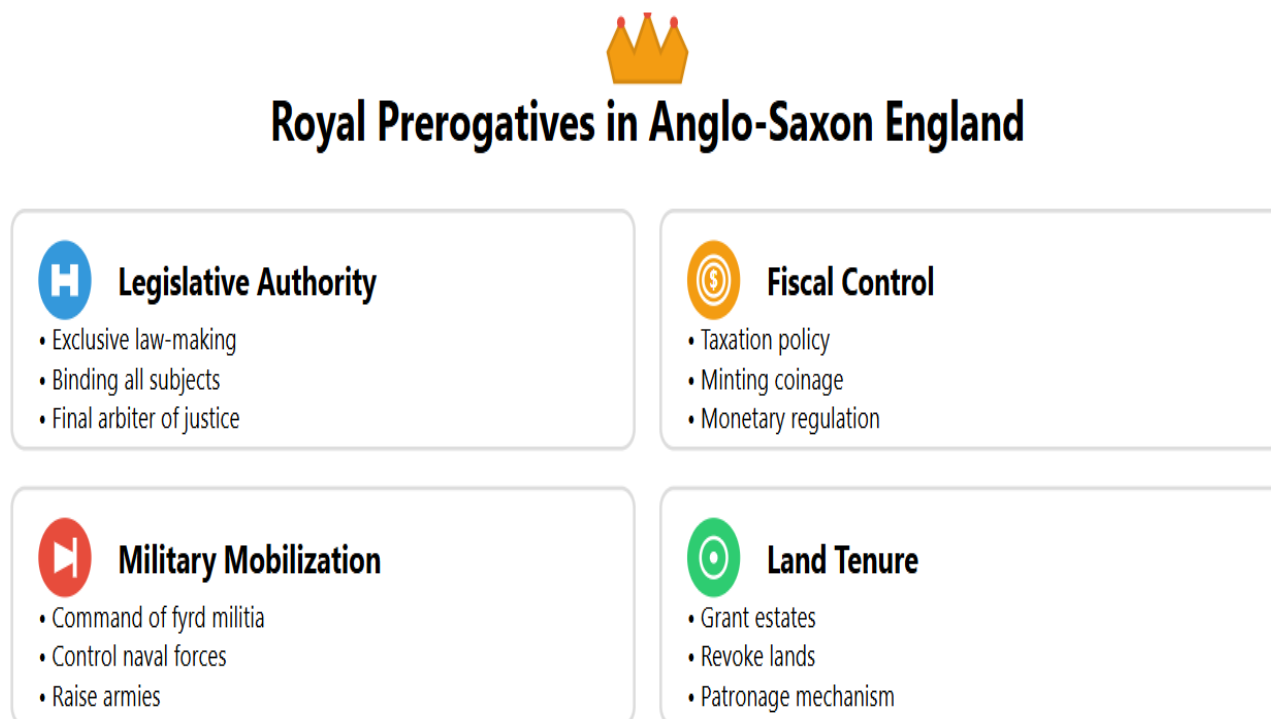
However, the route to supreme power was long and thorny, cherished over centuries with varying degrees of success at each point.

Pic. 23 – *The Unification of England, Royal Lineage from Wessex Dominance to the United Kingdom (802-1066).*



At the threshold of the Norman Conquest, Anglo-Saxon England operated under a centralized yet distributed model of royal authority. The monarch was at the top of the political hierarchy, wielding supreme executive power unconstrained by constitutional limitations. The king's divine mandate granted him unchallenged control over legislation, taxation, the military, and land distribution, forming the four pillars of royal power that made him the absolute pinnacle of Anglo-Saxon governance.

Pic. 24 – *The Functions United Under King's Figure in Anglo-Saxon England.*



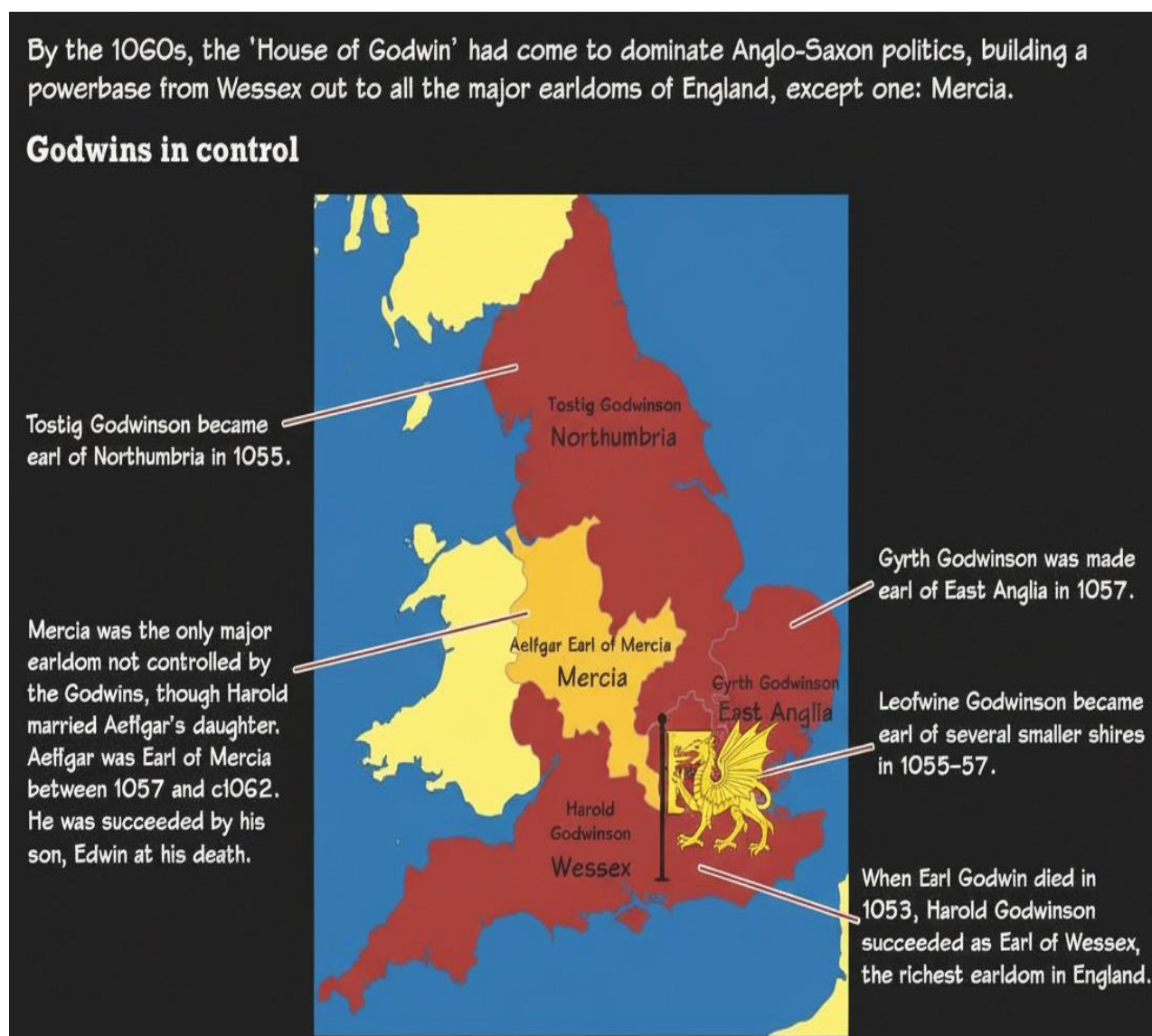
Altogether, this centralized authority delegated administrative functions through a network of earls. Earls stood directly below the king in the political hierarchy, governing vast regions as royal representatives. The crown delegated three essential powers to them: they collected taxes (retaining one-third for local administration and defense), administered justice (hearing cases and imposing sentences), and commanded military forces (serving as the king's generals leading the gentry in battle). The sheer size of some earldoms allowed their holders to accumulate formidable independent power. The **Witan** represented an advisory council, though the king controlled both its composition and agenda. Local **thegns** had the right to petition the king against earls deemed inadequate or oppressive. This mechanism came into play in

1065 when Northumbrian thegns revolted against Earl Tostig's misgovernance, prompting the Witan to intervene and decide his removal.

The Danelaw territories presented a unique jurisdictional complexity. While nominally under royal sovereignty, these Anglo-Scandinavian regions maintained distinct legal traditions and customary practices, requiring the crown to negotiate a delicate balance between central authority and regional autonomy.

Edward the Confessor restored the House of Wessex after the years of Danish rule. His reign (1042-1066) exemplified both the strengths and vulnerabilities of this system, since the king faced opposition from powerful earls, such as the House of Godwin, the most powerful Anglo-Saxon noble kin of Wessex, with Harold Godwinson as a future claimant to the English throne.

Pic. 25 – *The Godwins and their Role in the Pre-Conquest England.*



Born to Æthelred the Unready and Emma of Normandy, Edward spent his formative years in Norman exile during the period when the Danish figure was on the throne. His partial Norman ancestry provided William, Duke of Normandy, with a basis for his claim after the king died without an heir. The reign of Edward the Confessor, who was devoted to the church, was generally peaceful and marked by the creation of Westminster Abbey as a royal burial place.

The death of Edward the Confessor sparked a fierce struggle for the throne, which weakened England, leaving it vulnerable to Norman conquest.

Pic. 26 – *The Four Rival Claimants for the English Throne in 1066.*

Harold Godwinson Claim: Appointed by Edward on his deathbed. Family connection (brother-in-law). Proven military success and influence with the earls. Strength of Claim: Good Supported by witnesses (though ones loyal to him). Good chance of success.	Edgar Aethling Claim: Royal blood; Edward's nephew and natural heir ("Aethling" = prince of royal blood). Strength of Claim: Weak He was a blood relation, but the Witan wanted a strong king to see off threats from Scandinavia and Normandy.
Harald Hardrada Claim: Complicated; he had essentially inherited the claim from previous Viking kings. Strength of Claim: Weak Though the Danelaw may have welcomed a Viking king. The exiled Tostig went to Harald for support; together they had a strong army and fleet.	William, Duke of Normandy Claim: An agreement supposedly made with King Edward in about 1051, and confirmed during Harold's 1064 embassy. Strength of Claim: Backed by the Pope, but no real evidence. Good chance of success The Normans were strong.

The term “*Norman*” appeals to the Viking migrants who settled in the region of France between the 9th and 10th centuries. The newcomers from the north referred to

themselves as “*Northmen*,” a name that French speakers gradually softened and reshaped into “*Norman*.” The Scandinavian raiders were a tangible threat to France, pushing deep into the Seine valley to lay siege to Paris and leaving a trail of destruction across the surrounding region. To bring the relentless raids to a close, the French king Charles the Simple sat down with a Danish chieftain, Hrolfr Gangr, better known as Rollo the Rover, and hammered out a diplomatic settlement in 912. Charles gave Rollo the title of Duke of Normandy, a territory that took its name from its new northern masters, while Rollo, in return, swore his loyalty to the French crown. In the wake of the agreement, the Scandinavian settlers quickly merged into the surrounding French culture. Danish lingered briefly in a handful of places, Bayeux among them, but by 1066 the Normans had become thoroughly French in every sense, with their ancestral tongue completely gone from daily life.

William the Conqueror was the sixth duke in the succession stretching back to Rollo himself. William emerged from an extramarital union between Duke Robert V and Arletta, daughter of an artisan from the tanning community of Falaise. Notwithstanding the non-noble lineage of his maternal ancestry, Robert formally designated William as ducal heir. The formative years of the future conqueror unfolded within the violent atmosphere of eleventh-century feudal society. This harsh environment fundamentally shaped the leadership qualities and strategic shrewdness that would characterize his later achievements. He rose above the shadow of his illegitimate birth and modest origins, brushing off the taunts of enemies who branded him “*the bastard*” and “*the tanner’s grandson*,” and grew into a sharp military mind and a formidable commander in the field. William kept his restless barons in check while fending off pressure from rival ducal powers and the French crown alike. When the prospect of expanding his reach on the continent was closed off, he turned his gaze across the English Channel toward England.

Pic. 27 – *The Map of the Norman Conquest of Britain, 1066-1086.*



The domestic disorder in England played a crucial role in the success of Norman expansionism. After regaining sovereignty following the Danish evacuation in 1042, England experienced profound dynastic instability. Although Edward the Confessor occupied the throne until 1066, his reign faced continual opposition from the Wessex earl Godwine and subsequently from Harold. Northern magnates in Mercia and Northumbria maintained near-autonomous power, challenging centralized authority and eroding intra-regional confrontations. William remained well-informed about England's political divisions through efficient information networks spanning the narrow maritime boundary of the English Channel.

Upon Edward's demise, Harold acceded to the throne. Norman forces made landfall on the southern coast of England on September 28th. The fate of England was settled on the 14th of October. When Harold and his brothers were cut down, the heart went out of the English resistance, and it fell apart². With no coordinated resistance, William consolidated his authority over the realm in the months that followed.

² Following the Norman Conquest, Gytha of Wessex (c. 1053–1107), daughter of the defeated King Harold II and Edith Swanneck, sought refuge in Kievan Rus. Her subsequent marriage to Vladimir Monomakh, circa 1074, created a diplomatically significant union that linked the Anglo-Saxon and Rurikid dynasties. This marriage produced Mstislav the Great, Kievan Rus's final sovereign before its fragmentation. Through her lineage, Gytha became an ancestor to numerous

Pic. 28 – *Reasons for Norman success in Britain.*



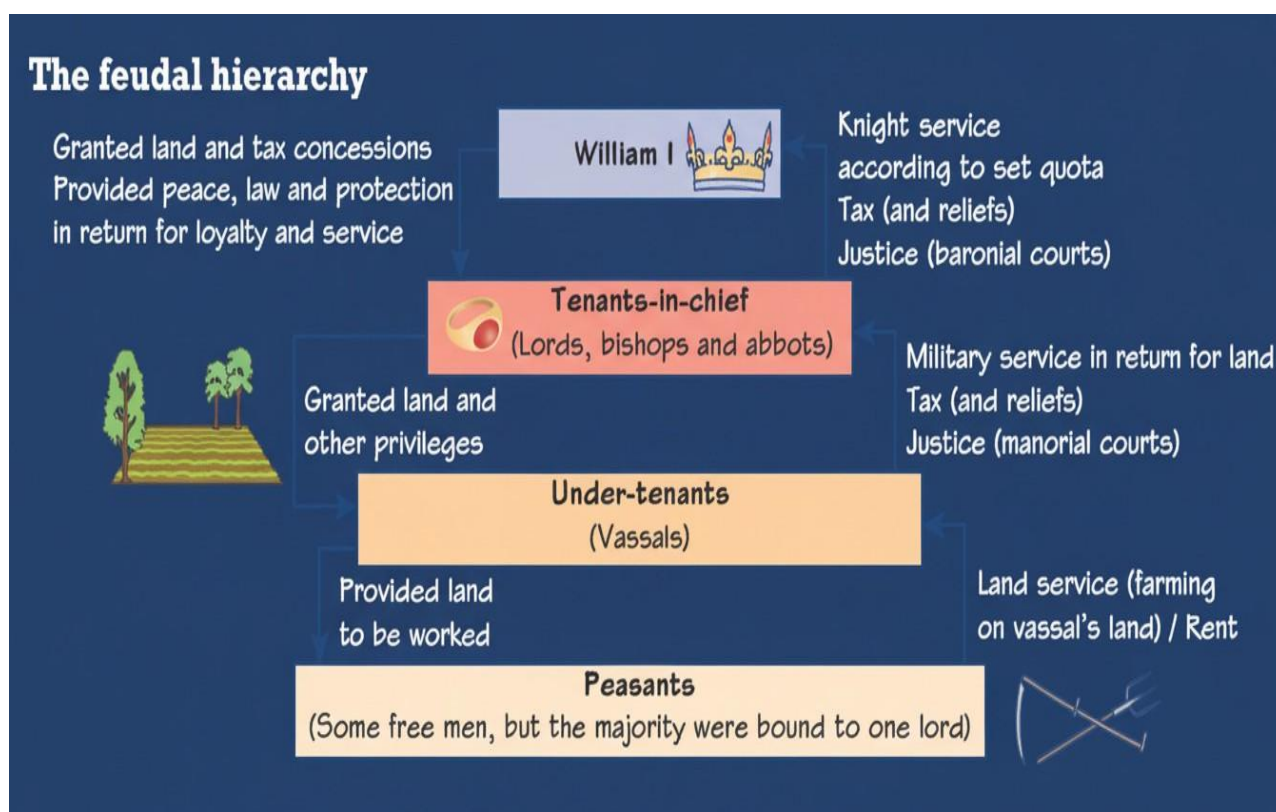
The conquest brought sweeping changes to the way England was governed. Where pre-conquest England had been a patchwork of semi-autonomous earldoms operating with considerable independence, William replaced that loose structure with a more centralized, metropolitan model of rule. The earldoms that William dismantled had their roots in the administrative framework established during the reign of King Canute³, who divided England into great territorial divisions. Wessex, the most powerful of them all, had been held by the king himself before passing into the hands of Godwine in 1020. Mercia initially fell under Eadric's governance until 1017, after which it passed successively to Leofwine and Leofric. East Anglia remained under Thurkill's administration until his exile in 1021, eventually transitioning to Harold Godwineson's control. Northumbria was first entrusted to Eric before being passed on

Eastern European nobles, with her descendants including composer Modest Mussorgsky, anarchist Prince Peter Kropotkin, and, according to certain genealogical interpretations, Queen Elizabeth II.

³ Through her paternal grandmother Gytha Thorkelsdóttir, Gytha of Wessex possessed kinship ties to King Cnut the Great. Gytha Thorkelsdóttir was related to Cnut through two distinct channels: matrimonially, as her brother Ulf's wife was Cnut's sister Estrid Svendsdatter, and genealogically, as both descended from Harold Bluetooth of Denmark and Norway, making them second cousins. This compound relationship, simultaneously established through marriage alliances and bloodlines, furnished both Gytha of Wessex and Harold II with Danish royal credentials that substantially augmented Godwin's dynastic prestige within Anglo-Saxon political hierarchies.

to Siward the Strong. William instituted a comprehensive reorganization of territorial governance, supplanting the decentralized earldom structure with a hierarchical feudal mechanism under direct royal supervision. The initial phase (1066-1070s) witnessed: a) the systematic elimination of Anglo-Saxon earls through battlefield casualties, exile, or confiscation; b) the provisional retention of certain earldoms with substantially diminished territorial extent and authority; c) the appointment of Norman aristocrats to strategic positions, granted with jurisdictional powers markedly narrower than those of their Anglo-Saxon forerunners.

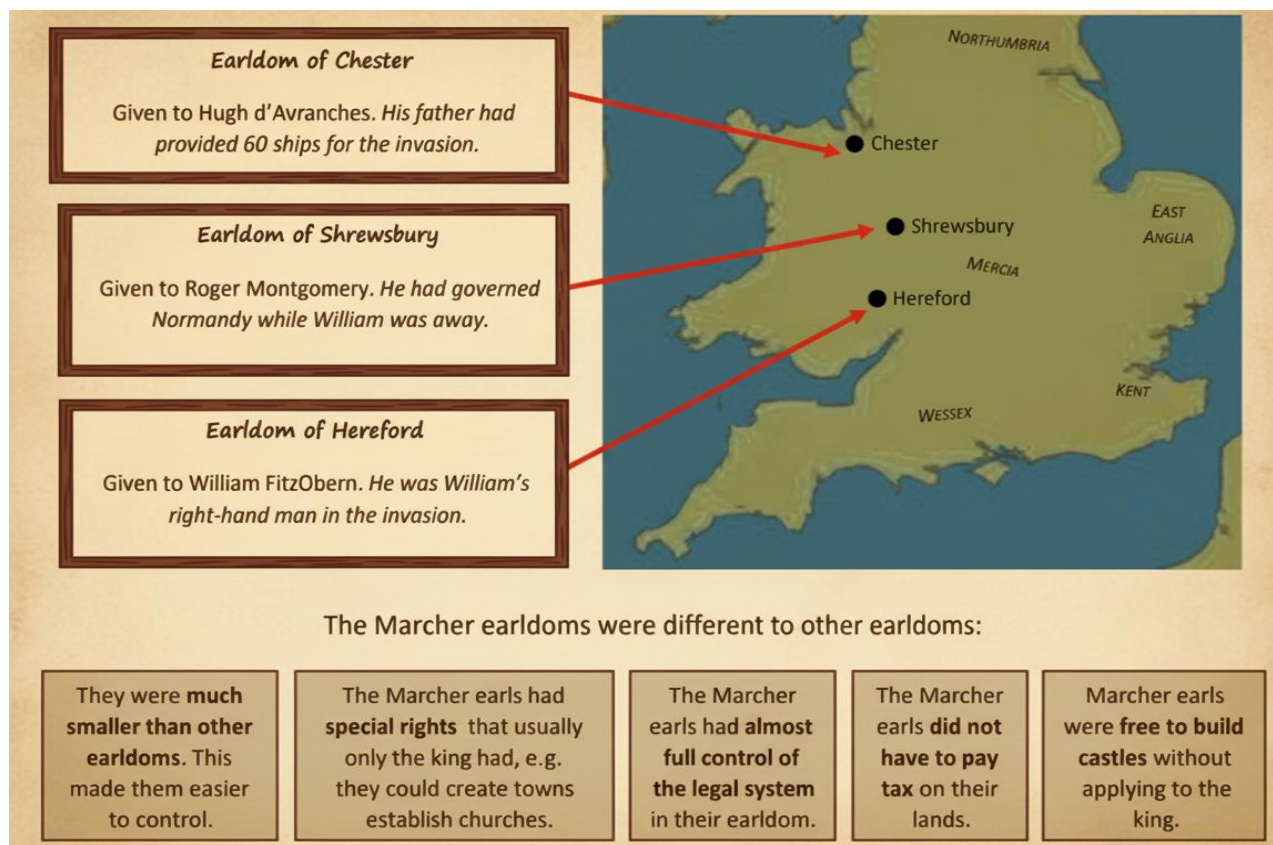
Pic. 29 – *The Feudal Stratification of William's England.*



The new system took shape through several distinct measures. William created special frontier earldoms along vulnerable borders, equipping them with expanded powers suited to their exposed positions, including the Earldom of Chester to hold back Welsh raids and, later, the Earldom of Durham to guard against Scottish incursions. These so-called *palatine earls* wielded something close to royal authority within their own lands, yet remained firmly answerable to the crown. Beyond the frontiers, most existing earldoms were either abolished outright or dramatically cut down in size. The fresh Norman earls received their lands scattered across multiple counties rather than

in solid territorial blocks, a deliberate arrangement that made it far harder for any one magnate to build an independent power base. Underpinning all of this was a strengthened sheriff system, when royal sheriffs took direct control of individual counties and answered to the king alone, bypassing the earls in much of the day-to-day governance.

Pic. 30 – *The System of Earldoms after the Norman Conquest.*



To tighten his grip on the Anglo-Welsh frontier, William established the *Marcher earldoms* = a trio of border jurisdictions anchored at Hereford, Shrewsbury, and Chester. The word “*march*” itself came from Old English, meaning a boundary or borderland. William distributed these earldoms among his most loyal adherents as a reward for their loyalty.

The Robin Hood cycle offers a vivid literary portrayal of the political and judicial discord in Britain following the Norman invasion. Descended from Anglo-Saxon aristocracy, the legendary outlaw serves as an emblematic figure of opposition to Norman hegemony. He was not the one who just robbed the rich to help the poor; he rebelled against the invaders. The Norman administration was seen as a dispenser of tyranny or dishonesty, while Robin Hood cultivated a counter-system of forest law,

consistently framed as more equitable. His symbolic power derived not so much from opposing economic inequality as from resistance to alien rule.

Pic. 31 – *The Lands of Willian the Conqueror after the Conquest.*



The Norman invasion of 1066 brought with it a population that spoke varieties of Old French, and the effect on the English language was profound and lasting, so much so that it marks the threshold between the Old English and Middle English periods. With the Normans in power, the long dominance of Wessex and its speech patterns came to an end. French became the language of authority, of the court, and of official life, while the dialects inherited from the earlier Germanic settlers were pushed to the margins, surviving only in local use. Great swaths of Old English vocabulary were swept away to make room for new words fitted to a changed world, and this wholesale reshaping of the lexicon remains one of the most striking hallmarks of the transformation English underwent in the wake of the conquest. Different linguistic features evolved at varying rates, as demonstrated in the *Kentish Homilies* (1150).

Chaucerian vocabulary also retains traces of assertive French influence, but of the later period. Further semantic shifts become clear when comparing the legacies of Chaucer and Shakespeare, though by that point the transformation in question is the passage from Middle English into Early Modern English. In Shakespearean England, for example, “*nice*” denoted stupidity, whereas “*rheumatism*” signified a common cold (nasal problems).

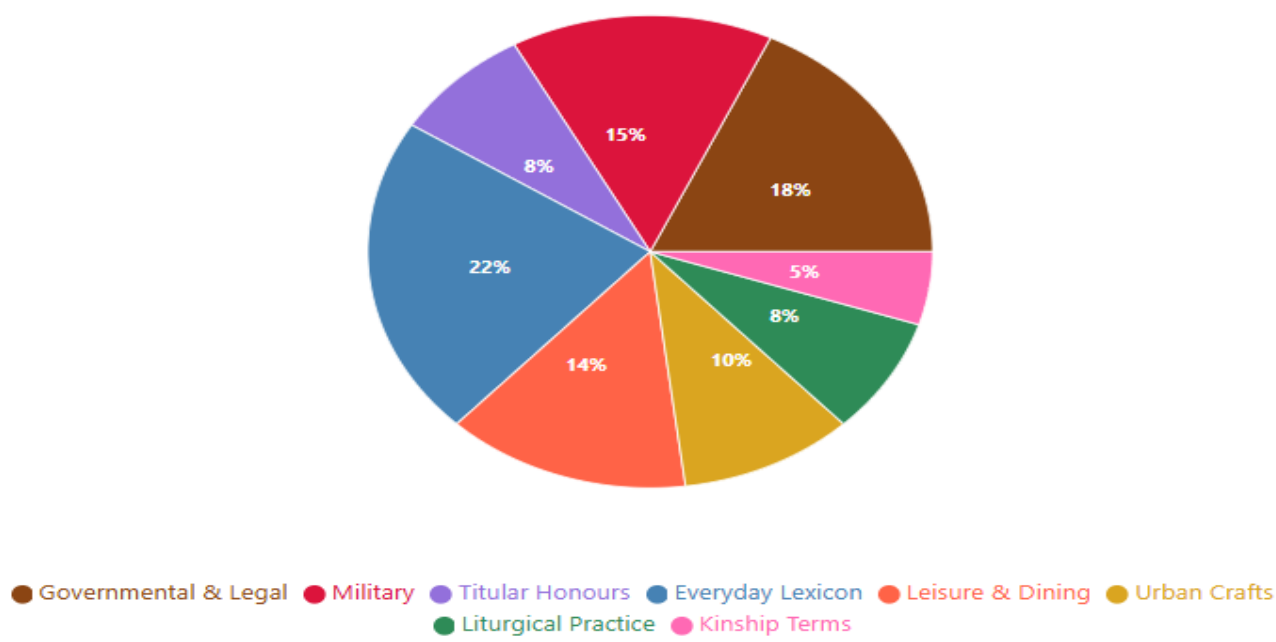
For much of the medieval period, three languages divided English society: French for the wealthy and powerful, English for ordinary people, and Latin for the Church and its ceremonies. Most official documents and records of the era were set down in French or Latin, rarely in English. This arrangement left a deep and lasting imprint on English vocabulary. The replacement of Anglo-Saxon names with French alternatives offered a vivid illustration of how the two cultures were being fused together. Male names led the way (William, Robert, and Richard caught on quickly), while female names (Matilda, Alice, Emma, Adela, Agnes, Isabel, Eleanor, Beatrice, Juliana, Cecily) made the transition more gradually. As a general rule, the longer and more complex a word in modern English tends to be, the more likely it is to trace its origins to French or Latin rather than to the native Germanic stock.

These French imports of vocabulary can be systematised by thematic groupings:

- 1) Titular honours: *prince – princess, count – countess, duke – duchess*;
- 2) Martial duty: *army, battle, peace, victory, colonel, lieutenant, major, etc.*;
- 3) Governmental organs and lawmaking authorities: *noble, baron, justice, judge, crime, prison, sentence*;
- 4) Liturgical practice: *religion, prey, saint, charity*;
- 5) Urban crafts: *painter, tailor, carpenter* (but the country occupations remained English: *shepherd, smith*);
- 6) Leisure activities and pastimes: *music, art, feast, pleasure, leisure, supper, dinner, pork, beef, mutton* (but the corresponding names of domestic animals remained English: *pig, cow, sheep*);
- 7) Blood relations: *aunt, uncle, nephew, cousin*;

8) Everyday lexicon: *air, river, large, age, boil, branch, brush, catch, chain, chair, table, choice, cry*.

Pic. 32 – *French Vocabulary Influence on Medieval English: Distribution by Thematic Domain (c. 1066-1300)*.

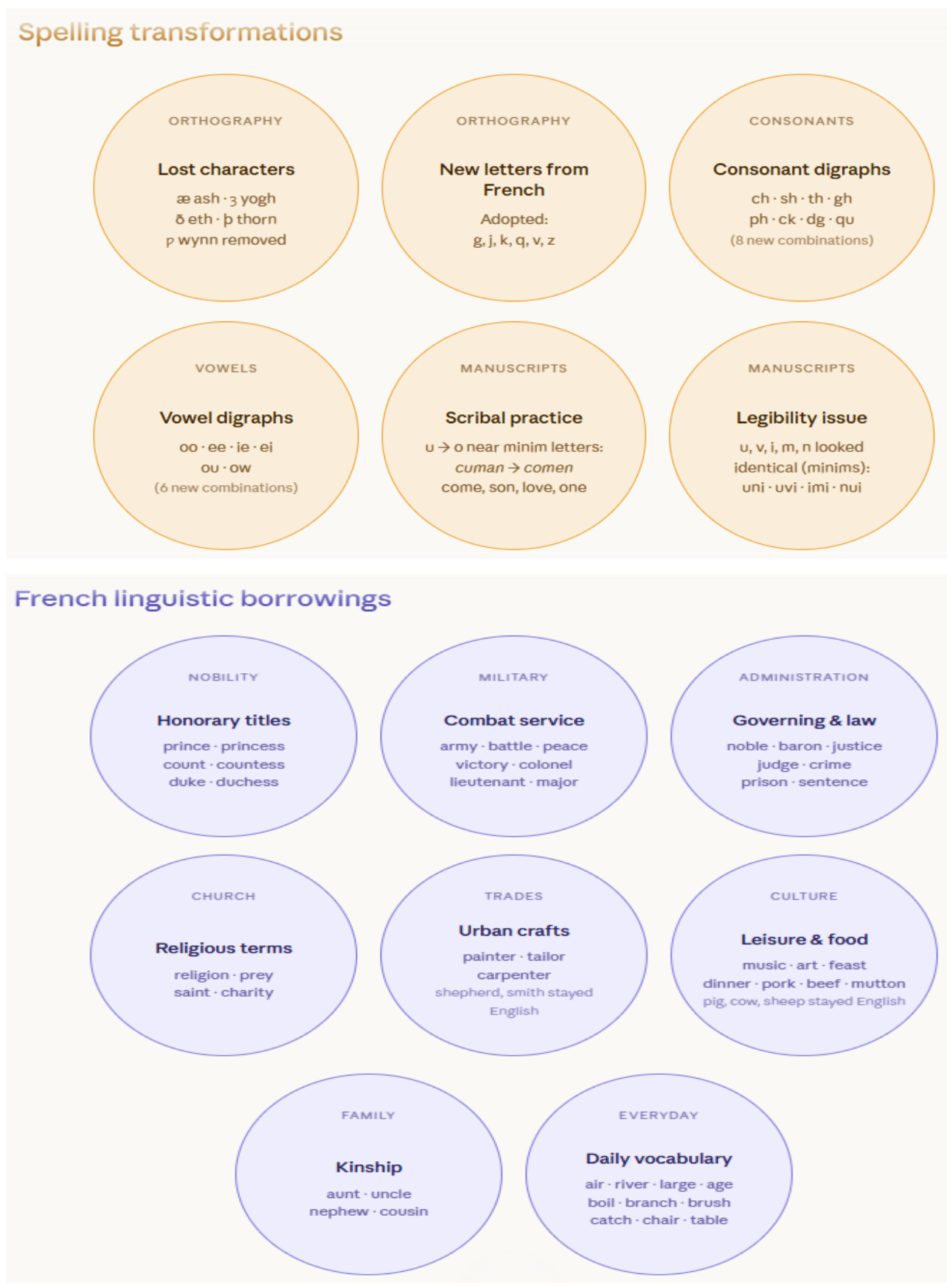


From around the twelfth century onward, the written language underwent a steady transformation, gradually pushing out its older, more unfamiliar characters and moving toward something closer to what modern readers would recognize. Five Old English letters were dropped from use. They were runic symbols that had no place in either the Latin or French alphabets: *æ* (*ash*), *ȝ* (*yogh*), *ð* (*eth*), *þ* (*thorn*), and *ƿ* (*wynn*). To fill the gaps they left behind, several letters were borrowed from French spelling: *g*, *j*, *k*, *q*, *v*, and *z*. (See Appendix 4). The writing system was further overhauled through the adoption of eight digraphs = pairs of letters used to represent a single sound: *ch* [*tʃ*], *sh* [*ʃ*], *th* [*θ/ð*], *gh* [*h*], *ph* [*f*], *ck* [*k*], *dg* [*dʒ*], and *qu* [*kw*]. Six vowel digraphs followed, introduced to signal vowel length: *oo* [*ɔː*], *ee*, *ie*, *ei* [*eː*], *ou*, and *ow* [*uː*]. Taken together, these changes mapped the language's gradual drift away from its Germanic roots and toward a more standardized written form shaped by the conventions of continental Europe.

However, certain spelling differences did not correspond to pronunciation but simply reflected alternative orthographic conventions. Such variation was common in

the Middle English period, as English writing was heavily influenced by French scribal practices, which produced inconsistent methods for representing sounds.

Pic. 33 – *Middle English Spelling and Lexical Landscape*



The Norman invasion disrupted the uniformity of Old English, leading to greater geographical diversity in how words were written. This regional diversification happened for at least two main reasons. Initially, English formed distinct dialect patterns across different areas: the north continued to show Scandinavian language effects, whereas the south had significant interaction with French speakers. Variants of words such as “such”, including *swilk*, *swich*, and *soch*, reflect these regional phonetic versions, although the exact sounds of each form remain uncertain.

Fundamentally, the Norman Conquest signified not simply dynastic replacement but comprehensive social and linguistic restructuring. Post-conquest England underwent a process of cultural blending, marked by the merging of Germanic, Romance, and Celtic traditions. The Norman Conquest tags the last successful foreign subjugation of the British Archipelago and symbolizes the originating moment of a distinctive English identity formed through cultural synthesis.

The concept of linguistic purity, which later became a subject of debate among scholars and writers such as Jonathan Swift, would have been largely unfamiliar to the general public in the Middle Ages. English itself did not become the subject of any systematic attention until the fourteenth century, in large part because, unlike Latin, it was never formally taught. Yet medieval writing was far from indifferent to language; anti-French sentiment runs through much of it. The fourteenth-century poet Geoffrey Chaucer, whose *The Canterbury Tales* were written between 1387 and 1400, is often held up as the embodiment of a distinctly English identity. But it may be more accurate to call what he represented a patriotism defined against France, rather than the full-blooded nationalism of the nineteenth century, that later ideology in which a shared language becomes the very foundation of a unified national consciousness.

The process of discarding the alien French code has an official date, set in 1346; however, the first steps leading up to it occurred much earlier. Britain, as a wild horse, was trying to get rid of the unwelcome riders all the way through a string of uprisings.

Pic. 34 – *The Years of Anglo-Saxon Resistance against Norman Conquest (1067-1075)*.

1067**EUSTACE OF BOULOGNE'S REVOLT**

📍 Location: Dover Castle, Kent

Leaders: Eustace II of Boulogne

Former Norman ally turns against William. Attempts to seize Dover Castle but repelled by garrison. Demonstrates early Norman vulnerability but William's rapid response crushes rebellion within weeks.

Outcome:	Casualties:
Crushed immediately	Minimal

1067-68**EXETER REBELLION**

📍 Location: Exeter, Devon

Leaders: Gytha of Wessex (Harold's mother), local thegns

Harold Godwinson's family refuses submission. City withstands 18 day siege before surrendering. Gytha flees to Flanders with Godwin family treasure. William builds Rougemont Castle to prevent future resistance.

Outcome:	Casualties:
Suppressed after siege	Moderate civilian losses

1068**FIRST NORTHERN REBELLION**

📍 Location: York & Northumbria

Leaders: Edgar Ætheling, Gospatric, Maerleswein

Edgar the Ætheling (legitimate Anglo-Saxon heir to throne) leads minor uprising. William marches north with army, constructs York Castle and Clifford's Tower. Rebels scatter; Edgar flees to Scotland under King Malcolm III's protection.

Outcome:	Casualties:
Defeated by show of force	Few battlefield deaths

1069 (Jan)**DURHAM MASSACRE**

📍 Location: Durham & York

Leaders: Local Northumbrian thegns

Norman Earl Robert de Comines arrives with 700 troops, ignores warnings. Northumbrians ambush and massacre entire garrison including earl (900+ deaths). Norman garrison barely holds out. Triggers William's fury.

Outcome:	Casualties:
Major rebel victory	900+ Norman deaths

1069 (Sept)**GREAT DANISH INVASION**

📍 Location: Humber estuary, Yorkshire

Leaders: King Sweyn II of Denmark, Edgar Ætheling, Waltheof

Massive Danish fleet (240-300 ships, 3,000+ warriors) lands. Joins forces with Anglo-Saxon rebels. Combined army captures York, destroys both Norman castles. Most serious threat to William's rule. Danes paid off with Danegeld to withdraw.

Outcome:	Casualties:
Temporary rebel control	Heavy Norman losses

1069-70**HARRYING OF THE NORTH**

📍 Location: Yorkshire, Durham, Northumbria

Leaders: William I (perpetrator)

William's genocidal scorched-earth campaign. Systematic destruction: villages burned, crops destroyed, livestock slaughtered. Famine tools broken, salt spread on fields. Mass starvation follows. Domesday Book (1086) records vast areas still waste. Modern estimates: 100,000-150,000 deaths, possibly 75% of population. Region devastated for generations.

Outcome:	Casualties:
Total domination	100,000-150,000 civilian deaths

1070-71**HEREWARD'S FENLAND RESISTANCE**

📍 Location: Isle of Ely, East Anglia

Leaders: Hereward the Wake, Morcar (former Earl of Northumbria)

Legendary Anglo-Saxon warrior Hereward establishes rebel base in marshes. Uses guerrilla tactics, intimate knowledge of fens. Norman assaults repeatedly fail. Joined by Earl Morcar. Becomes symbol of resistance. Last major Anglo-Saxon holdout.

Outcome:	Casualties:
Prolonged resistance	Light; guerrilla warfare

1071**FALL OF ISLE OF ELY**

📍 Location: Isle of Ely, Cambridgeshire

Leaders: Hereward the Wake (defender), William I (besieger)

William constructs massive causeway across marshes to reach Ely. Months-long siege. Monks betray rebels, showing secret paths. Morcar surrenders, imprisoned for life. Hereward's fate uncertain; legends say he escaped, possibly pardoned later. Ends major organized Anglo-Saxon resistance.

Outcome:	Casualties:
Norman victory	Moderate; many imprisoned

1075**REVOLT OF THE EARLS**

📍 Location: Norfolk, East Anglia

Leaders: Roger de Breteuil, Ralph de Gael, Earl Waltheof

Three powerful earls (two Norman-Breton, one Anglo-Saxon) conspire at wedding feast to overthrow William. Plot discovered before action. Ralph flees to Brittany. Roger imprisoned for life. Waltheof, last Anglo-Saxon earl, executed 1076 despite confession. Marks end of any significant anti-Norman resistance.

Outcome:	Casualties:
Failed conspiracy	Waltheof executed; others imprisoned

With that, the bridle was slightly weakened with the loss of Norman territories across the English Channel. If the first kings of Norman origin preferred spending the lion's share of their time in France, the later representatives, starting with King John (1199-1216) and onward, resided more consistently in England. In 1204, King John of England lost Normandy to Phillip II of France, which marked the end of Norman control over their original continental homeland. This was a turning point: after that loss, no English king ruled Normandy, and England became the chief base of royal power. The major artery that fueled the royal court linguistically was partially isolated.

Although King John was deprived of the core Norman areas, including Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, the English crown still retained Aquitaine (Gascony) and the Channel Islands (Jersey and Guernsey), which would lead to a series of clashes between France and England in the future. The climax of this supremacy rivalry is the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453).

Pic. 35 – 116 Years of Anglo-French Conflict in Four Phases.



As a result, the Hundred Years' War established a new type of warfare in Europe. The continental defeat of England ended medieval ambitions in France, while

simultaneously strengthening nationalism and accelerating the restoration of the English language in governance and culture. France achieved political unification under a centralized monarchy, with Joan of Arc emerging as a defining national symbol that forged a collective French identity. The war introduced a range of French military terms into the English language, including “*soldier*,” “*captain*,” and “*siege*.” It also accelerated the revival of English and reduced the prestige of French, thereby limiting new French borrowings and stabilizing English-French lexical doublets.

Another event that strengthened the position of English was the Black Death, which reached the country’s shores in 1348 and lasted roughly until 1350. The 1346 drought in Mongolian territories prompted the inhabitants to relocate, thereby facilitating the spread of the disease from its natural reservoirs to Europe. The simultaneous drop in temperatures across Europe drew rats closer to humans. The plague killed around one-third to half of the population, reshaping English society and enabling class shifts, as people of modest descent managed to secure positions at the royal court, elevating the status of English in previously exclusive spheres.

By the late fourteenth century, English had begun to regain ground, and it appeared in official contexts. Although English was used to open Parliament for the first time in 1362, the written records continued to be kept in French. While most spoken communication took place in English, it still lacked official status as a written language, and ordinary people continued to use their regional dialects. By the end of the century, English had become increasingly visible in public and administrative settings, but formal institutional backing was needed to establish it as the official written medium, a support that ultimately came from the Lancastrian monarchy.

In 1399, Henry IV seized the throne from Richard II, who was later assassinated. Despite securing power, Henry spent much of his reign putting down aristocratic rebellions, and while he leaned on the Commons in Parliament to keep his barons in check, he made no particular effort to promote the English language. The more consequential shift came with Henry V, who took the throne in 1413. He relaunched the war with France in 1415, winning a string of famous victories, none more celebrated than Agincourt. A second campaign in 1417 ended with his marriage to the

French princess Katherine and a promise that he and his heirs would inherit the French crown upon King Charles's death. These triumphs gave English nationalism a powerful boost.

A landmark moment in the history of the language came when Henry V began writing his letters in English after his 1417 campaign in France. His battlefield dispatches to the mayor and aldermen of London were written in English, and from 1417 until his death in 1422, the bulk of his private correspondence, handled through the Signet Office, followed suit. The wave of anti-French feeling stirred up by the war also worked in the Lancastrian monarchy's favor, lending it a broader legitimacy rooted in English identity. In this way, Henry V did for the written language in the fifteenth century something of what Alfred the Great had done in the ninth century, using the authority of the crown to elevate English, and a particular form of it, to the status of an official standard.

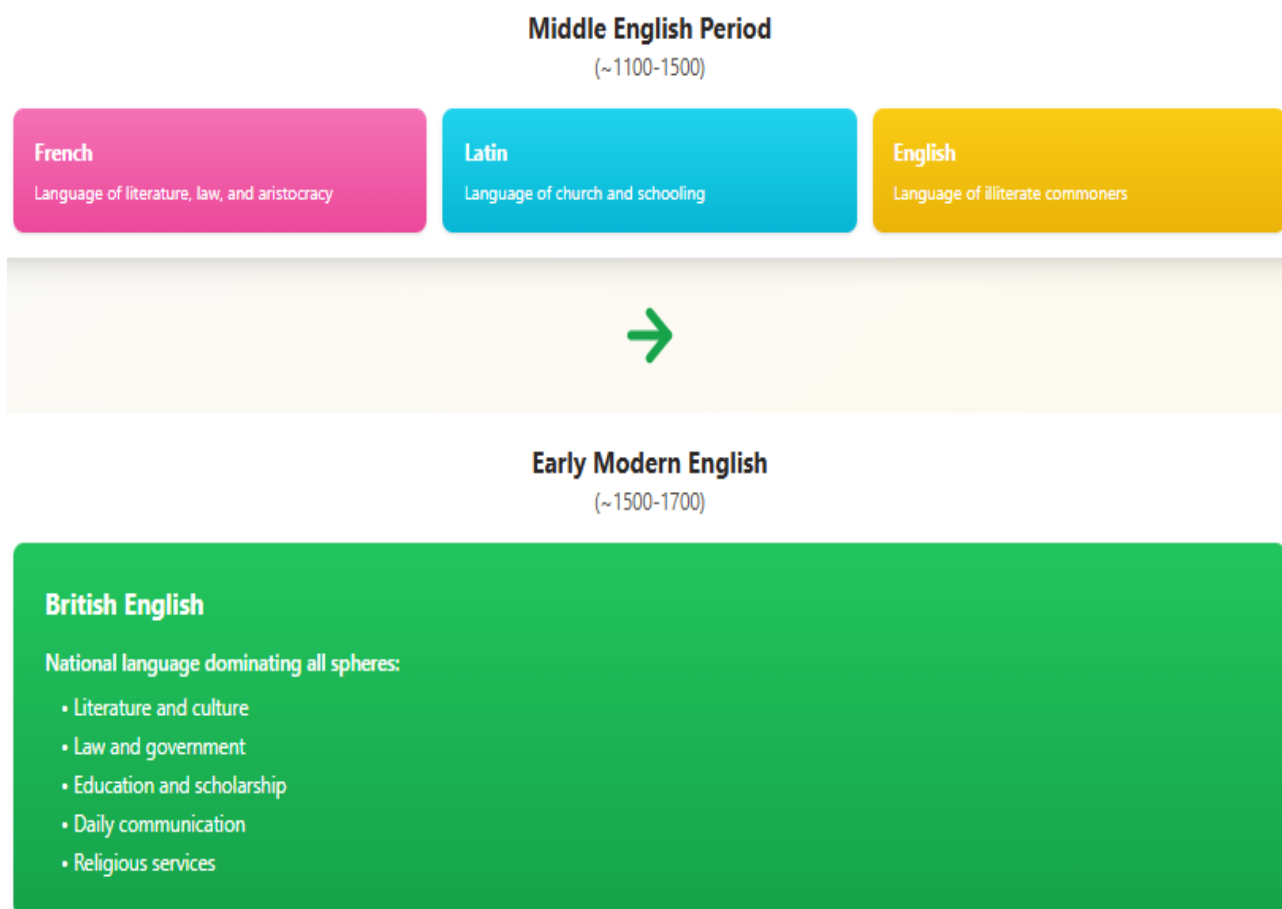
The steps leading to the restoration of English on its land were numerous and can be represented graphically.

Pic. 36 – *How did English Reclaim Dominance after 300 years of French Rule?*



And so, by the close of the Medieval period, the English language had restored its position in all major spheres of communication, entering the Early Modern Era as a national language.

Pic. 37 – *Language Spheres in Medieval England.*



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Examine a map of Norman England (1066-1100). Identify 5 castles built by William the Conqueror and explain their strategic importance. Why were they positioned in these specific locations? What does their placement reveal about Norman's control strategies?
2. Why did the Normans bring the French language and the French culture with them when they conquered Britain in 1066?
3. Among the titles of nobility, French borrowings make up the bulk. The only Anglo-Saxon titles preserved are **king** and **queen**. Explain why.
4. The famous quotation from Sir Walter Scott emphasized the class differentiation of the everyday vocabulary in Middle English, namely, the origin of animal names and various kinds of meat. What was it like? If you are unsure, search the internet for the answer.
5. Supply examples of class differentiation among the names of professions.

6. Supply examples of class differentiation among the items of furniture.
7. The Black Death (1348-50) killed 1/3 to 1/2 of England's population. How did this demographic catastrophe accelerate the restoration of English? Consider: Which social classes died in greater numbers? How did labor shortages affect English-speaking workers' social mobility?
8. The pace mentions that French names like William, Robert, and Richard replaced Anglo-Saxon names. Research: What were common Anglo-Saxon male names before 1066? (Examples: *Æthelred*, *Eadwig*, *Ælfric*) Find 5 Anglo-Saxon names that completely disappeared after the Conquest. Can you find any that survived?
9. Find "The Canterbury Tales" by Geoffrey Chaucer, and read the opening lines in Middle English. Try reading them aloud. Which words can you understand? Which are completely unfamiliar? What percentage would you estimate is recognizable to a modern English speaker?
10. The Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) introduced military terms like "soldier," "captain," and "siege" into English. Find 10 more military or warfare terms borrowed from French during this period. Why did warfare vocabulary come from French when the English were often winning battles?
11. Even today, some English legal phrases preserve Norman French, like "attorney," "judge," "jury," "defendant," "plaintiff," and "verdict." Can you find 5 more legal terms from French? Why did legal language retain French longer than other domains?

THE TOPICS FOR SELF-STUDY AND REPORTS:

1. Male and female names brought by the Norman Conquest: origins, meanings, and the etymology of a transformed naming culture.
2. Middle English in Writing: *The Peterborough Chronicle* as a record of a language in transition.
3. The Medieval dialect map: regional variation and the rising authority of the London dialect.
4. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, and the literary world of his contemporaries.
5. *The Hundred Years' War* (1337–1453) and its consequences for language, identity, and the English nation.

THE MODERN ERA AND THE CREATION OF LINGUISTIC IDENTITY

1. *The progression toward establishing a unified linguistic standard for the nation.*
2. *The adoption of foreign lexical items and the factors that prompted their incorporation. The Shakespearean project.*
3. *Pioneering grammarians and their strategies. The development of dictionaries.*
4. *Language condition in the XXth-XXIst centuries.*

The period from 1400 to 1660 was pivotal in establishing a standardized linguistic system for Modern English. Throughout the sixteenth century, efforts were made to place the language within a specific system, reflecting the knotted history of the English language: *“It was during the 16th century that English really began to take off. Suddenly, people started talking about the language in terms of its grammar, vocabulary, and writing. And there were clues that standardization was just around the corner, for they also began to talk about their language in a more judgmental fashion.”* (Burridge, 2005, p. 10).

The idea of a unified national language took root in the 1400s, coinciding with the emergence of the nation itself as a concept. Fundamentally, the nation-state represents a distinctly modern invention. The theoretical foundations for understanding nationhood and nationalist movements were laid by thinkers such as Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, and Eric Hobsbawm.

A national English language emerged through a combination of various circumstances:

- 1) The gradual retreat of French from its position as the language of the aristocracy and government was shaped by a combination of conditioning factors: a)

Massive reduction of French territorial holdings in the 15th century cut off the ties of the Norman elite to the continent, removing their motivation to preserve French as their dominant tongue. The loss of French territories compelled the previously French-speaking upper class to integrate more fully into English society, accelerating their adoption of English and cementing the language's reach across all social levels. At the same time, the surge of nationalism, fueled by decades of war with France, strengthened English national identity and turned the language itself into a symbol of collective solidarity and resistance to foreign influence. Then came the plague, which tore through Britain and killed roughly a third of the population, leaving a devastating shortage of people at every level of society. The court was forced to draw from the general population to fill the gap – men and women who spoke English, not French. This necessity broke down entrenched social barriers and opened up a degree of class mobility that would previously have been unthinkable, transforming the linguistic character of Britain in the process.

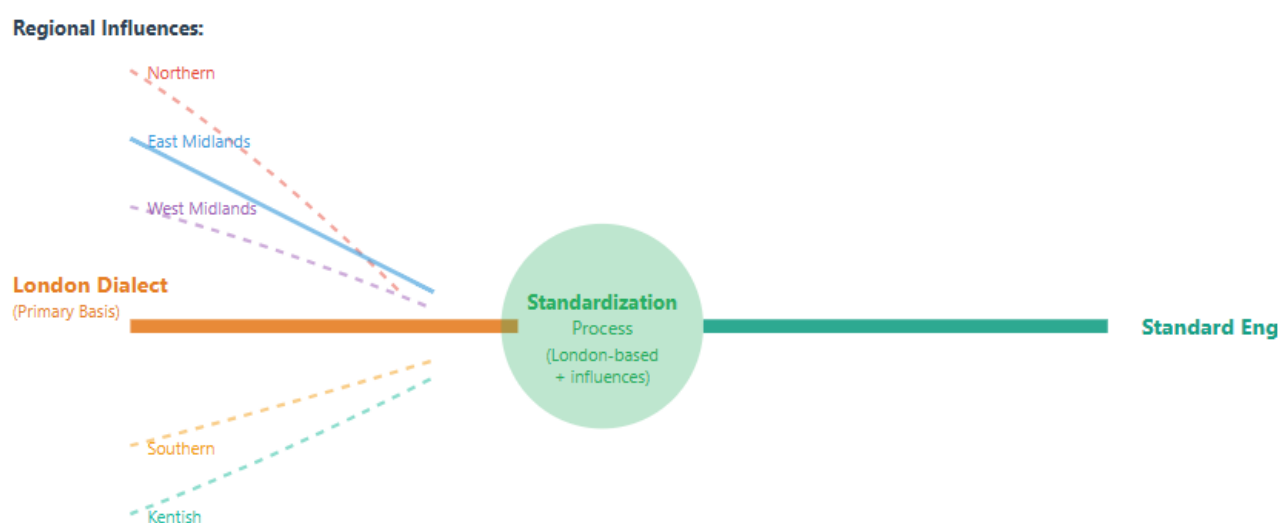
2) The accumulation of political and economic significance in one center, which was London.

3) Increased travel and trade (the merchant class conducted business in English) weakened local dialect distinctions, and the necessity of a unified language for the kingdom promoted English as the recognized standard for communication at the national level.

4) The advent of the printing press in 1476 intensified the drive for standardization, which paralleled the growing application of English in governmental records and judicial matters. Throughout the Early Modern English era, spelling peculiarities that initially reflected regional speech patterns as well as the practices of individual scribes slowly eroded as different dialectal features combined. This blending produced standardized forms that no longer reflected a particular dialectal pronunciation, and the writing system eventually acquired its own distinct identity, resulting in a growing gap between how people spoke and how they wrote. Language scholars and literary figures have attempted to impose standardized frameworks on English since at least the twelfth century, when a monk named Orm set out to

systematize pronunciation and spelling in his work, the *Ormulum*. By the fourteenth century, however, the written conventions that had taken hold bore little resemblance to how anyone actually spoke, suggesting an artificial set of rules that scribes and copyists were expected to follow regardless of where they came from or how their regional accents shaped their speech. In the 1400s, a standardized variety emerged, known as the Chaucerian standard or Samuel's Type IV. Printing substantially reduced the cost of books, thereby increasing public access to literature. English evolved from a regional dialect into a cohesive national standard.

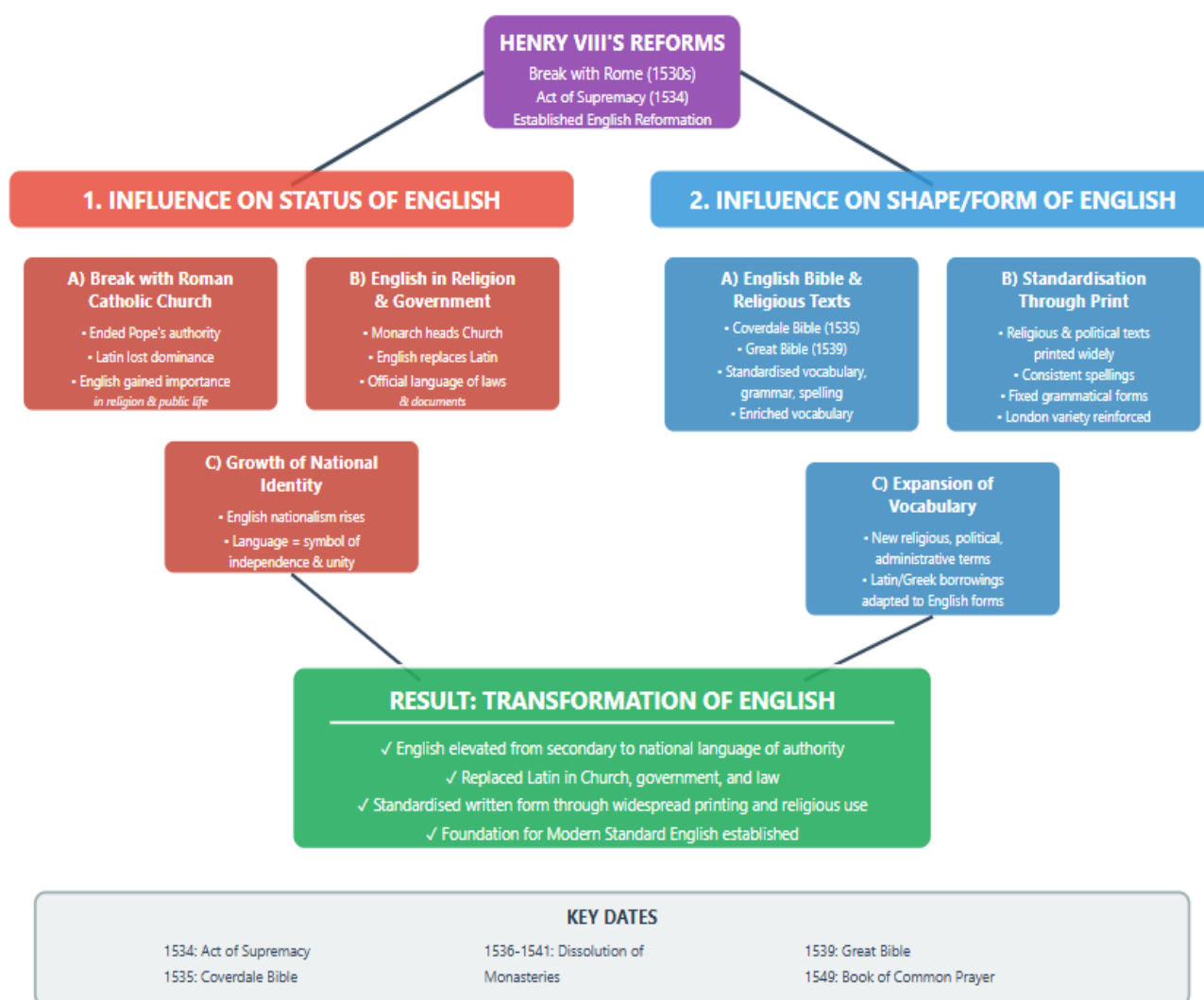
Pic. 38 – *Blending of British Dialects into a Dominant Standard (1400-1700).*



5) Henry VIII's reforms dismantled Catholic ecclesiastical power, fundamentally reshaping the language of the church. During the Middle English period, society operated through a tripartite linguistic system: French dominated literature, law, and aristocratic circles; Latin governed religious worship and scholarly education; while English remained confined to the illiterate common people. The Early Modern English era marked a dramatic shift, as a single national language, British English, began to permeate all domains of social, political, and religious life. The Anglicization of the church created urgent practical demands. Centuries of Latin monopoly in religious contexts meant that English lacked equivalents for theological concepts, liturgical terminology, and ecclesiastical vocabulary. Translators faced the monumental task of rendering sacred texts and liturgical language into English for the first time. The Bible required an official English translation that ordinary people could understand, as

did the complete liturgy of church services, like prayers, psalms, hymns, and sacramental rites. Some translators borrowed Latin terms directly, adapting them to English phonology and morphology (such as “*salvation*,” “*redemption*,” and “*apostle*”). Others created new English compounds or revived archaic Anglo-Saxon words to convey religious meanings. The resulting translations, particularly *the Coverdale Bible* (1535), *the Great Bible* (1539), and later *the Book of Common Prayer* (1549), didn’t merely fill lexical gaps; they fundamentally shaped English prose style, introduced hundreds of phrases that became permanent fixtures in the language, and established models for formal written English that influenced generations of writers. The language of these religious texts permeated daily life through weekly church attendance, making their vocabulary, syntax, and rhythms familiar to all social classes and accelerating the standardization of English across the nation.

Pic. 39 – Henry VIII’s Reforms and Their Impact on the English Language.



As English emerged as the nation's primary language for both writing and speaking, it existed under the shadow of two prestigious tongues, from which it sources much of its vocabulary: Latin, revered for its classical authority, and French, celebrated for its literary elegance. The turbulent history of English formation, marked by extensive internal and external influences and uneven development, sat uneasily alongside the prevailing ideal of Latin as a fixed, dead language that served as the universal model of grammatical perfection precisely because it never changed. French presented another unfavorable comparison: not only did it derive from Latin, but it also boasted centuries of distinguished literary achievement. By contrast, English at that time had only recently developed standardized forms and possessed a modest collection of recognized literary works. Critics characterized English as crude and unrefined, attacking its perceived deficiencies on multiple fronts. The language was judged inadequately expressive, lacking essential vocabulary, and containing unpolished words. It was labelled as "*ineloquent*," "*barbarous*," "*rude*," "*base*," "*vile*," and "*indigent*." Caxton, as the first English printer, frequently addressed this perspective in the introductions and conclusions of his late-fifteenth-century publications, characterizing English as an awkward and ungraceful medium.

The question whether to preserve the natural development of English in writing or try to "edit" it in order that it was rectified according to the pre-conquest period, free from the alien French elements, was debatable. Time has proved that language, as a living organism, is hard to alter artificially. Throughout this period, many English speakers carried a deep sense of linguistic inferiority toward their own tongue, and this discomfort drove repeated efforts to correct perceived shortcomings. Suspicion of English's natural, unguided growth can be traced back to the fourteenth century and has continued since then. Change, when it came, was rarely welcomed: "*The language is going to the dogs!*"

Despite early challenges, printing facilitated uniform spelling by distributing consistent written texts to readers. Chaucer's linguistic variety gained acceptance as the standard, as it represented the first significant literary form to appear after the Norman conquest. Adopting this linguistic model essentially formalized an English that

merged foreign contributions with its Germanic foundation, creating a connection between medieval and contemporary usage. Chaucer, along with Lydgate (an English poet and monk of Bury St. Edmunds, best known for his long narrative and moral poems) and Gower (one of the major English poets of the late 14th century, the author of *Confessio Amantis*), was credited with elevating English to the status of a legitimate literary language, a feat achieved only toward the close of the 15th century.

British literary evolution in the late Middle English and Early Modern eras drew substantially from Italian cultural precedents. Throughout the fifteenth century, Italy served as the heart of the Renaissance and a hub of artistic excellence, remaining geographically and culturally distant from the reach of England. Boccaccio once dismissed England as “*the most remote little corner of the world.*” As Renaissance ideas spread northward across Europe, English translators ran headlong into a practical problem: the language lacked the vocabulary to convey the sophisticated concepts already present in classical texts. The solution was another wave of borrowing, this time drawing Latin and Greek words directly into English, a practice its proponents described as “enriching” the native tongue. In 1530, an unnamed translator put the difficulty plainly, noting that there were many Latin words for which English had no proper equivalent. However, while authors commonly remained anonymous before Chaucer, often due to modesty, the belief that God was the ultimate creator of all things, or fear of punishment, Renaissance writers had names and biographies. By the late sixteenth century, the literary credentials of the English language became undeniable, propelled by outstanding literary accomplishments and an expanding corpus of English texts. Sidney and Spenser’s works proved the literary merit of their native tongue, demonstrating that such a refined language could no longer be considered inferior.

English translations of the Bible provided further evidence for the recognition of the English language. Although Wycliffe’s translations date back to the end of the 1300s, the Church had originally forbidden Bibles in everyday language. The increasing public desire for scripture accessible to ordinary English readers led to the 1611 Bible, which served as clear proof of linguistic power and elegance. The fact that

sacred religious truths could be conveyed effectively in English put to rest any claims that English lacked the dignity required for important literary works.

Pic. 40 – *A comparison of the Beatitudes from the fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, as rendered in the Wycliffe, Tyndale, and Authorized versions, offers a vivid window into how the English language changed across the centuries.*

WYCLIFFE (completed around 1382, with revisions into the 1390s)	TYNDALE (<i>New Testament</i> published in 1526, parts of the <i>Old Testament</i> followed before Tyndale's death in 1536)	KING JAMES (1611)
1. And Jhesus, seyng the puple, wente vp in to an hil; and whanne he was set, hise disciplis camen to hym. 2. And he openyde his mouth, and tauyte hem, and seide, 3. Blessed ben pore men in spirit, for the kyngdom of heuenes is herne. 4. Blessid ben mylde men, for thei schulen welde the erthe. 5. Blessid ben thei that mornen, for thei schulen be coumfortid. 6. Blessid ben thei that hungren and thristen riytwisnesse, for thei schulen be fulfillid. 7. Blessid ben merciful men, for thei schulen gete merci. 8. Blessid ben thei that ben of clene herte, for thei schulen se God. 9. Blessid ben pesible men, for thei schulen be clepid Goddis children. 10. Blessid ben thei that suffren persecusioun for riytfulnesse, for the kingdam of heuenes is herne.	1. When he sawe the people, he went vp into a mountayne, and when he was set, his disciples came to hym, 2. And he opened hys mouthe, and taught them sayinge: 3. Blessed are the povre in sprete: for theirs is the kyngdome of heven. 4. Blessed are they that morne: for they shalbe comforted. 5. Blessed are the meke: for they shall inheret the erth. 6. Blessed are they which hunger and thirst for rightewesnes: for they shalbe filled. 7. Blessed are the mercifull: for they shall obteyne mercy. 8. Blessed are the pure in herte: for they shall se God. 9. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shalbe called the chyldren of God. 10. Blessed are they which suffre persecucion for rightwesnes sake: for theirs ys the kyngdome of heuen.	1. And seeing the multitudes, he went vp into a mountaine: and when he was set, his disciples came vnto him. 2. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying: 3. Blessed are the poore in spirit: for theirs is the kingdome of heauen. 4. Blessed are they that mourne: for they shall be comforted. 5. Blessed are the meeke: for they shall inherit the earth. 6. Blessed are they which doe hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7. Blessed are the mercifull: for they shall obtaine mercie. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall bee called the children of God. 10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdome of heauen.

From the sixteenth century onward, regional speech patterns began to appear in written literature, in both dramatic works and prose narratives.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) was a black swan that altered the linguistic surface, elevating the language to modern standards. Drawing on his knowledge of multiple languages, he expanded English by adopting foreign vocabulary, creating

compound words, and transforming existing word forms. Around 1,700 new words entered the language through his work alone, among them *eyeball*, *fashionable*, and *lonely*. His work helped establish standardized grammar and a lexicon, with many of his linguistic innovations later appearing in *Samuel Johnson's Dictionary*.

Pic. 41 – *Shakespearean Vocabulary Innovations*.

LEXICAL UNIT	PLAY/SOURCE	ORIGINAL MEANING/CONTEXT	CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION
ASSASSINATION	<i>Macbeth</i>	First recorded use of this specific term	Political murder
BEDROOM	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Compound word combining "bed" + "room"	Private sleeping chamber
BUMP	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Used as a verb meaning "to strike"	To collide or hit
CRITIC	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>	From the Greek, but Shakespeare popularized it	Someone who evaluates art/literature
EYEBALL	<i>The Tempest</i>	Compound word for the eye's globe	The round part of the eye
FASHIONABLE	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	Related to the following current styles	Stylish, trendy
GENEROUS	<i>Hamlet</i>	Originally meant "noble-born"	Kind, giving freely
GLOOMY	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	Describing a dark, depressing atmosphere	Sad, melancholy
HURRY	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	Used as both a noun and a verb	To move quickly
LONELY	<i>Coriolanus</i>	Feeling alone or solitary	Isolated, without company
MAJESTIC	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Having grandeur or dignity	Impressive, regal
OBSCENE	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>	Offensive or disgusting	Indecent, vulgar
PUKING	<i>As You Like It</i>	Vomiting (in "mewling and puking")	Throwing up
SWAGGER	<i>Henry V & others</i>	To walk boastfully	Confident, arrogant behavior
UNCOMFORTABLE	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Causing discomfort	Uneasy, not at ease

Pic. 42 – *Common Phrases Shakespeare Coined.*

EXPRESSION	WRITING SETTING	SITUATION/MEANING
“Break the ice”	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	To initiate a conversation
“Dead as a doornail”	<i>Henry VI, Part 2</i>	Completely dead
“Heart of gold”	<i>Henry V</i>	A kind, generous person
“In a pickle”	<i>The Tempest</i>	In a difficult situation
“Wild goose chase”	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	A futile pursuit
“Wear your heart on your sleeve”	<i>Othello</i>	To show emotions openly
“The world’s your oyster.”	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Full of opportunities

Pic. 43 – *Types of Innovations.*

INNOVATION TYPE	ILLUSTRATIONS	DETAILS
Compound Words	<i>Eyeball, bedroom, courtship</i>	Created new concepts by combining existing words
Conversion	<i>To friend, to gossip, to petition</i>	Converted nouns into verbs
New Adjectives	<i>Fashionable, generous, majestic</i>	Enhanced descriptive language
Prefix/Suffix Changes	<i>Uncomfortable, unreal, outbreak</i>	Modified existing words with new meanings
Borrowed & Adapted	<i>Critic (Greek), obscene (Latin)</i>	Introduced foreign words to English

Some modern historians refer to the innovation in the Early Modern period as “*Operation Shakespeare*,” which aimed to establish a distinctive English scholarly tradition through literary development and refinement of the language. Shakespeare’s works were fundamental in creating historical accounts that distinguished between heroes and villains, thereby shaping the public perception of English royalty. The movement also emphasized linguistic purity, replacing words of foreign origin with

concise, native English alternatives. Later writers such as Agatha Christie embodied this approach through their preference for short, fundamentally English terms. Additionally, Shakespeare's plays depicted foreign societies, such as Venice, in negative terms, illustrating how language could be strategically deployed to shape cultural attitudes and national identity.

The Age of Exploration (15th-17th centuries) considerably increased English vocabulary being fueled from new lands, peoples, and concepts, absorbing thousands of words from various languages including Spanish (*chocolate, tomato, mosquito*), Indigenous American languages (*tobacco, canoe, raccoon*), Indian languages (*jungle, bungalow, curry*), and Southeast Asian tongues (*bamboo, ketchup, typhoon*). Simultaneously, British colonizers systematically transplanted familiar place names across their territories, creating *updated* versions of the places found in old Britain, such as *New York, New England, and New Zealand*. They often directly replicated British cities, like *Boston* and *Cambridge*, and honored royalty through names like *Virginia, Georgia, and Victoria*. This naming practice, which extended to geographical features such as the *Thames* and *Avon* rivers, was replicated in multiple countries (Australia, America, Canada, New Zealand), installing colonial dominance and helping settlers maintain cultural connections to Britain while reinforcing their claim to colonized territories.

Attempts to structure and unify the English grammar under a single framework began in the Early Modern English period. One of the earliest grammatical texts was *A Shorte Introduction of Grammar* by William Lily. Although often attributed solely to Lily, the work combined ideas developed by various authors, including John Colet and Thomas Robertson. It remained popular even after Lily's death in 1523. The text received royal approval from King Henry VIII, making it one of the earliest English works to attain such recognition and establishing it as the standard grammar in England for the following centuries. As a result, it maintained its position in English educational institutions through the 1800s, when Kennedy's *Latin Primer* (1866) eventually replaced it. Written in English but grounded in Latin grammar, it provided the foundational grammatical education for virtually every major writer of the early

modern period, including Shakespeare, Spenser, and Ben Jonson. The book served, in the words of one observer, as “*the gateway to the classics of Rome for those who would go on to create the classics of England*”.

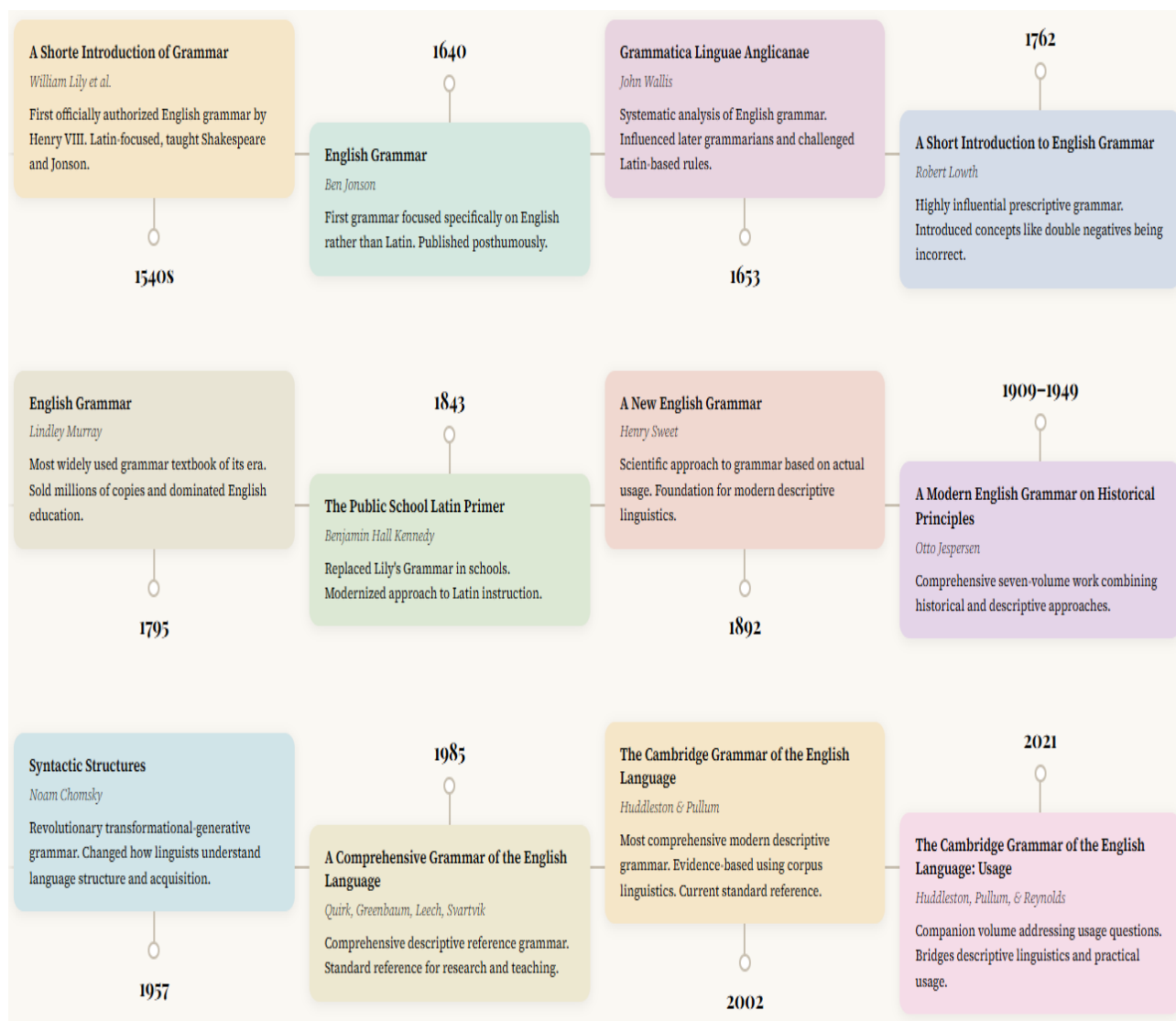
Following Lily’s Latin-focused grammar, English grammar books in the later modern period underwent a significant shift toward regulating and refining the English language itself in order to establish a sophisticated literary medium in its own right. These new grammars attempted to systematize English by often applying Latin grammatical categories to the vernacular language, establishing standards for what was considered proper English usage. Notable examples include *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762) by Robert Lowth and *English Grammar* (1795) by Lindley Murray, which became widely adopted in schools. Lowth, in his *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762), defined fixed rules that are still debated today (such as the “*no split infinitives*” rule⁴).

Over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the study of English grammar shifted its orientation, moving away from prescribing how the language ought to be used and toward describing how it actually is used by real speakers and writers. Noam Chomsky’s transformational-generative grammar (1950s-1960s) revolutionized the field by exploring the underlying structures of language and the principles of universal grammar. Structural linguists, such as Leonard Bloomfield, emphasized the systematic observation of language patterns, while later functional and cognitive grammars examined how meaning and context shape grammatical structures. The rise of corpus linguistics, enabled by computer technology, allowed grammarians to analyze vast collections of authentic language data, leading to the development of comprehensive descriptive grammars, such as the *Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (2002). Contemporary grammars now embrace linguistic diversity, regional variations, and evolving usage patterns, sliding from the strict rule-based approach of

⁴ The “*no split infinitives*” rule is a prescriptive grammar guideline that prohibits inserting words, usually adverbs, between “*to*” and the verb in an infinitive construction; according to this rule, modifying words should appear either before “*to*” or following the verb itself.

previous eras to a more adaptable, research-driven view of English grammar as a fluid, organic system.

Pic. 44 – *Evolution of English Grammars.*



Several key figures took it upon themselves to bring order to English between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Robert Cawdrey produced the first English dictionary, *A Table Alphabetical* (1604), pinning down what he called “hard words”, a modest collection of around 2,500 entries. By contrast, Elisha Coles’s 1676 dictionary, compiled by a schoolmaster who had taught English to foreign learners, gathered some 25,000 words under the unwieldy but revealing title *An English Dictionary: Explaining the Difficult Terms used in Divinity, Husbandry, Physick, Philosophy, Law, Navigation, Mathematics, and other Arts and Sciences*. The landmark achievement of the age, however, was Samuel Johnson’s *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), which

brought lasting consistency to spelling and definitions and dominated English usage for decades. Notably, Johnson himself had used the word “standard” in this context as early as 1712.

Throughout the eighteenth century, London’s coffeehouses buzzed with debate about language, politics, and literature, while the proliferating journals of the day gave writers a ready platform to air their views on all three. Jonathan Swift supported the founding of an English Academy, following the examples set in France and Italy, to codify the language; however, this initiative never materialized. Authors like Swift were deeply concerned about protecting English from being labeled ‘*barbaric*’, promoting the idea of ‘*fixing*’ or polishing the language to establish ‘*a particular standard*’ that would prevent continued evolution and transformation and elevate it to the prestige of classical languages. As Dr. Samuel Johnson observed approximately four decades later: “*languages, like political systems, naturally tend toward decline: we have long maintained our governmental structure, so let us also fight for our language.*”

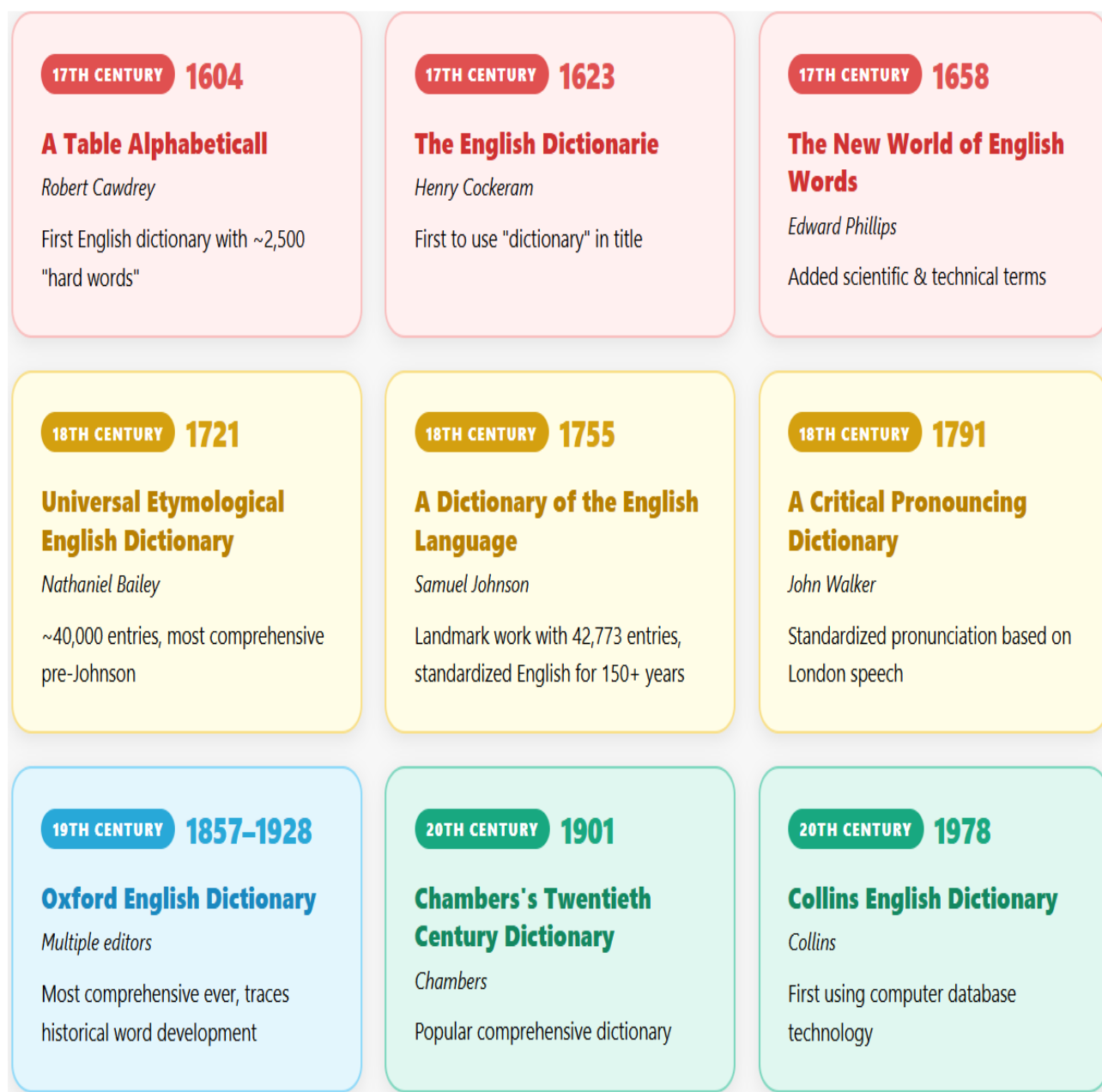
In 1828, Robert Noah Webster standardized American English through his dictionary, establishing uniquely American spelling conventions such as “*color*” and “*center*.”

The philosophy of correctness extended to spoken English as well, finding expression in dedicated pronunciation guides. John Walker’s *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, published in 1791, is the prime example. Walker acknowledged the wide variety of regional accents across England, but fixed his attention above all on the speech of Londoners, who, in his view, served as models for distant parts of the country and were therefore obliged to hold themselves to a stricter standard of accuracy.

By the eighteenth century, English spelling had largely taken its current recognizable form. Nineteenth-century Britain underwent significant technological and social transformations. The Industrial Revolution created a new middle class anxious about social status, who relied on language manuals for guidance on proper speech. As long as education expanded, linguistic correctness became a key marker of social refinement, and the term “standard English” came into use. During the latter half of the

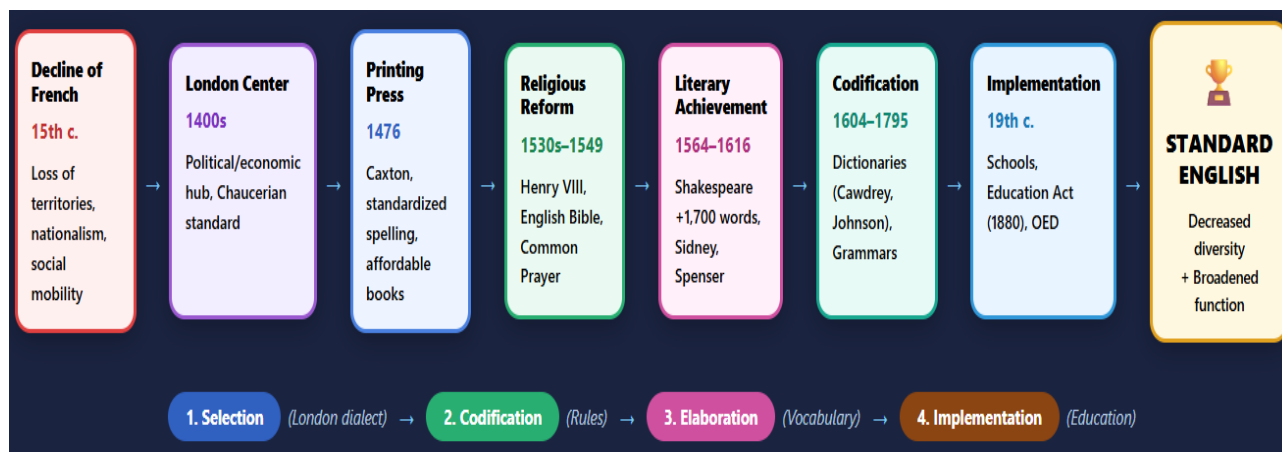
19th century, the Victorian era, patriotic confidence rose in tandem with imperial expansion in India and Britain's growing global dominance. Commercial enterprises generated wealth that potentially reached all social classes. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) was established and began publication in 1884.

Pic. 45 – *History of British Dictionaries.*



Thus, true standardization of the English language became possible during the Modern English era, when society underwent significant changes, having passed through several crucial steps.

Pic. 46 – *Standardization of English in the Modern Period (1400-1900).*



A **standard language** establishes agreed-upon conventions of correct usage, typically set out in reference works and grammars, and adopted across key institutional domains such as education, government, and scientific inquiry. Standardization moves through four principal stages, which may unfold simultaneously rather than in strict sequence.

The first is **selection**: choosing an existing variety as the foundation, usually the speech of the most powerful or socially prestigious group.

The second is **codification**: ironing out internal inconsistencies within the chosen variety and establishing recognized norms for grammar and vocabulary. Since standard languages are rooted in written form, this typically involves settling on consistent spelling rules.

The third is **elaboration**: ensuring the emerging standard can meet a full range of demands, which may require expanding its resources, developing specialized professional vocabulary, for instance, or devising new structural patterns.

The fourth is **implementation**: securing the standard's widespread acceptance by making materials available in that variety, restricting competing forms in formal contexts, and building among its users a sense of loyalty and commitment to it.

Underlying the whole process are two defining tendencies: a *reduction* in structural variation and an *expansion* in the range of functions the language is called upon to serve.

During the World Wars, English absorbed a wealth of military vocabulary, including terms such as *trench warfare* and *shell shock*. Soldiers' interactions with

allies introduced foreign words, and the demands of clear, concise communication shaped both written and spoken forms. In the postwar period, the global influence of the United States accelerated the spread of American vocabulary and spelling. Meanwhile, scientific discoveries and mass media introduced more terms and standardized informal speech.

In the digital era, the metamorphosis of English has accelerated, shaped by the internet, texting, and social media, which introduced acronyms, emojis, and novel spelling conventions, while fostering global communication and hybrid forms. Throughout these periods, English has demonstrated remarkable flexibility, adapting its vocabulary and expanding its modes of expression.

The full timeline, detailing the historical development of the English language through crucial milestones, is provided below.

Pic 47 – *The Periods of the Making of the English Language.*

№	A TIMELINE OF PERIODS	KEY DATES AND LANDMARK EVENTS	LINGUISTIC ANCESTRY as proposed by HENRY SWEET
0	<i>ANCIENT (PRE-ENGLISH) PERIOD</i>	<i>before the fifth century A.D.</i> <i>Iberians, the prehistoric, pre-Celtic inhabitants of the British Isles (around 3000 BC.) →</i> <i>Celts (700 B.C. - 43 A.D.) → Romans (43 A.D. - 409 A.D.) → Romanized Celts (410 A.D.)</i>	
1	THE OLD ENGLISH (ANGLO-SAXON) PERIOD	5th-11th centuries. 1) In 449 AD, Germanic tribes, the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes, invaded and settled across the British Isles. 2) The Heptarchy comprised seven principal Anglo-Saxon kingdoms: Sussex (South Saxons), Wessex (West Saxons), Essex (East Saxons), East Anglia, Northumbria, Mercia, and Kent. 3) From the late sixth century through the seventh, the Christianisation of Britain set in motion a profound transformation in Northumbria's cultural life, as monastic centres took shape and grew into focal points of both religious devotion and intellectual activity.	The period of full inflections.

		4) Around 700 AD, the oldest surviving example of Old English literature, <i>Cædmon's Hymn</i>, composed somewhere between 658 and 680, was committed to writing. 5) 8th–9th century – Viking raids and Scandinavian invasion. 6) 878 – Alfred's victory at the Battle of Edington over the Vikings led to an agreement carving out territories of Scandinavian settlement, later known as the Danelaw. 7) From 890, the compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle begins. 8) 927 – Æthelstan united the kingdoms of the Heptarchy into a single Kingdom of England. 9) 10 August 991 – the English army was defeated by the Danes at the Battle of Maldon, after which tribute known as Danegeld was paid. 10) Around 1000, <i>Beowulf</i>, the earliest surviving major poem in English, was set down in the manuscript that has come down to us. 11) 1016 – England came under the rule of Cnut the Great, king of Denmark. 12) 1043 – Edward the Confessor became king of all England.	
2	MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD	11th -15th (1066-1475) 1) 5 January 1066 – the death of Edward the Confessor, the last Anglo-Saxon king of England. 2) 14 October 1066 – the clash at Hastings between Norman and allied French forces and the united English army marked the beginning of the Norman Conquest, driving many English into exile in neighboring lands, with Scotland, Ireland, and Scandinavia among them. 3) The imposition of Anglo-Norman as the language of the ruling class hastened the decline of Old English. 4) 1362 – English was used to open Parliament for the first time, though official records continued to be kept in French. 5) In 1384, John Wycliffe's English translation of the Bible was completed. Copied and circulated widely in manuscript form, it was read across England and, composed in the London dialect, played a	The period of leveled inflections.

		significant role in spreading that regional variety throughout the country. 6) 1387-1400 – Geoffrey Chaucer’s <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>, a collection of 24 stories running to over 17,000 lines written in Middle English. Chaucer’s literary language, rooted in the mixed, largely East Midland, dialect of London and known as classical Middle English, became in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the foundation of a national literary standard. 7) 1475 – <i>The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye</i>, an English translation of the Trojan legends printed in Bruges, became the first known book to be printed in English, marking a watershed moment in the history of the written language.	
3	NEW ENGLISH PERIOD	is traditionally divided into three broad periods: - Early Modern English (1476–1660), commonly known as Shakespeare’s English; - The Normalisation period (1660–1800), also known as the Age of Correctness or the Neoclassical period; - Late Modern English, or the Modern English period (1800 to the present, with Present-Day English conventionally dated from 1945); - The global stage: English in the digital age of the World Wide Web and artificial intelligence. 1) 1476 – William Caxton established England’s first printing press near Westminster, and by 1492 had produced over a hundred books, setting in motion the widespread circulation of printed texts in English. 2) 1558–1603 – The Elizabethan Era: a period of cultural flowering and imperial reach, defined by the theatrical brilliance of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, the maritime exploits of privateers such as Francis Drake, and the first stirrings of colonial ambition in the Americas. 3) 1564 – Birth of Shakespeare: his linguistic inventiveness introduced a vast number of new words into English, pushing against the boundaries of classical usage and substantially enriching the language by the turn of the seventeenth century.	The period of lost inflections

		4) 1616 – Shakespeare’s death, and the beginning of his enduring influence: though he was gone, the more than 1,700 words he had introduced continued to shape the English language long after him. 6) 1755 – Samuel Johnson’s <i>Dictionary of the English Language</i>: a pioneering, if imperfect, attempt to codify English vocabulary, combining scholarly rigour with wit, and leaving a lasting mark on the art of lexicography. 7) In 1880, the Elementary Education Act made primary schooling compulsory and, notably, extended that requirement explicitly to girls. 8) 1896 – the first issue of <i>The Daily Mail</i>, Britain’s national daily newspaper. 9) 1939–1945 – the Second World War left a deep and lasting imprint on the English language, accelerating changes in vocabulary, reshaping sociolinguistic dynamics, and shifting the geopolitical landscape in ways that helped forge the language into its contemporary form. 10) From the late twentieth century to the present, the rise and spread of the internet has driven the fastest and most far-reaching transformation of English since the printing press, leaving deep marks on its vocabulary, syntax, and global reach.	
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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What language was spoken in parliament at the beginning of the New English period? When was that tradition broken? How did it happen?
2. Compare French borrowings of the Middle English period and the New English period. Which were more numerous? Why?
3. Why do you think English spelling has not changed greatly from Early New English?
4. What factors contributed to the status of English as a global language?
5. Which English monarch granted royal approval to William Lily’s grammar book, making it the standard text for centuries? Why was this approval significant for the development of English education and literature?
6. Examine Pic. 40 comparing Wycliffe, Tyndale, and King James versions of the Beatitudes. Identify 5 specific words or phrases that show the evolution from Middle English to Early Modern English. What patterns of change do you notice?
7. During the Age of Exploration (15th-17th centuries), the English absorbed words from Spanish, Indigenous American languages, Indian languages, and Southeast Asian tongues. Find 3 additional borrowings from each of these language

families (beyond the examples given in the text) and explain what they reveal about colonial contact and trade.

8. Robert Cawdrey's 1604 dictionary contained 2,500 words, while Elisha Coles's 1676 work had 25,000 entries. What factors might explain this tenfold increase in just 72 years? Can you identify at least 4 major linguistic or historical developments?

9. Caxton frequently characterized English as 'awkward and ungraceful' in his late-fifteenth-century publications. Find one of Caxton's original prefaces or epilogues and quote a specific passage where he expresses this linguistic inferiority. How do his concerns compare to modern attitudes about language change?

10. Robert Lowth's 1762 grammar introduced the controversial 'no split infinitives' rule. Find 3 examples of split infinitives in modern published English (newspapers, books, or reputable websites). Do these examples seem natural or awkward? What does this tell us about prescriptive vs. descriptive grammar?

11. British colonizers replicated place names across territories (New York, New England, Boston, Cambridge, Thames River, etc.). Search Google Maps for Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. Find 5 place names in each country that are direct copies of British locations. What does this naming practice reveal about colonial attitudes and identity?

THE TOPICS FOR SELF-STUDY AND REPORTS:

1. The printing press and the push toward a Standard English.
2. The English Reformation and Henry VIII's claim to restore ancient truth.
3. The Elizabethan Age as a crucible of literature and the arts.
4. Shakespearean idioms and the language of the English Renaissance.
5. *The King James Bible* (1611).
6. Robert Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabeticall* (1604).
7. Jonathan Swift's *A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue* (1712).
8. John Walker's *Pronouncing Dictionary* (1774–1791).
9. Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755).
10. Henry Alford's *A Plea for the Queen's English* (1864).
11. The *Oxford English Dictionary* from the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Century.

THE GENETIC BLUEPRINT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS PHONOLOGICAL SYSTEM

1. *The concept of linguistic ancestry and the languages in focus. Indo-European and Proto-Germanic.*
2. *The development of the Germanic linguistic branch. The earliest monuments.*
3. *The sound changes within the West Germanic languages.*
4. *The stages of evolution of the English vocalic system and orthographic conventions across history.*

As a twig of the West Germanic branch within the Indo-European language family, English derives its genealogical roots from the early medieval linguistic environment of Anglo-Saxon England, before its core national standardized forms had fully solidified.

The concept of grouping languages by genealogy, through the application of comparative linguistics, took shape during the 19th century. Influenced by Romanticism, thinkers of the 19th century turned to the past, viewing it through the prism of idealism and considering it “uncorrupted” by industrial advancements. In this retrospection, the idea of the modern nation-state, defined by shared language and national identity, was crystallized, having being moulded by a string of processes, including Enlightenment rationalism, revolutionary politics in France, Napoleon campaign, new attention to folklore, emergence of works like Emanuel Kant’s “*On the Different Human Races*” (1775) and Johann Gottfried Herder’s conception of *Volksgeist* or national spirit. Prior to the 1400s-1500s, individuals aligned themselves with their immediate community or feudal authority rather than with any larger national entity, but this changed. Additionally, archaeological discoveries enabled scholars to decipher ancient linguistic systems, thereby propelling scientific thought.

Comparative linguistics was built on the contributions of a handful of foundational figures. Franz Bopp (1791–1867) opened the field by systematically comparing Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Persian, and the Germanic languages in his *Comparative Grammar of the Indo-European Languages* (1833–1852), demonstrating their shared Proto-Indo-European origins. Working at roughly the same time, the Danish scholar Rasmus Rask (1787–1832) identified recurring sound correspondences between Germanic and other Indo-European languages, while Jacob Grimm (1785–1863) gave these observations formal expression in Grimm’s Law (1822), which described regular patterns of sound shift, such as $p \rightarrow f$ and $t \rightarrow th$, in the transition from Proto-Indo-European to Germanic. August Schleicher (1821–1868) advanced the field further by introducing the genealogical tree model for representing language relationships and attempting the first reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European in his *Compendium of the Comparative Grammar of the Indo-European Languages* (1861–1862). Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), though primarily a philosopher of language, contributed to comparative linguistics through his emphasis on the internal structures of individual languages. Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900) brought the discipline to a wider public through his lectures and research on Sanskrit and Indo-European mythology. Finally, Karl Verner (1846–1896) refined the theoretical framework by accounting for the apparent exceptions to Grimm’s Law through Verner’s Law (1875), lending support to the Neogrammarian position championed by Hermann Osthoff and Karl Brugmann.

Although mythology offers a range of explanations for language development, the writing that records the solidification of ancient linguistic systems for scientific study is scarce and relatively young when measured against the full span of human existence. The Hittite inscriptions, dating to around 1500 BC, rank among the earliest discovered. Summarizing the studies of the 19th century, August Schleicher’s family tree model visualized language evolution, showing a root language splitting into major branches.

Pic. 48 –*The Phylogenetic Model of Languages.*

sometime between 4000 and 2500 BCE, from where they gradually spread across Europe and Asia. In contrast, the *Anatolian hypothesis* (Colin Renfrew, 1980s) posits that the PIE homeland was located in Anatolia (modern Turkey) around 7000–6000 BCE. The following classification presents the main languages within this large macrofamily.

Pic. 49 – *The Indo-European Branches and their Twigs.*

№	LANGUAGE FAMILY	EARLIEST RECORDED EVIDENCE	CURRENT STATUS	PRESENT-DAY BRANCHES AND SUBDIVISIONS
1	Anatolian (Hittite)	Around 1500 BCE.	A branch that has since died out.	It left no living descendants.
2	Indo-Iranian	Vedic Sanskrit (c. 1000 BCE).	Still in active use.	<i>Indic branch:</i> languages of the Indian subcontinent, including Hindi and Bengali. <i>Iranian branch:</i> Persian, Kurdish, and Ossetic.
3	Hellenic (Greek)	Continuous documentation from around 1400 BCE, spanning Mycenaean Greek through to Modern Greek. <u>Ancient:</u> <i>Mycenaean Greek</i> (c. 16th–12th century BCE, written in Linear B). <i>Classical Greek</i> dialects, including Attic (the basis of Classical Athenian literature), Ionic, Doric, Aeolic, and Arcadocypriot. <u>Hellenistic and Medieval:</u> <i>Koine Greek</i> , the common dialect of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and <i>Medieval (Byzantine) Greek</i> (c. 5th–15th century CE).	Transformed and endured.	<i>Standard Modern Greek</i> , the official language of Greece and Cyprus. <i>Dialects include:</i> Pontic Greek, Tsakonian (descended from Doric and highly divergent), Cappadocian Greek, Cretan Greek, and Cypriot Greek.

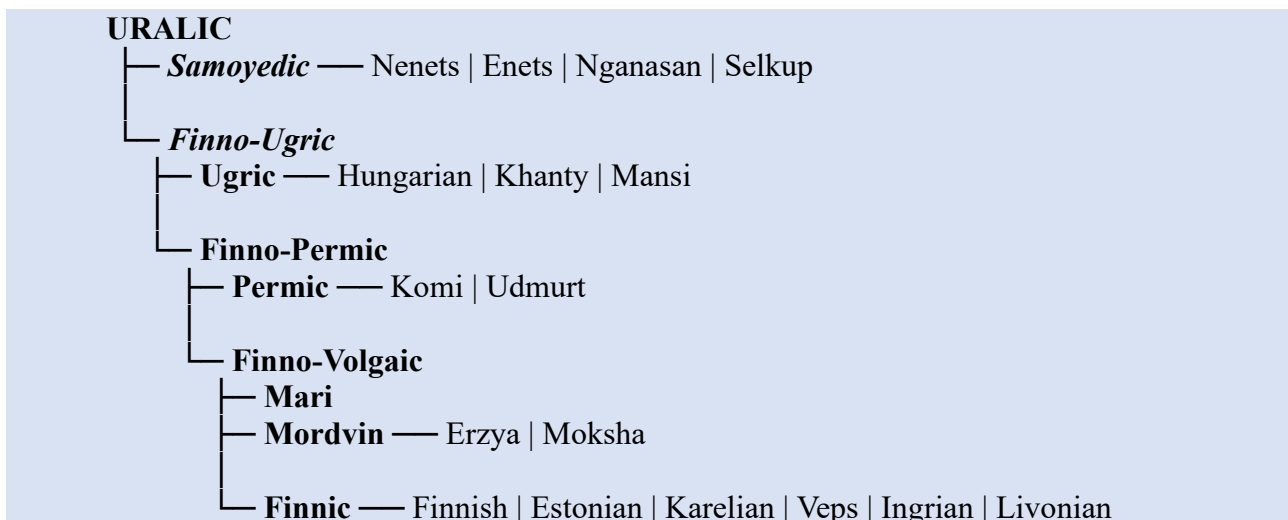
4	Italic	Latin inscriptions appear only sparsely before 240 BCE, with fuller documentation emerging in the centuries that follow.	Functioning.	<u>The Romance languages:</u> <i>Romanian, Rhaeto-Romance, Italian, French, Catalan, Spanish, and Portuguese.</i>
5	Slavic	9th century CE, with Old Church Slavonic as the earliest attested form.	Alive.	Modern subgroups: <u>East Slavic:</u> <i>Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian.</i> <u>South Slavic:</u> <i>Macedonian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovene.</i> <u>West Slavic:</u> <i>Polish, Czech, Slovak.</i>
6	Baltic	-Old Prussian (15th century CE), -Lithuanian and Latvian (documented from the 16th century onward).	-Now extinct. -Functioning.	- -Lithuanian and Latvian.
7	Celtic	Primary division: GOIDELIC (“Q-CELTIC”): Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Manx. BRYTHONIC (“P-CELTIC”). Earliest records: Irish glosses (7th century CE).	Extinct: Gaulish (surviving until around the 5th century CE) and Cornish.	Living: Welsh, Breton (the latter deriving from insular Celtic, not Gaulish).
8	Germanic	<i>Runic inscriptions:</i> From the 3rd century CE.	<u>East Germanic:</u> <i>Gothic</i> , preserved in the 4th-century CE <i>Wulfilan Bible</i> , now extinct, with its last attested use dating to around the 8th–9th centuries CE.	<u>North Germanic:</u> Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic. <u>West Germanic:</u> English, German, Dutch, Afrikaans (derived from Dutch), Yiddish (historically rooted in Middle High German), the Frisian languages (spoken in parts of the Netherlands and Germany), and Low German (also known as Low Saxon).

Indo-European languages contain many phonetically similar words.

Pic. 50 – Word “mother” in the IE Languages.

alongside smaller minority languages such as Karelian, Veps, Ingrian, and the nearly extinct Livonian. *The Ugric subgroup* comprises Hungarian and the Ob-Ugric languages, Khanty and Mansi, both of which are endangered. The Samoyedic branch, spoken across Arctic Russia, includes Nenets, Selkup, Enets, and Nganasan.

Pic. 51 – *Uralic Language Family*.



While historical linguistics traces the Indo-European and Uralic languages as linked to most European languages, these systems constitute only a part of the global linguistic network. According to the *Altaic theory*, Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic languages, as well as Korean and Japanese, share a common ancestor. The assumption was based on typological similarities, such as agglutinative morphology, subject-object-verb word order, and vowel harmony systems. Today, these languages are treated as separate, unrelated families that developed similar features through contact between neighboring communities.

Afro-Asiatic languages, which branch into various linguistic twigs such as Semitic, Berber, and Chadic, construct words through root-and-pattern word formation and extensively use grammatical gender throughout their grammars. Ancient Egyptian, documented from around 3000 BCE, represents the earliest recorded language in this family.

The Sino-Tibetan family is divided into the Sinitic branch, which includes Mandarin and other Chinese languages, and the Tibeto-Burman branch, represented by Burmese. The Sino-Tibetan language family is the second-largest in the world by

number of speakers. The languages belonging to it are tonal with an analytical grammar system.

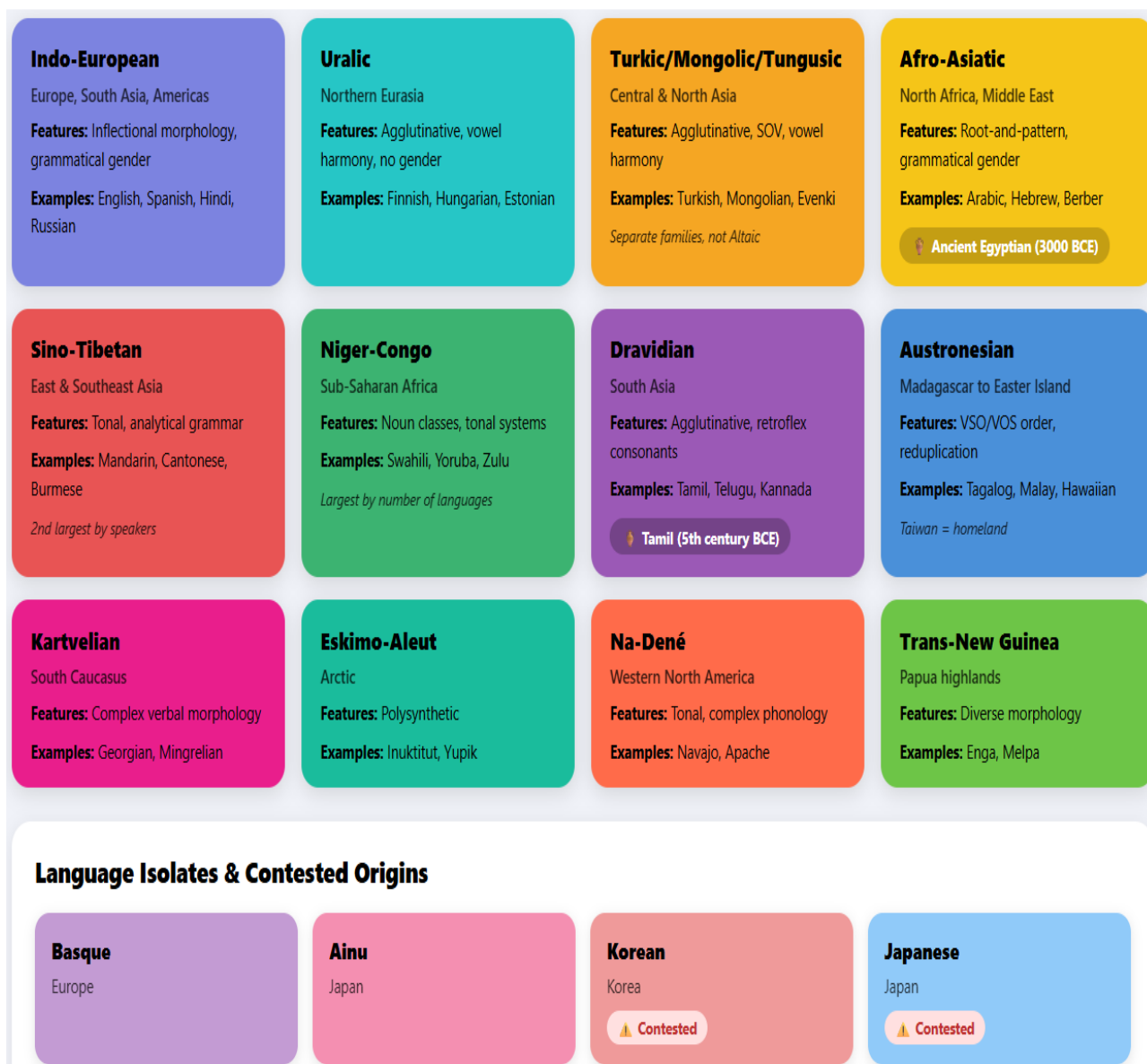
The Niger-Congo language family, which is found throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, holds the distinction of being the largest language family by the number of diverse languages. Its members typically display sophisticated noun classification and the use of tonal systems. Notable representatives include Swahili, a Bantu language, and Yoruba from the Volta-Niger branch.

The Dravidian languages of South Asia, employing Tamil and Telugu, among others, exhibit typological features that distinguish them from the Indo-European languages of the region. Morphologically, Dravidian languages are predominantly agglutinative, while phonologically, they possess a particularly rich system of retroflex consonants. The earliest records of Tamil extend to approximately the 5th century BCE.

The Austronesian language family is geographically scattered, extending from Madagascar in the west to Rapa Nui (Easter Island) in the east. Syntactically, Austronesian languages exhibit verb-initial word order (VSO or VOS), and morphologically, they exhibit productive reduplication. Taiwan serves as the linguistic homeland, where Formosan languages preserve ancient splits into several distinct descent lines. From this diversity, one group broke away and formed the Malayo-Polynesian group, creating a single evolutionary branch that would eventually populate two oceans, from Tagalog in the Philippines to the most distant Pacific islands.

The linguistic atlas harbours a constellation of additional family groups. Among these genealogies are the Kartvelian languages, such as Georgian, which anchor the South Caucasus; the *Eskimo-Aleut* tongues, including Inuktitut, which thread across the Arctic; the *Na-Dené* languages, including Navajo, which span western North America; and the *Trans-New Guinea* languages, like Enga, which weave through Papua's highland valleys. Yet some languages resist any classification. For example, the Basque stand alone as Europe's enigmatic pre-Indo-European orphan, while the Ainu in Japan remains a genealogical mystery. Korean and Japanese hover in genealogical uncertainty, their origins still hotly contested between the ruins of Altaic theory and the hopeful scaffolding of "*Transeurasian*" hypotheses.

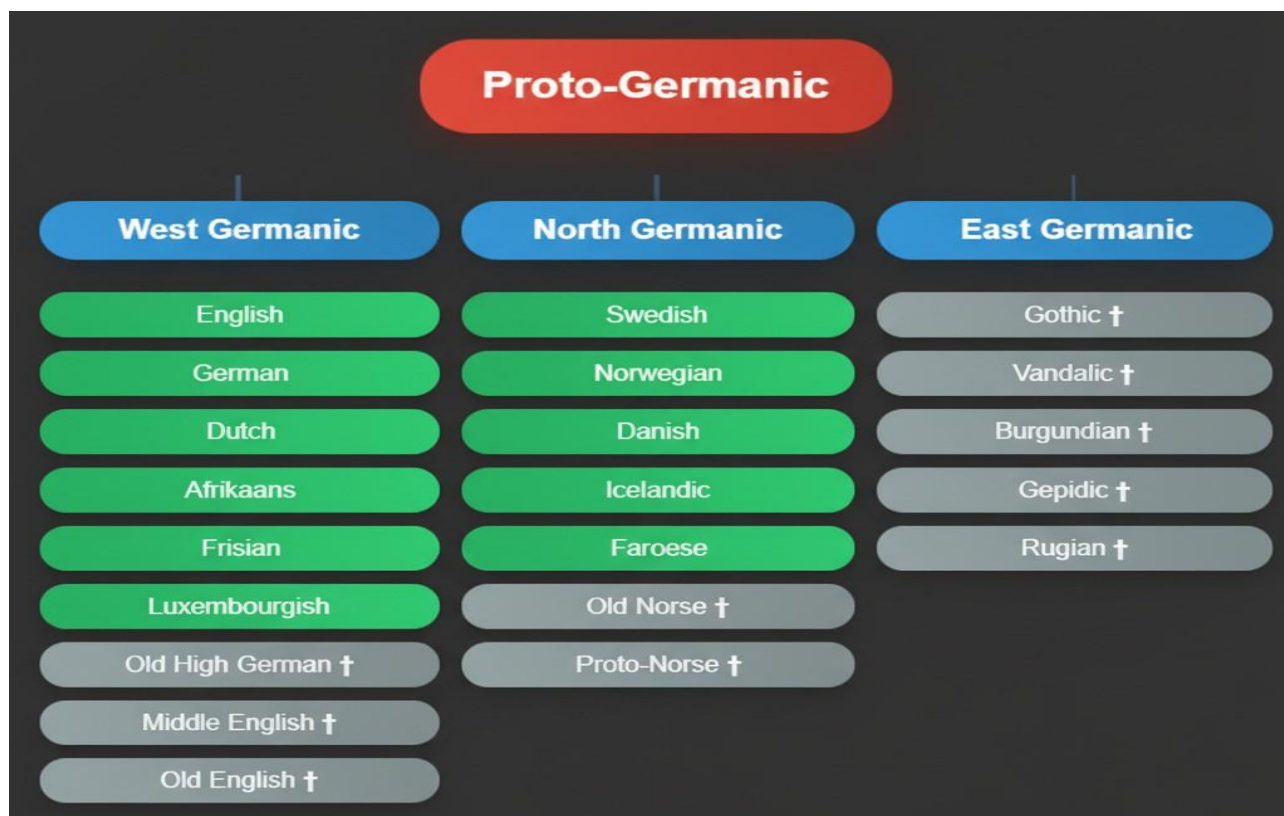
Pic. 52 – *World Language Families of Non-Indo-European Origin.*



English, which finds its place on the Indo-European family tree by tracing a path through the Germanic branch to its West Germanic twig, has the Eastern Germanic cousin, now extinct, that is interesting for us only as a comparative tool, a linguistic fossil useful for reconstructing prehistoric sound changes and morphological innovations. Various Germanic tribes, among them the Goths, Vandals, Lombards, Franks, Frisians, Teutons, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Scandinavians, spoke Germanic dialects across the frontier regions bordering the Roman Empire. Despite their differences, these people shared distinctive grammatical and phonological traits. As the tribes migrated and encountered new linguistic surroundings, their languages evolved and underwent significant change.

Pic. 53 – The Germanic division of the Indo-European family.

(The visualization employs a chromatic distinction, within which green indicates currently spoken languages, while gray marked with † denotes languages no longer in use).



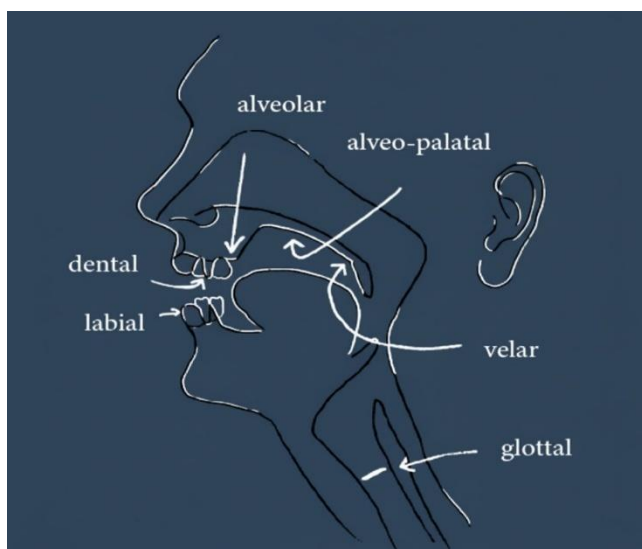
Proto-Germanic formed a rich body of vocabulary not found in earlier Indo-European, covering a wide range of semantic fields: animals (*bear, bull, boar, hound, dove, horse, lamb, sheep, ram, toad*); plants (*berry, leek, oak, oat, reed, weed*); parts of the body (*back, body, bone, brain, cheek, finger, liver, neck, shoulder, skull, toe, womb*); descriptive adjectives (*broad, dear, dim, grey, idle, narrow*); social and familial terms (*bride, child, king, wife*); words related to buildings, travel, materials, and warfare (*bow, gate, house, lane, path, roof, sail, sea, ship, shoe, silver, steel, tin, weapon*); as well as numerous everyday verbs and abstract notions (*buy, begin, dream, drink, drive, dwarf, flee, ground, ice, leap, luck, mood, race, shake, soul, start, steal, steam, swell, swallow, thing, top, trend, wonder*).

The first divide produced Proto-Germanic in the lands between southern Scandinavia and northern Germany, which then fragmented into three branches: East, West, and North Germanic. West Germanic underwent further division, resulting in the Anglo-Frisian cluster, which covers both Frisian and English. During the Migration

Period, as Roman power declined, Anglo-Saxon migrations brought the Anglic language to Britain. This migration laid the foundation for Modern English, marking the culmination of a long genealogical path from Proto-Indo-European to the present-day language.

The Germanic group wears the “centum” badge in the Indo-European family portrait. The name was derived from the Latin word for “hundred,” which features an ancient consonant mutation process.

Pic. 54 – Places of Articulation.



Articulation location indicates where airflow is restricted during speech production. This includes: the lips for labial consonants [p, b, m, f, v]; the teeth for dental sounds [θ, ð]; the alveolar ridge (the bump behind the upper teeth) for alveolar consonants [t, d, n, s, z, l, r]; the front portion of the palate for alveo-palatal sounds [ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ]; the palate for [j]; the rear section of the palate for velar consonants [k, g, ŋ]; and the glottis for glottal sounds [h]. Most consonants form voiced-voiceless pairs based on whether the laryngeal vocal folds vibrate during production. For example, [f] and [s] lack voicing, while [v] and [z] are voiced. This distinction can be detected by placing a finger on the throat and

switching between producing a continuous [s] sound and a continuous [z] sound⁶.

As a result, we receive the following table based on the English sounds:

Pic. 55 – The English Consonants (*w is seen as labio-velar).

PLACE \ MANNER	STOP	FRICATIVE	AFFRICATE	NASAL	LIQUID
Labial	p / b	f / v	-	m	-
Dental	-	θ / ð	-	-	-
Alveolar	t / d	s / z	-	n	l, r
Alveo-palatal	-	ʃ / ʒ	tʃ / dʒ	-	-
Velar	k / g	-	-	ŋ	-
Glottal	ʔ	h	-	-	-

⁶ **Glossary:**

1) When closure of the air-passage is air-tight, consonants are called **stops** (or ‘plosives’, or ‘occlusives’): thus [b] and [p], [d] and [t], [g] and [k].

2) When closure is only partial, they are called **spirants** (or ‘fricatives’): [v] and [f], [s] and [z].

3) With [l] and [r], partial closure occurs without audible friction, and these sounds are, therefore, often classified separately, usually under the name **liquids**.

The centum camp, clustering in the western Proto-Indo-European homeland, gathers together Italic, Greek, Celtic, and Germanic families. Across the linguistic landscape, the eastern “*satem*” languages, derived from the Avestan term meaning “hundred”, are distinguished by a specific consonantal development. In some Indo-European languages, the original palatal *k*-sounds changed in a regular way. This sound pattern became typical of the Balto-Slavic and Indo-Iranian subfamilies. The break occurred at the Proto-Indo-European level, which had three kinds of *k* sounds. In *centum* languages, the palatal sounds merged with the plain *k* sounds, while in *satem* languages, they changed into hissing *s*-like sounds. Although modern research shows that this division is not perfectly clear-cut, since some language branches blur the lines and others, like Anatolian and Tocharian, do not fit neatly, linguists still use the *centum/satem* distinction as a helpful basic framework in Indo-European studies.

Pic. 56 – *The Centum-Satem Divide.*

CENTUM	SATEM
From Latin: “ <i>kentum</i> ” (hundred)	From Avestan: “ <i>satəm</i> ” (hundred)
WESTERN INDO-EUROPEAN	EASTERN INDO-EUROPEAN
Sound change: PIE <i>k̑</i> → merged with <i>k</i>	Sound change: PIE <i>k̑</i> → sibilants (<i>s, ś, ṣ</i>)
ITALIC (Western Mediterranean) <i>Latin, Italian, French, Spanish</i>	BALTO-SLAVIC (Eastern Europe) <i>Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Polish, Czech, Serbian</i>
CELTIC (British Isles) <i>Irish, Welsh, Breton</i>	INDO-IRANIAN (South Asia, Iran) <i>Persian, Hindi, Bengali, Sanskrit, Avestan</i>
GERMANIC (Northern and Western Europe) <i>English, German, Dutch, Swedish</i>	NOTE: Armenian also exhibits satem features.
GREEK (Southern Balkans) <i>Ancient & Modern Greek</i>	
EXCEPTIONS	
Don't fit the pattern	
ANATOLIAN <i>Hittite, Luwian (extinct)</i> Preserves all three PIE velar series.	TOCHARIAN (Western China) <i>Tocharian A & B (extinct)</i> Centum features in the east.

English traces its ancestry to Proto-Indo-European through a cascade of linguistic splits. The first layer of splits occurs as the Germanic languages begin to

develop. The initial significant transformations observable across Germanic languages as a whole constitute the series of changes that occurred when these languages diverged from Proto-Indo-European. As a result, we receive a set of differences between the entire Germanic system and the Indo-European proto-language, which serves as the mother language or language source.

The condition of the Germanic languages and their variations was solidified in preserved texts that date back to specific points in history. These sources are scarce due to the general illiteracy of the population, as runic letters, believed to hold magical power, were predominantly incised by the initiated. Another factor was the natural difficulty of preserving the manuscripts over time, due to the material on which they were written and the historical conditions that led to wars, fires, and devastating conquests.

Pic. 57 – *Earliest Recorded Germanic Languages.*

Earliest Recorded Germanic Languages				
№	LINGUISTIC SYSTEM or SCRIPT	DATE RANGE	BRANCH	REMARKS
1	Runic Inscriptions	200-1200+	Various	Script used for multiple Germanic varieties.
2	Gothic	350-700	East Germanic	Bible translation by Wulfila.
3	Old English	700-1150	West Germanic	Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.
4	Old High German	750-1050	West Germanic	Earliest German literary texts.
5	Old Norse	800-1350	North Germanic	Common North Germanic literary language.
6	Old Saxon	850-1200	West Germanic	Low German variety.
7	Middle Dutch	1150-1500	West Germanic	Standard term for medieval Dutch.
8	Old Frisian	1200-1550	West Germanic	Legal and administrative texts.

CORE FEATURES OF THE GERMANIC BRANCH. SHARED PHONETIC DEVELOPMENTS.

The transition from Proto-Indo-European to Proto-Germanic involved systematic slides visible across multiple linguistic dimensions. Proto-Indo-European featured **movable stress** that could fall on any morpheme, whether root, prefix, or suffix, and **had a musical, pitch-based quality**. Proto-Germanic standardized this into **fixed initial-syllable stress**, characterized by **dynamic, breath-driven force** rather than tonal variation. This transformation affected vowel length and quality: stressed syllables preserved long vowels and lengthened short ones, whereas unstressed syllables shortened long vowels. Germanic fixed stress placement favors the initial root syllables. Words with two syllables consequently paired a stressed root with an unstressed ending, while longer words showed a gradual reduction in stress that still allowed intermediate syllables sufficient prominence to preserve their acoustic clarity. This pattern restructuring became essential following the subsequent grammatical transformation of English from a synthetic (inflectional) to an **analytic** (word-order-dependent) grammar. The major phonological innovation in Germanic involved a shift in both the quality and position of Indo-European stress, resulting in homophonous forms with different meanings.

Pic. 58 – *Major Linguistic Changes in the Transition from Proto-Indo-European to Proto-Germanic.*

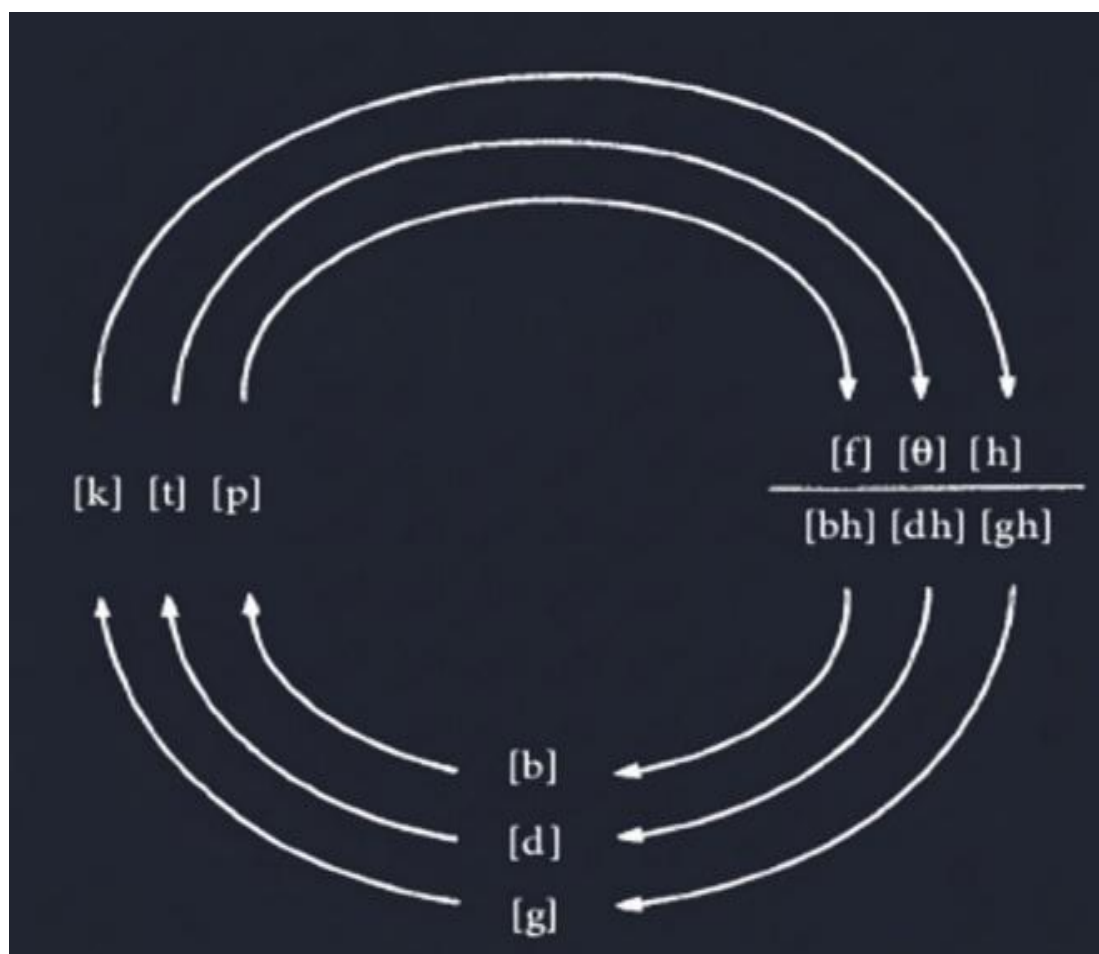


The shift from mobile pitch accent to fixed stress, similar to the Consonant Shift known in linguistics as **Grimm's Law**, lacks a definite chronological marker. The First Consonant Shift, as articulated and analyzed by Jacob Grimm in 1822, represents a regular pattern of phonetic changes that occurred as Germanic languages diverged from Proto-Indo-European. This process is conventionally segmented into three successive phases:

1. *Proto-Indo-European voiceless stops transformed into voiceless fricatives.*
2. *Proto-Indo-European voiced stops shifted to voiceless stops.*
3. *Proto-Indo-European voiced aspirated stops evolved into voiced stops or fricatives (functioning as variant pronunciations of the same sound).*

These stages collectively illustrate the fundamental phonological transformation that set the development of the Germanic languages apart from their Indo-European origin.

Pic. 59 – The pattern of changes constituting Grimm's Law.



Pic. 60 – *The Acts of Grimm's Law.*

ACT	IE CONSONANTS	PG CONSONANTS	MODELS
I	[p, t, k]	[f, θ, h]	Lat. p iscis, Goth. f isks, OE f isc (Mod.E fish) Lat. t res, Ukr. т ри, OE þ rie (Mod.E three) Lat. c or (cord), OE h eorte (Mod.E heart)
II	[b, d, g]	[p, t, k]	Ukr. б олото, OE p ōl (Mod.E pool) Ukr. д ерево, OE t rēo (Mod.E tree) Rus. г оре, OE c aru (Mod. E care)
III	[bh, dh, gh]	[b, d, g]	Sans. b hrata, OE br ōðor (Mod.E brother) Sans. vidh ava, OE wid ve (Mod.E widow) IE lagh , OE lic ean (Mod.E lie)

At the time Grimm's Law was originally expressed as a phonetic formula, researchers noticed peculiar exceptions to its patterns. In consonant sequences, only the first consonant was transformed according to the initial stage of Grimm's Law, while the second remained unchanged, exemplified by Latin *octo* evolving into Old English *eahta* (Modern English *eight*). The most systematic exception, however, involved consonants that appeared after *s*. While Grimm's Law typically shifted Proto-Indo-European voiceless stops (*p, t, k*) into voiceless fricatives (*f, þ, h*) in Germanic languages, this transformation was blocked when these stops followed an *s*. The sibilant effectively shielded the subsequent consonant from the shift, preserving the original stop unchanged. This phenomenon explains numerous correspondences between Latin and English. Where Latin *pater* becomes English *father* (with *p* → *f*), while Latin *spina* yields *spine* with the *sp* cluster intact. Similarly, while Latin *tres* transforms into *three* (with *t* → *þ*), Latin *stare* produces *stand* with *st* preserved. The pattern holds for velars as well: Greek *kardia* becomes *heart* (with *k* → *h*), but Latin *scala* gives *scale* with *sk* unchanged. These pairs, *father/spade*, *three/stand*,

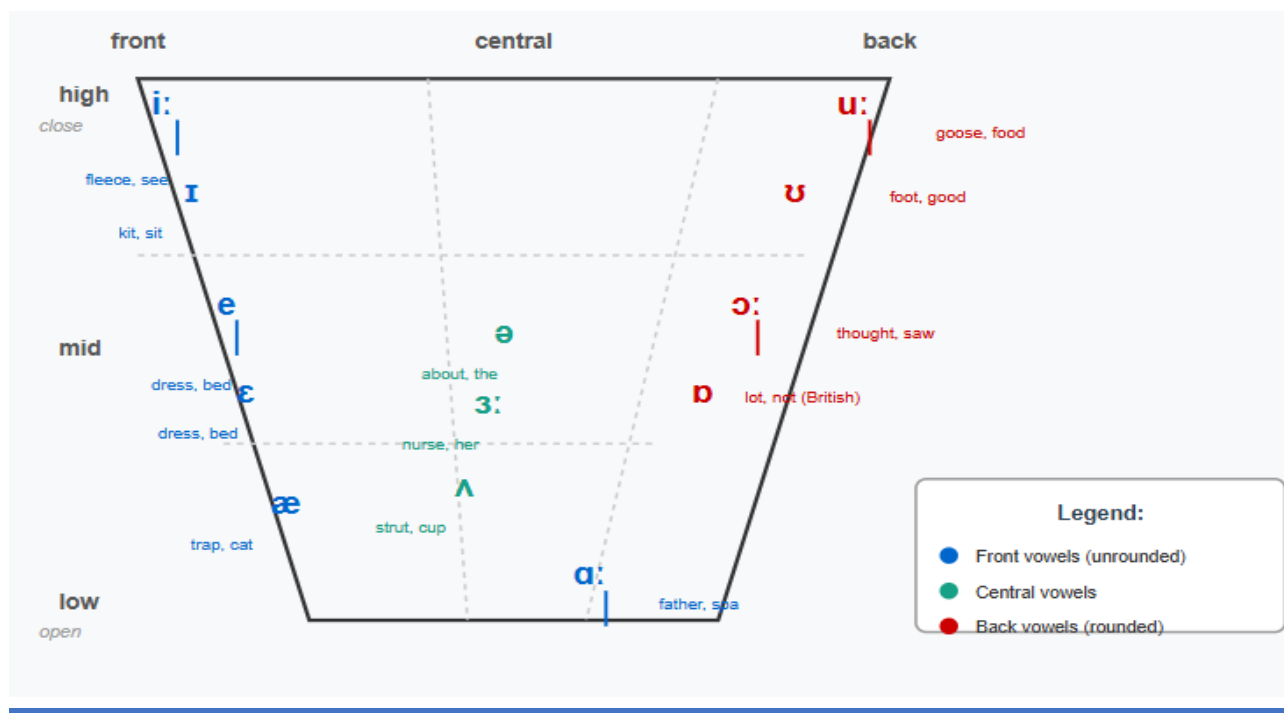
heart/scale, demonstrate how the presence of a preceding sibilant created a stable phonetic environment that resisted the otherwise regular consonant shifts of Grimm's Law. This *s-exception* is one of the clearest examples of how phonetic context can override general sound-change patterns in historical linguistics. Furthermore, certain Germanic words displayed Indo-European voiceless stops becoming voiced stops instead of the anticipated fricatives, such as *[t]* shifting to *[ð]* in Latin *māter*, leading to Old English *mōðor*. Danish linguist Karl Verner resolved this puzzle in 1875, with the discovery subsequently termed **Verner's Law**. Verner concluded that stress placement was the determining factor, showing that when a voiceless stop followed an originally stressed vowel in Proto-Indo-European, it became a fricative in the first stage of Grimm's Law. However, when the stop came after an unstressed vowel, the resulting fricative was voiced and subsequently developed into a voiced stop in the final stage of Grimm's Law. This provided a pattern, $[t > \theta > \delta > d]$: Sanskrit *pitar* > Proto-Germanic *faðar* > Old English *fæder* (Modern English *father*).

NOTA BENE

According to Verner's Law, during the era of mobile stress, voiceless fricatives were voiced when they followed an unstressed vowel.

The Germanic vowel system also underwent significant transformations. However, to understand these changes, it is essential to be familiar with the characteristics of vowels and the nature of their formation in present-day English.

Pic. 61 – *English Vowels Chart*.



THE DOMINANT PHONETIC SLIDES AFFECTING THE WEST-GERMANIC LANGUAGES TAKE IN:

1. *Consonant doubling* (gemination) – all consonants excluding [r] underwent doubling when occurring between a short vowel and the [j] sound, and sometimes [l]. This [j] could later vanish: Gothic *saljan*, *teljan* shifted to Old English *sellan*, *tellan*, ultimately becoming Modern English *sell*, *tell*. This mirrors patterns in Russian *веселье*, *знание* and Ukrainian *весілля*, *знання*. By contrast, [r] stayed unaltered: Gothic *arjan* became Old English *erian* (meaning “to plough”), comparable to Russian *перья* and Ukrainian *пір'я*.

2. *Rhotacism* – a common sound change wherein the voiced fricative [z] is transformed into [r] via the sequence [s] > [z] > [r]: *wæs* contrasted with *wæron* (derived from *wæson*); Gothic *maize* became Old English *marā*.

3. *Alterations of Proto-Germanic diphthongs*. Proto-Germanic contained a diphthong system that underwent systematic changes as it diverged into individual Germanic daughter languages.

Pic. 62 – *The Modification within the System of Proto-Germanic Diphthongs* (Proto-Germanic diphthongs underwent systematic transformations as the language evolved into Old English, with most diphthongs either monophthongizing or developing into new diphthong patterns depending on phonetic environment and vowel quality).

PROTO-GERMANIC <i>ai</i> → OLD ENGLISH <i>ā</i> / <i>æ</i>			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
stainaz	stains	stān	stone
<i>ai</i> → <i>ā</i> monophthongization			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
hailaz	hails	hāl	whole / hale
<i>ai</i> → <i>ā</i> in most environments			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
raidō	raidar	rādro	road
<i>ai</i> → <i>ā</i> regular development			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
laisjan	laisjan	læran	learn
<i>ai</i> → <i>æ</i> with <i>i</i> -umlaut			

PROTO-GERMANIC <i>au</i> → OLD ENGLISH <i>ēa</i> / <i>ā</i>			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
hlaupan	hlaupan	hlēapan	leap
<i>au</i> → <i>ēa</i> (breaking context)			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
auzō	auzo	ēaze	eye
<i>au</i> → <i>ēa</i> before <i>g</i>			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
zlaupaz	—	zlēaw	wise
<i>au</i> → <i>ēa</i> developments			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
sauro-	sārs	—	sore
<i>au</i> → <i>ā</i> (no breaking)			

PROTO-GERMANIC EU → OLD ENGLISH ēo / īo			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
deupaz	diups	dēop	deep
<i>eu → ēo regular change</i>			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
hleupan-	—	hlēopan	leap
<i>eu → ēo (variant of leap)</i>			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
þeudō	þiuda	þēod	people
<i>eu → ēo development</i>			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
leuhtam	liuhap	hlēoht	light
<i>eu → ēo before h</i>			

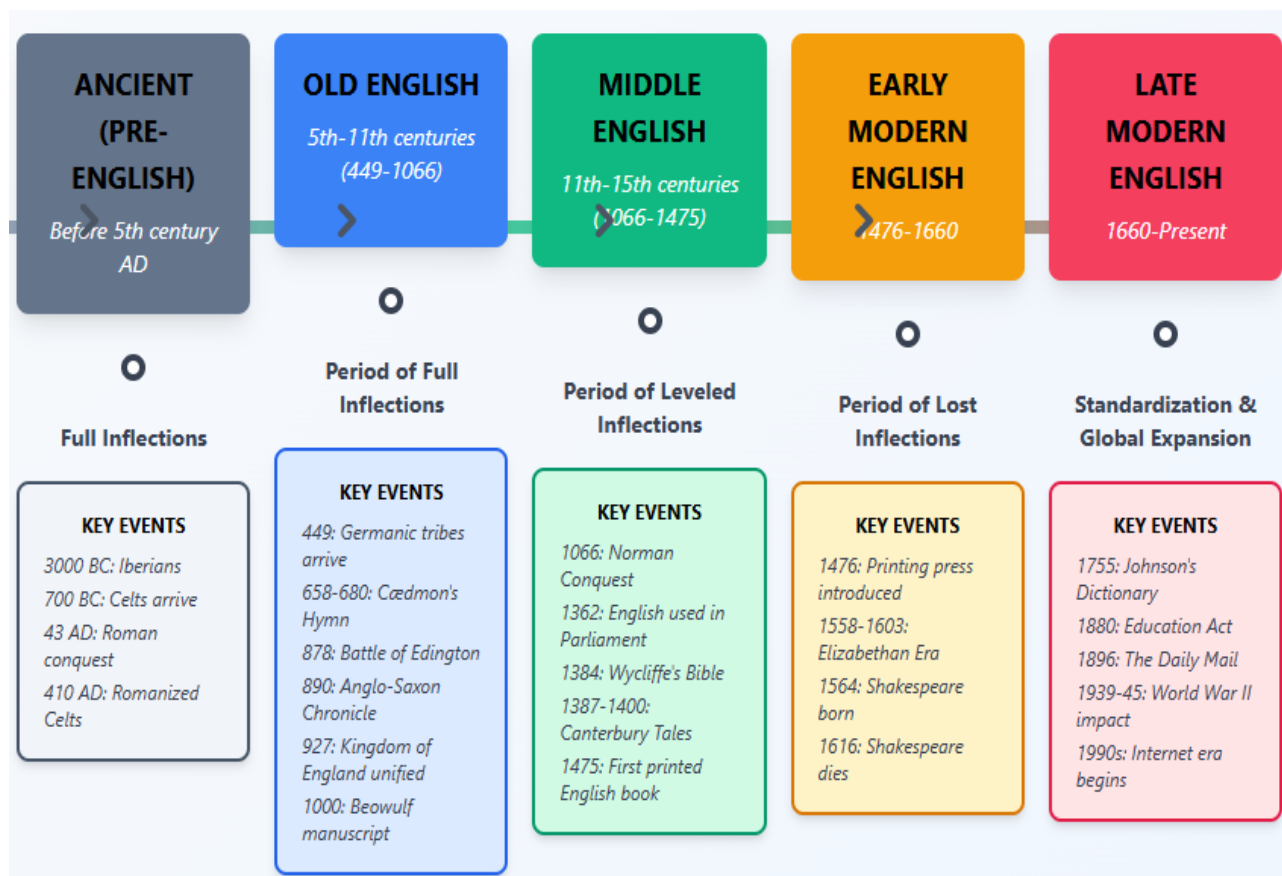
PROTO-GERMANIC IU → OLD ENGLISH ēo / īo			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
kiusan	kiusan	cēosan	choose
<i>iu → ēo monophthongization</i>			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
liuhtam	liuhap	lioht	light
<i>iu → īo variant</i>			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
biudan	biudan	bēodan	bid
<i>iu → ēo regular change</i>			
PROTO-GMC	GOTHIC	OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENG.
tiuhant	tiuhant	tēon	draw / pull
<i>iu → ēo with consonant loss</i>			

These shifts proved especially significant in the evolution toward Old English and other West Germanic varieties.

Sound systems transformed through Grimm's Law and related changes. Intricate Proto-Indo-European consonant clustering and extensive vowel system, including multiple long vowels and diphthongs, giving way to a simplified consonantal system and reduced vowels in unstressed positions in Proto-Germanic.

The FORMATION OF THE ENGLISH language began when a part of the Germanic tribes settled in the British of Archipelago and dominated. The language was born in blood and is marked by the distinct stages of development.

Pic. 63 – *The Chronology of English Language Formation.*



The language of the old stage was shaped by a set of processes that occurred within its language system but were absent in other Germanic languages.

THE PHONOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD.

THE FORMATION OF OE.

1) *Anglo-Frisian Brightening* occurs in Old English and Frisian, when Proto-Germanic [a] was fronted to [æ] in certain environments, specifically before nasals: *mann* → *mann* (the last word started to be pronounced with [æ]).

2) *The mixing of [o] and [a]*. The shift between [o] and [a] is a characteristic phonological development within West Germanic, most clearly noticeable in Anglo-Saxon varieties. This vowel phenomenon can be traced to the branch-specific transformation of Proto-Germanic [a] across the Germanic branches. While East Germanic (Gothic) and North Germanic (Old Norse) generally preserved the vowel as [a], West Germanic restructured the system, making conditioned fluctuations between [a] and [o]. The process was launched by Anglo-Frisian brightening, which fronted Proto-Germanic [a] to [æ] except for the pre-nasal and pre-labial positions, and *o*-umlaut (labial rounding), which backed [a] to [o] under the influence of adjacent labial

consonants or back vowels. This triggered the formation of characteristic Old English patterns, such as *mann* (preserving [a] before nasals) versus *dæg* (exhibiting fronting), alongside morphophonemic pairs like *singan/song*, which demonstrate labial conditioning. Old English extended this West Germanic tendency beyond its continental twins, displaying clear regional variation with competing forms, such as *mon/man* and *hwonne/hwanne*, manifested across manuscript traditions. While Old Saxon and Old High German demonstrate comparable but more limited [a] → [o] shifts, generally restricted to pre-nasal and pre-labial contexts, Old English developed the most extensive and systematic variation pattern within West Germanic. This was amplified by unique Anglo-Frisian developments and subsequently reinforced through Middle English vowel fusion, producing the [o] ~ [a] shift as a characteristically Anglo manifestation of wider West Germanic sound changes, rather than a pan-Germanic feature.

3) *Breaking* is a process in Old English whereby short vowels develop into brief diphthongs when they appear before certain consonant clusters. Specifically, the short vowel [æ] becomes [ea] before combinations of *r*, *l*, or *h* followed by another consonant, as well as before word-final *h*. This accounts for forms such as *ærm* → *earm*, *æld* → *eald*, *æhta* → *eahta*, and *sæh* → *seah*. The short vowel [e] undergoes a parallel shift to [eo], though in a somewhat more restricted set of environments: before *r* plus a consonant, before *lc* and *lh*, before *h* plus a consonant, and before word-final *h*. Representative examples include *herte* → *heorte*, *melcan* → *meolcan*, *selh* → *seolh*, and *feh* → *feoh*.

4) *I-mutation* or *palatal mutation* (also called *umlauting*, *front mutation*, or *i/j-umlaut*) represents a regular sound shift in which vowels within a root syllable undergo modification triggered by phonemes present in the succeeding syllable [i], [ī], or [j] (the <y> sound as in “yes”). Specifically, this process causes back vowels to move forward in the mouth and front vowels to rise to a higher articulatory position.

This process is an example of regressive assimilation, in which a sound modification happens backward from a following syllable to affect a preceding one. This mechanism illustrates how neighboring phonemes can influence one another

across syllable boundaries, resulting in systematic shifts that later acquired morphological significance and led to vowel harmony. In languages such as Old English, *i-mutation* played a functional role in marking grammatical distinctions, for instance, between singular and plural forms (*foot-feet, goose-geese*).

Pic. 64 – Examples of Palatal Mutation.

[o], [a] → [e]				
Linguistic Variety	Form	Articulation	Today's English	Details
Gothic	<i>Anʒlisc</i>	[ˈaŋʒlɪsk]	-	Original form with [a]
Old English	<i>Enʒlisc</i>	[ˈeŋɡliʃ]	English	[a] → [e] due to following [i]

[u] → [y]				
Linguistic Variety	Form	Articulation	Today's English	Details
Old High German	<i>kuninʒ</i>	[ˈkuniŋ]	-	Original [u] preserved
Gothic	<i>muzis</i>	[ˈmuːzɪs]	-	Original [u] with [i] in ending
Old English	<i>cyninʒ</i>	[ˈkyniŋɡ]	king	[u] → [y] due to [i]
Old English	<i>mys</i>	[myːs]	mice	[u] → [y] due to [i]

[ea], [eo] → [ie]				
Source Vowel	Old English Form	Mutated Form	Today's English	Details
ea	<i>heard</i>	<i>hierd</i>	herd	[ea] → [ie] before [i]
ea	<i>hearʒ</i>	<i>bierd</i>	herd	[eo] → [ie] before [i]
eo	<i>beoʒ</i>	<i>bierʒ</i>	-	[eo] → [ie] before [i]

[ēa], [ēo] → [īe]				
Vowel	English Form	Mutated Form	Today's English	Details
ēa	<i>dēad</i>	<i>dīed</i>	no form. *however, me dēd → dead.	Long [ēa] → [īe]
ēo	<i>dēord</i>	<i>dīerde</i>	deer	[ēo] → [īe] before [i]

The impact of *palatal mutation on modern English is evident* in several forms of word structure, particularly in plural formation and derivational morphology. Historical vowel fronting explains irregular plurals such as *man* → *men*, *mouse* → *mice*, *goose* → *geese*, *tooth* → *teeth*, and *foot* → *feet*, *brother* – *brethren* (meaning *brothers in Christ*), where the root vowel changes rather than simply adding an ending. Similar effects appear in derived words, as seen in pairs like *long* → *length*, *strong* → *strength*, *broad* → *breadth*, *full* → *fill*, and *blood* → *bleed*, which reflect earlier morphological processes that altered the vowel of the base form. Comparative and abstract formations

also preserve traces of mutation, for example, *old* → *elder*, *late* → *latter*, *deep* → *depth*, and *wide* → *width*. Although palatal mutation is no longer a productive process in contemporary English, these surviving patterns demonstrate its historical influence on the language's vocabulary and grammatical development.

5) *Nasal consonants were often lost before fricatives* such as [f, θ, s], a systematic change that typically caused the preceding vowel to become nasalized and lengthened. For instance, in Old High German, the word *fimf* lost its nasal element and became Old English *fiƿ*, which survives in Modern English as *five*. In addition, consonants in unstressed final syllables were frequently weakened or dropped: the semivowel [j] was regularly removed from suffixes, and this deletion often produced further alterations in the vowel of the root syllable. Such processes of consonant erosion and compensatory vowel change contributed to the evolution of English morphology and phonology over time.

6) *Old English eliminated final -n* in many grammatical endings earlier than other Germanic languages, which preserved the consonant for a longer period.

Pic. 65 – The Reduction of Nasal Endings throughout the Old English Stage.

Grammatical Category	Gothic	Old High German	Old English	Definition
Infinitive	<i>niman</i>	<i>neman</i>	<i>nime</i>	"to take"
Infinitive	<i>ninan</i>	<i>zēban</i>	<i>zief</i>	"to give"
Infinitive	<i>ziban</i>	<i>bintan</i>	<i>binde</i>	"to give"
Infinitive	<i>bindan</i>	<i>bimtan</i>	<i>binde</i>	"blind"
Acc. S3. Masc.	<i>blindana</i>	<i>blintanz</i>	<i>blind</i>	"good"
Acc. S3. Masc.	<i>zōdana</i>	<i>zuoton</i>	<i>zōd</i>	"the blind one"
Weak Adj.	<i>blindan</i>	<i>blinton</i>	<i>blinda</i>	"the blind one"
Weak Adj.	<i>zōdana</i>	<i>zuotonz</i>	<i>zōda</i>	"the good one"
1st Pl. Present	<i>nimam</i>	<i>nemames</i>	<i>snima</i>	"we take"
1st Pl. Present	<i>zibam</i>	<i>zebames</i>	<i>zifa</i>	"we give"
Dat. Pl.	<i>blindaim</i>	<i>blintom</i>	<i>blindum</i>	"to the blind ones"
Dat. Pl.	<i>zōdaim</i>	<i>zuotom</i>	<i>zōdum</i>	"to the good ones"
Past Participle	<i>numans</i>	<i>zinomann</i>	<i>numen</i>	"taken"
Past Participle	<i>zibans</i>	<i>zizeban</i>	<i>ziefen</i>	"given"

7) *H-loss and compensatory lengthening* in Old English describes a sound change whereby the consonant [h] was deleted in certain environments, and the vowel before it was lengthened to make up for the loss of the consonantal segment.

Pic. 66 – *Sound change involving the dropping of h and compensatory lengthening of the vowel in Old English.*

PROTO-GERMANIC	EARLY OLD ENGLISH	LATE OLD ENGLISH	MODERN ENGLISH	DETAILS
sehs	sehss	six	six	[h] lost before [s], vowel lengthened
nēahm	nēahm	ēnigh/near	-	[h] lost word-finally
hēah	hēah	hē	high	[h] lost word-finally, vowel lengthened
þurh	þurh	þōr	through	[h] lost finally, [u] lengthened
feoh	feoh	fē	fee	[h] lost finally, diphthong simplified
sceoh	sceoh	scō	shoe	[h] lost finally, diphthong → long vowel
tēoht	tēoht	tē-	-	[h] lost finally (archaic "draw, pull")
hleahtor	hleahtor	hleā- / hlæter	laughter	[h] lost in cluster, vowel changes

8) *The palatalization of velar consonants.* The transformation of velar consonants into palatalized forms in Germanic languages was closely linked to the distinctive stress patterns found in these languages, where emphasis typically fell on root syllables rather than prefixes. This stress placement resulted in significant phonetic slides in prefixed words, which manifest themselves through the Old English prefix *ȝe- [je]*. This prefix, originally matching the Gothic form *ȝa-*, went through an early vowel shift that established the phonological conditions required for palatalization to occur. The velar sound [g] underwent palatalization to [j] due to the influence of the front vowel that had developed in the unstressed prefix position. Throughout the Middle English period, the phenomenon of palatalization underwent additional changes,

involving further phonological weakening. The palatalized [j] consonant and the adjacent front vowel gradually fused together to form a simple [i] vowel. This transformation is evident in examples such as the Middle English word “yriden” (a past participle form), which evolved from the Old English “*zeriden*,” demonstrating how the original palatal consonant and vowel merged completely into a single vowel sound. While prefixes in Germanic languages generally lacked stress, some prefixed words could occasionally bear full stress, which would modify their phonological evolution. However, the standard pattern of prefix reduction and palatalization represents the dominant trend in the phonological history of Old and Middle English.

In Old English, velar consonants underwent palatalization under three separate phonological conditions, each defined by the position of the consonant within the word.

a) *Word-Initial Position*. When the velar consonants [k] and [g] occurred word-initially, they would shift toward a palatal articulation if the following vowel was a front vowel, though there was one key exception: front vowels that had arisen through *i-umlaut* were excluded from triggering this process. This restriction wasn't limited to word-initial position but held across the entire word. The word *child* illustrates the pattern well: the [k] at its beginning is palatalized because it stood before the front vowel [i], yielding the sound we still hear in the modern form “*child*.”

b) *Word-Internal (Medial) Position*. Inside words, the palatalization of velars followed more intricate rules. Both [k] and [g] underwent palatalization when they preceded the high front vowel [i] or the palatal glide [j]. However, [g] proved more susceptible to fronting influences than [k], as it also palatalized when surrounded by front vowels on either side, regardless of vowel height. This position within the word, flanked by front vowels, gave rise to the most complicated palatalization patterns found anywhere in the phonological system.

c) *Word-Final Position*. Velar consonants in word-final position behaved in different ways depending on the language and context. In Old English, [k] was susceptible to palatalization when a front vowel preceded it, while [g] followed the same pattern after front vowels in both Old English and Old Frisian, a parallel development that points to a shared history between these two closely related

languages. The word *spræc* [spræ̃k] → [spræ̃k'] demonstrates this: its final [k] shifted toward a palatal articulation following the front vowel [æ̃], eventually yielding the modern form "speech." The word *sprecan*, by contrast, shows [k] resisting palatalization because the surrounding vowel context was different: a back vowel was present, which effectively blocked the change, as we can see in the modern descendant "speak." The principle underlying all of these patterns is consistent: the velars [k], [g], [x], and [ɣ] tended to palatalize when they were adjacent to front vowels, unless a back vowel appearing later in the word intervened and prevented the process from taking effect.

9) *Voicing of fricatives* developed as a regular phonological mechanism in Old English through which voiceless fricative consonants gained voicing under certain phonetic circumstances. This voicing transformation influenced the anterior fricatives [f], [θ], and [s], converting them to [v], [ð], and [z] when situated in an entirely voiced phonetic context, on condition that the main stress occupied the foregoing syllable. Significantly, these articulated forms [v, ð, z] functioned as pronunciation variants determined by context (allophones) of the base voiceless phonemes [f, θ, s], rather than establishing distinct sound categories. This pattern of voicing continued to operate stably through the early Middle English phase, producing regular pronunciation distinctions within morphologically related words. Evidence for this phenomenon can be found in many word pairs in which a shared lexical root alternates between fricative pronunciations based on phonetic context. Characteristic Middle English illustrations enumerate: *wulf* – *wulfes* [wʊlf – wʊlvəs] "wolf – wolves," *paþ* – *papes* [paθ/paðəs] "path – paths," and *hūs* – *hūses* [hu:s/hu:zəs] "house – houses." The configuration also manifested in adjectival constructions like *half* – *halfe* [half – halvə] "half" and *wrāþ* – *wrāþe* [wra:θ – wra:ðə] "angry," together with verbal inflections such as *drīfen* – *drāf* [dri:vən – dra:f] "to drive – drove" and *queþen* – *quap* [kwɛðən – kwaθ] "to say – said." This homegrown variation pattern in English received significant reinforcement from Old French lexical imports, which presented parallel voicing contrasts in pairs like *us* – *user* "use – to use" and *sauf* – *sauver* "safe – to save." A large number of these interrelated borrowings were assimilated into English throughout

the thirteenth century or previously, including *grief* – *grieve* and *strife* – *strive* (appearing in the *Ancrene Riwe*, around 1200), *advice* – *advise* (found in Robert of Gloucester’s 1297 chronicle), plus additional thirteenth-century pairs such as *safe* – *save*, *use* – *(to) use*, and *device* – *devise*. The trajectory extended with *relief* – *relieve* appearing in the fourteenth century, showing how French vocabulary reinforced the already-established English phonological framework. Over time, Old English developed a wide-ranging repertoire of vowel and consonant sounds, with every phoneme actively employed in daily conversation.

The vowel palette of Old English was highly symmetrical, based on two essential types (simple vowels and diphthongs), both of which existed in short and extended durations. The set of simple vowels consisted of fourteen distinct sounds: seven short vowels *[a, æ, e, i, o, u, y]*, each paired with a long equivalent *[ā, ē, ē, ī, ō, ū, ŷ]*. Certain linguistic models recognize an additional vowel, *[ā]*. The blended vowel system offered eight sounds, split evenly between four shortened diphthongs *[ea, eo, ie, io]* and four lengthened diphthongs *[ēa, ēo, īe, īo]*, with usage patterns varying across these combinations.

The Old English consonant repertoire included several sounds now extinct in contemporary English. The system featured stops and affricates like *b, d, p*, and *t*, while the letter *c* shifted its pronunciation based on neighboring vowels, sounding as *[k]* alongside back vowels (*cū* “cow” *[ku:]*) but as *[tʃ]* near front vowels (*ċild* “child” *[tʃild]*). The letter *g* proved particularly adaptable in its pronunciation, emerging as *[g]* at word beginnings or following nasal consonants (*gōd* “good” *[go:d]*), yet frequently transforming into *[j]* or *[ɣ]* between vowels (*dæg* “day” *[dæj]*). The fricatives *f* and *s* demonstrated positional behavior, remaining voiceless (*[f]*, *[s]*) at word edges but gaining voice (*[v]*, *[z]*) in middle positions, evident in contrasts like *fisc* “fish” *[fisk]* against *hæfen* “haven” *[hæven]*, and *sēon* “see” *[se:on]* against *rīsan* “rise” *[ri:zan]*. The letter *h* produced *[h]* initially but shifted to *[χ]* or *[ç]* after vowels (*niht* “night” *[nixt]*). Both *þ* (thorn) and *ð* (eth) served as interchangeable symbols for the dental fricatives *[θ]* and *[ð]*, appearing in forms like *þorn* “thorn” *[θorn]* and *sēoþan* “seethe” *[se:oðan]*. The resonant consonants (*l, m, n*, and *r*) rounded out the system,

with *r* probably articulated as either a trilled [r] or tapped [ɾ] sound. Special characters like *ƿ* (wynn) denoted [w] (*peorc* “work” [work]), while the function later performed by *ȝ* (*yogh*) in Middle English fell to *g* in this earlier period. The uncommon letter *x* signaled [ks] or [hs] clusters (*fox* “fox” [foks]). Together, these elements reveal the phonological complexity and context-sensitive nature of early English consonants.

A defining feature of Old English spelling was its phonetic transparency since every written symbol corresponded to an actual spoken sound. Unlike Modern English, Old English contained no mute letters, meaning every vowel and consonant visible on the page received vocal expression. This established a far clearer connection between writing and pronunciation than modern readers experience today.

Thus, the OE phonological landscape can be summarized in a graph below.

Pic. 67 – Old English Phonological Changes.



The linguistic splits and changes that occurred within the Old English language system were partially solidified in the written monuments of various epochs. The

earliest traces of inscribed English are in runes, a common feature of the Germanic languages. They involve the 5th-century deer bone fragment found in a cremation vessel at Castor-by-Norwich, Norfolk, which is currently housed at Norwich Castle Museum. The *Undley Bracteate* is a small gold disc discovered in Suffolk in 1982 and dated to roughly 450–480 AD. It bears Anglo-Frisian runic inscriptions and features decorative motifs that suggest connections to southern Scandinavia. *The Franks Casket*, produced in Northumbria in the early eighth century, is a box carved from whalebone and now housed in the British Museum. Its imagery draws on Roman, Jewish, and Germanic traditions, and it preserves some of the earliest known Anglo-Saxon verse, rendered in both runic and Latin alphabets. *The Vespasian Psalter* was compiled around 750 in Canterbury and contains a Latin manuscript into which an English biblical translation, the oldest of its kind, was later inserted during the ninth century, reflecting the growing presence of English in religious and scholarly contexts.

The Will of King Alfred features the West Saxon dialect, linked to a precise historical date. The *Will* catalogs a wide range of locations spanning southern England, stretching from Cornwall to Sussex, and as a result, stands as an important source for understanding how places were named and understood in early medieval England

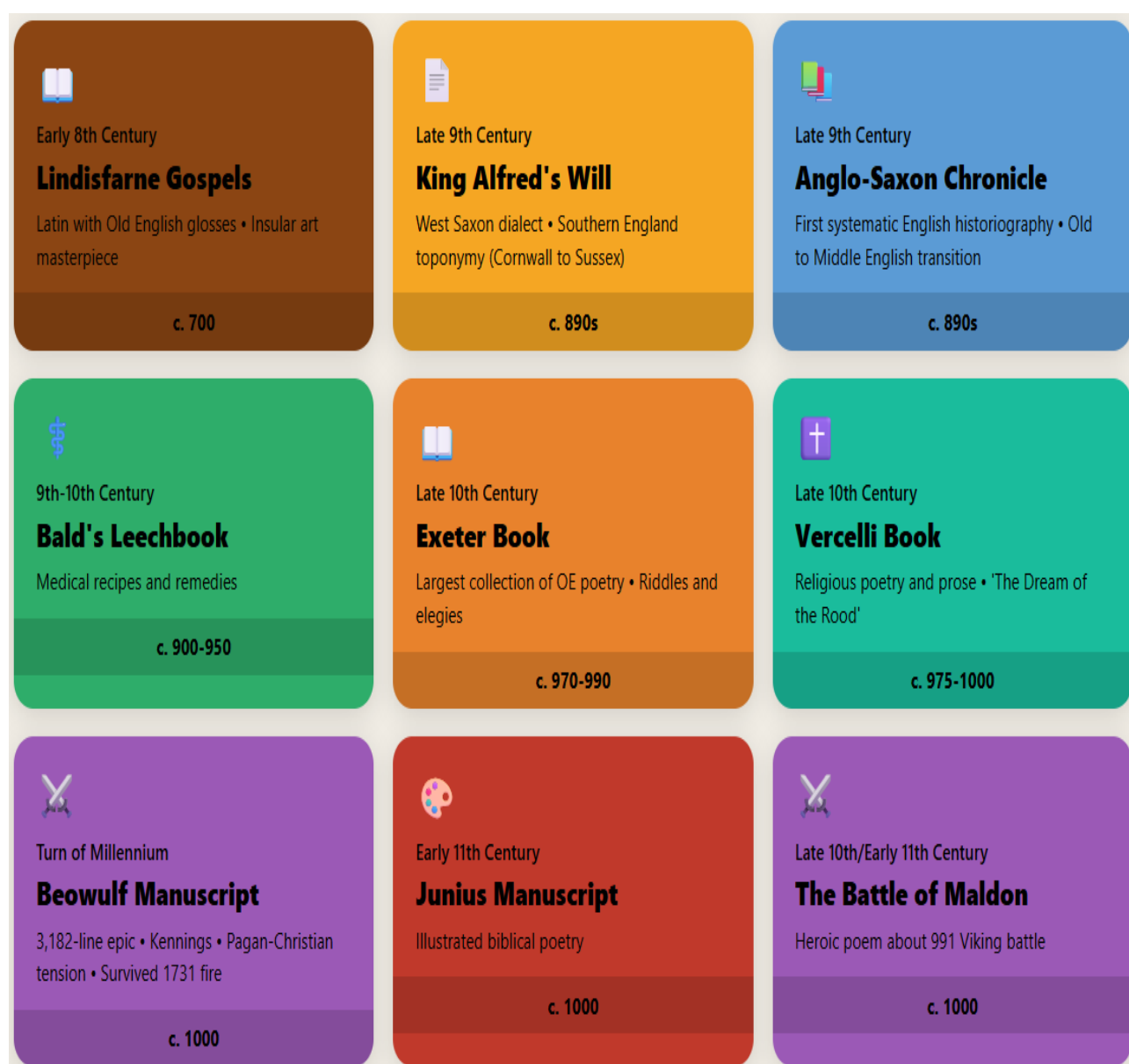
The *Beowulf* manuscript (c. 1000 CE) preserves the only existing copy of this 3,182-line Old English epic, considered the most significant literary work from Anglo-Saxon England. Two scribes copied the text from an older source, though scholars disagree about when the poem was originally composed, estimating a span from the 8th to early 11th centuries. The manuscript barely survived a 1731 fire at the Cotton Library, which damaged its edges. *Beowulf* reveals important aspects of Old English language structure, including distinctive compound words (kennings), while reflecting both heroic warrior culture and the tension between pagan traditions and Christian beliefs.

The Liber Vitae, dating from 1031, served as a spiritual register cataloging the souls of members, donors, and supporters deemed worthy of divine remembrance at the Last Judgment. Its symbolic annotations (crosses for clergy, coniunx for married pairs) mapped the community's internal hierarchy. The simultaneous presence of

traditional Anglo-Saxon theophoric names, such as Æthelred and Godgifu, alongside Norman names like William and *Matilda*, created a two-tiered onomastic system that froze the moment of conquest in ink.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, initiated under King Alfred, marks the first systematic effort in England to establish a national historical record in English rather than Latin. Produced by multiple scribes across generations at various monastic centers, the work features the linguistic transition from Old to Middle English. *The Peterborough* continuation (1122–1154) presents variations among manuscript copies that reflect regional dialect differences, offering insight into their origins, medieval historiographic practices, and the evolution of the English language.

Pic. 68 – *English Manuscript Timeline: OE period.*



TASKS TO CONSIDER:

Task 1. Using the information in Pic. 49 (Indo-European Branches), create a visual timeline showing when each language branch was first recorded. Which branch has the oldest written records? Which branch developed written documentation most recently? What might explain these differences?

Task 2. Grimm's Law describes three acts of consonant shifts. Using Pic. 59-60, trace the following Proto-Indo-European words through the sound changes:

- PIE *pāter* → Germanic _____
- PIE *trēyes* → Germanic _____
- PIE *bʰrāter* → Germanic _____

Task 3. Look at the Pic. 56 featuring the *Centum-Satem Divide*. Find modern English words for “hundred” and compare them with equivalents in:

- A Romance language (centum branch);
- A Slavic language (satem branch);
- A Greek word (centum branch).

Task 4. The pace lists vocabulary unique to Proto-Germanic (not found in PIE). From the lists provided:

- Choose 5 words related to seafaring/navigation;
- Choose 5 words related to warfare;
- Choose 5 words related to nature.

What does this vocabulary reveal about the lifestyle and environment of the Germanic peoples?

Task 5. Research the runic inscriptions mentioned in the text (*Undley Bracteate*, *Franks Casket*, *Castor-by-Norwich bone*). Find images of these artifacts online. Can you identify any recognizable letter forms? What makes runic writing different from the Latin alphabet?

Task 6. West Germanic languages showed specific sound changes. Test your understanding:

- Why did “*mann*” keep its [a] sound while “*dæg*” changed? (Hint: Anglo-Frisian Brightening).
- Find 5 modern English words where nasals were lost before fricatives (like “*five*” from “*fimf*”).
- What happened to the word “*finger*”? Why does it still retain an ‘n’?

Task 7 The pace explains the creation of *i-mutation* (*umlaut*), which leads to singular/plural distinctions. Find:

- 5 modern English plural forms created by *i-mutation* (*foot/feet* pattern);
- 3 verb/noun pairs showing *i-mutation* (*fill/full* pattern);
- 2 place names showing *i-mutation* (Canterbury/Kent pattern).

Task 8. Old English palatalized velar consonants [k, g] in specific positions. Using the rules in the text:

- Explain why “*child*” has [tʃ] but “*cold*” has [k];
- Find 5 modern words where initial [k] became [tʃ];
- Find 3 words where [g] became [j] (as in “*yes*”).

Task 9. The pace mentions several OE manuscripts. Choose one (*Beowulf*, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, or *Vespasian Psalter*):

- Find the approximate date of composition;
- Identify which dialect it represents;
- Find one image of the manuscript online;
- What makes it difficult to read? (Hint: Pay attention to letter similarity issues).

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PHONOLOGY

The majority of changes in the language system during the Middle English (ME) period were influenced by French. Under the influence of French phonology, the letter *c* developed context-dependent pronunciations, realized as [s] before *e*, *i*, and *y*, and as [k] before *a*, *o*, and *u*, in accordance with French sound patterns. To improve readability in words crowded with vertical strokes, scribes frequently replaced *u* with *o*, which is why Old English *cuman* came to be written as *comen* [‘kʊmən] in Middle English. This practice can be seen in words such as *come*, *son*, and *some*. In her book, *Weeds in the Garden of Words*, Kate Burridge makes the following observation: “Let me explain a little more about how scribes could have misread **gravey** for **graney**. The problem was that the letters *u*, *v*, *i*, *m* and *n* were all very similar at this time. The strokes were identical. To make matters worse, scribes didn’t leave a space between the letters. So, if you had a whole lot of them together it was extremely difficult to figure out what they represented. Let’s say you had five strokes in a row. That could represent *uni*, *uvi*, *imi*, *ivu*, *nui* and a number of other possibilities. Things were made even harder because it wasn’t the custom then to put a dot or a stroke above the letter ‘i’. Small wonder there was the occasional slip. Incidentally, it was this same confusion over letters that triggered some rather peculiar spelling changes by the French scribes of the time. Thinking it would make life easier, they developed the convention of writing a ‘u’ as an ‘o’ in those words where two or three of these tricky letters appeared in sequence. This is why we have spelling anomalies in Modern English like **love**, **honey**, **come**, **son** and **one** – these were originally written with ‘u’, much like **butter**, **crumb** and **summer**.” (Burridge, 2005, p. 71).

While orthographic changes were extensive, the consonant system experienced only minor modification during this time. The key consonantal developments included:

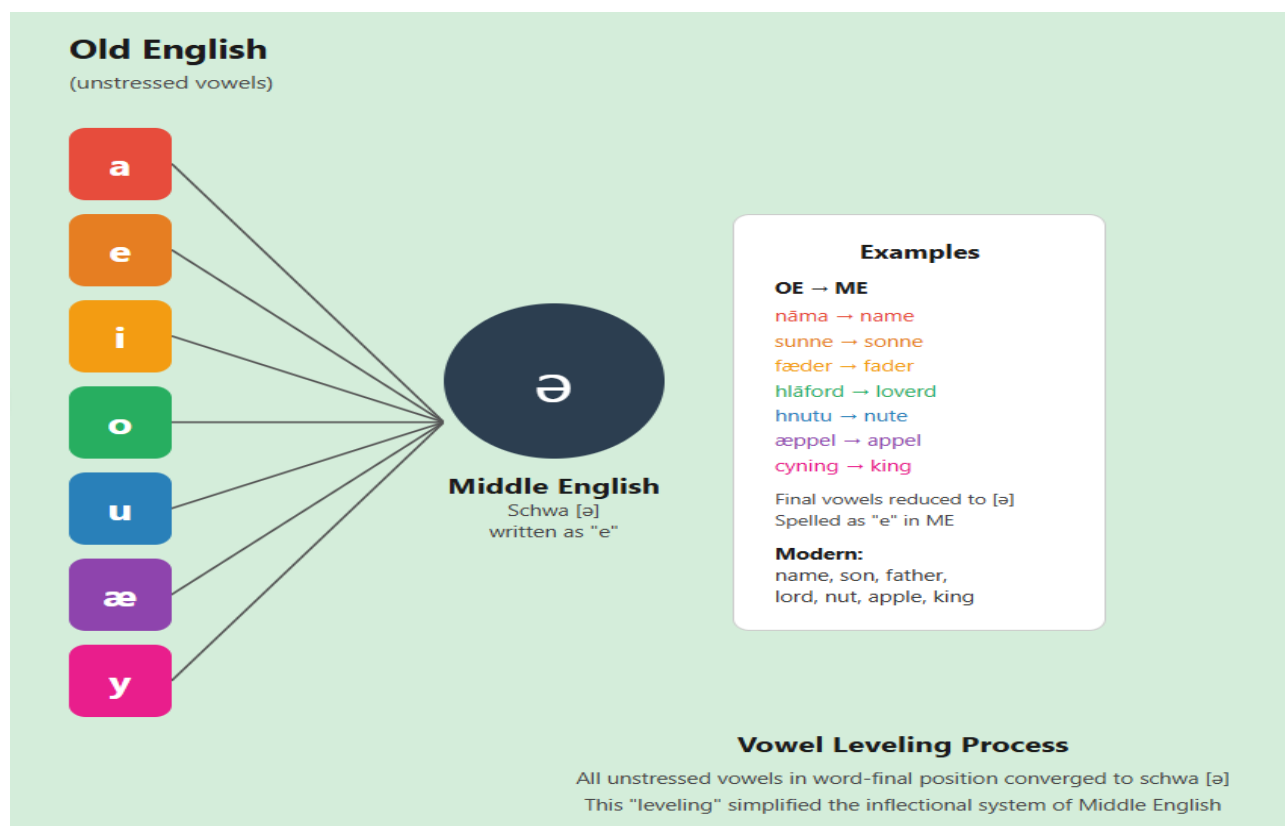
1) Reduction of initial *h*-clusters (*simplification*), in which the initial consonant was lost before *r*, *l*, and *n*, so that *hr*, *hl*, and *hn* were simplified to *r*, *l*, and *n*. For example, Old English *hring*, *hlāford*, *hnutu* developed into Middle English *ring*, *loverd*, *nute*, and later into Modern English *ring*, *lord*, and *nut*.

2) *Development of the sound [ɣ]*, whereby *ȝ* [ɣ] shifted to [w]. This change is reflected in the transition from Old English *boȝa* and *morȝen* to Middle English *bowe* and *morwen*, and subsequently to Modern English *bow* and *morrow*. A comparable development can be observed in Russian, where *ezo* exhibits the change [g > v], whereas Ukrainian does not show an analogous process.

3) *Vocalization of postvocalic [j] and [w]*, whereby [j] was realized as [i] and [w] as [ʊ]. For example, *snāw* [sna:w] developed into *snow* [snow], and later into Middle English *snow* [snəʊ].

The vowel system remained largely stable in relation to the Old English model, with changes primarily occurring in spelling rather than in phonological structure. Most unstressed vowels were leveled and reduced to a *schwa*-like sound [ə], commonly represented orthographically by *e* (as in *tape*).

Pic. 69 – *Reduction of Unstressed Vowels in Middle English.*

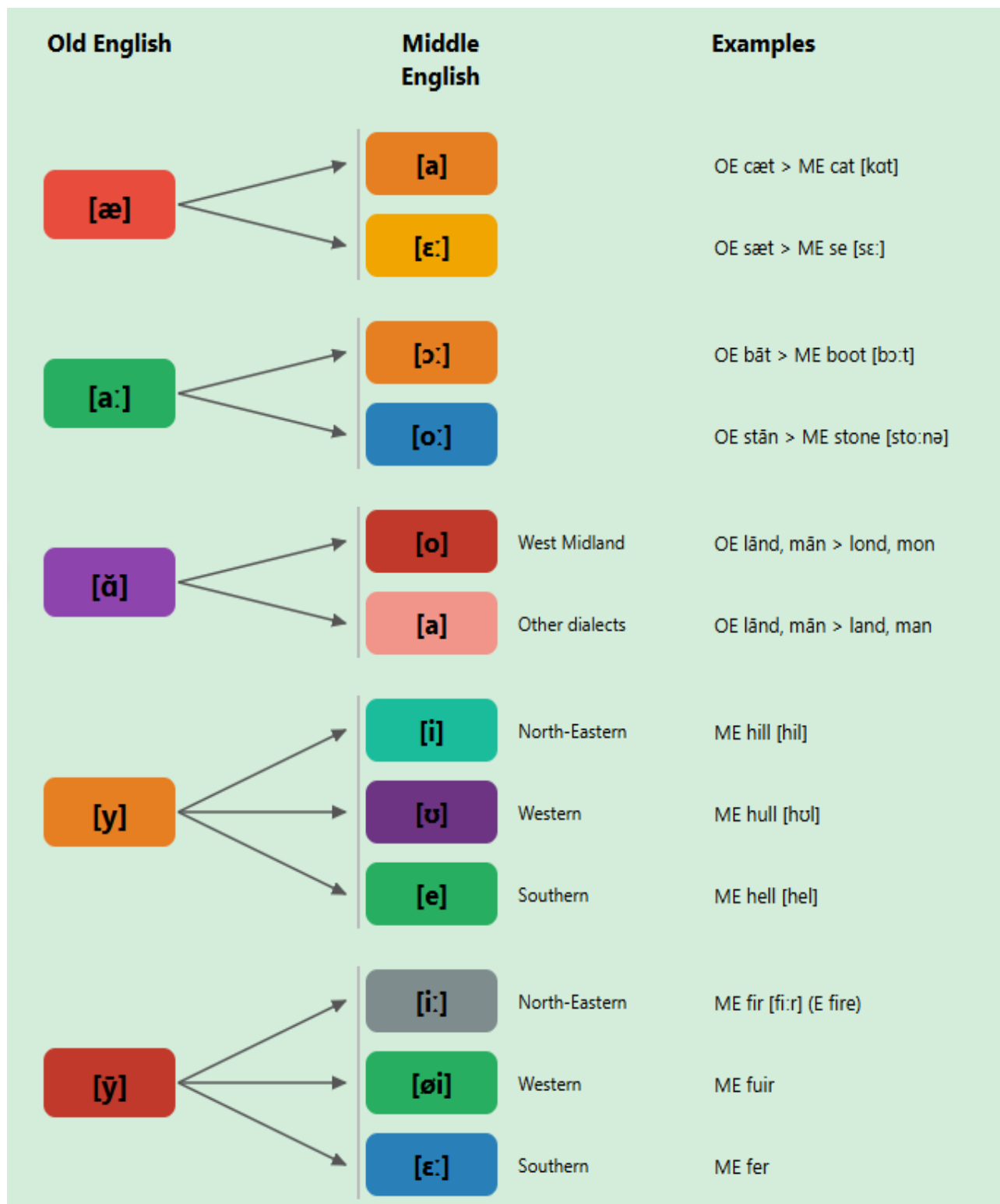


In the Middle English period, written texts reveal the extensive breakdown of grammatical inflections through a process known as *leveling*.

Stressed vowels underwent two principal types of change – *qualitative* and *quantitative*. *Quantitative* modification involved the lengthening and shortening of vowels. In Old English, vowel quantity was phonemically independent, which meant that vowels could occur as either short or long regardless of their position within a word. The Middle English vowel system departed significantly from this model. Vowel length became conditioned by the phonological environment and was strongly determined by the sounds that followed. With few exceptions, Middle English followed the rule that some phonological environments permitted only short vowels, whereas others consistently required long vowels. This development marked a shift from the free-vowel-length system of Old English to a more regulated, context-dependent system in which vowel quantity was no longer autonomous but was governed by phonological surroundings. Initially, long vowels were shortened when followed by two consonants, as illustrated by *fe:dan* → *fe:den* → *fe:dde* → *fedde*. Exceptions to this pattern occurred with consonant clusters composed of two voiced sonorants, such as *mb*, *ld*, and *nd*, or when the consonant combination appeared in the second syllable of a word, as in *maeste*, *laest* → *most*, *least*. On the other hand, short vowels were lengthened when located in open syllables of dissyllabic words. This lengthening primarily affected *[a, e, o]*, as seen in *ca:ru* → *care*, *talu* → *tale*, and *macian* → *make*. The vowels *[i]* and *[u]*, however, were generally resistant to this elongation process.

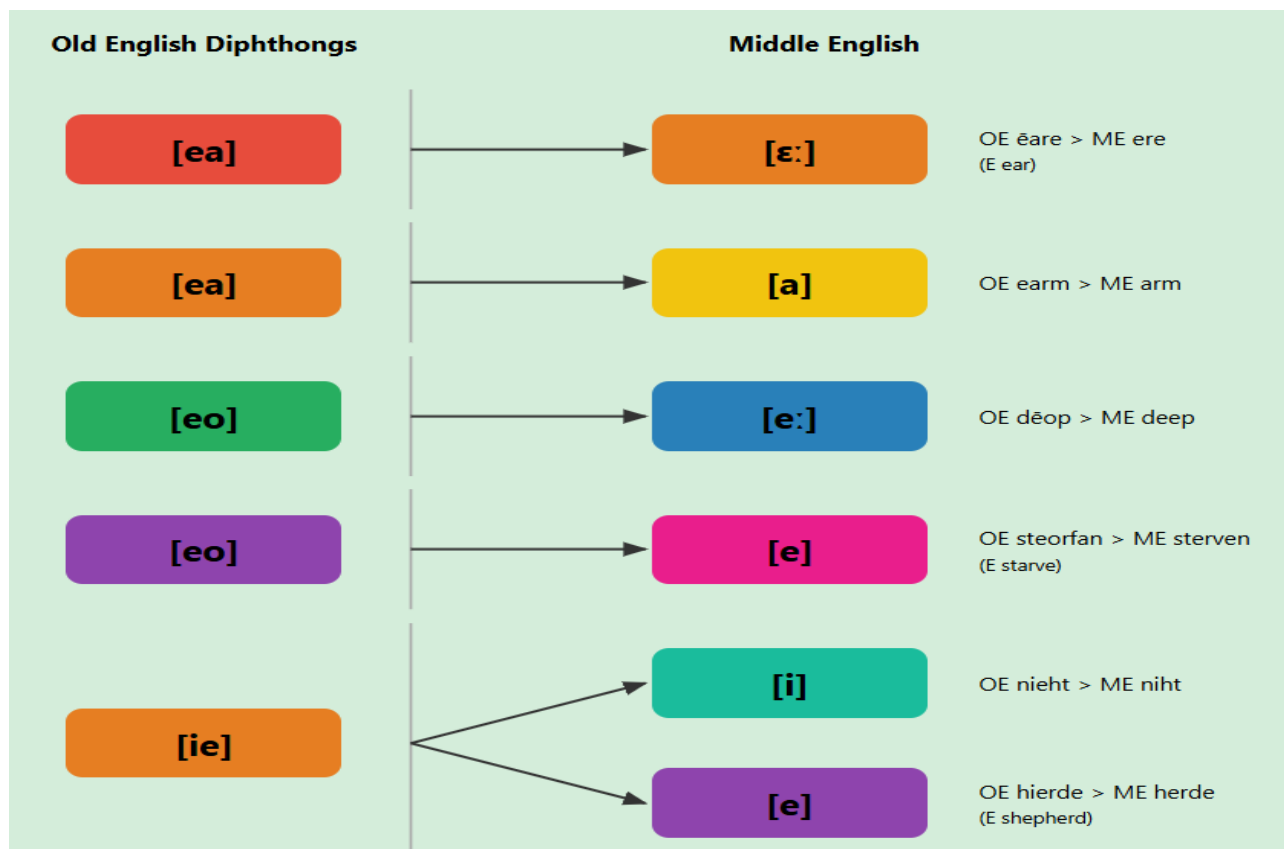
Qualitative changes impacted the core properties of vowel sounds. Six Old English vowels (*[ā, æ, ē, ā, y, ŷ]*) underwent notable modifications in their acoustic quality. This systematic transformation signified a shift from Old English's length-based distinctions to a Middle English system in which vowel duration was largely determined by syllable structure and the surrounding consonantal context.

Pic. 70 – *Middle English Vowel Quality Shifts*.



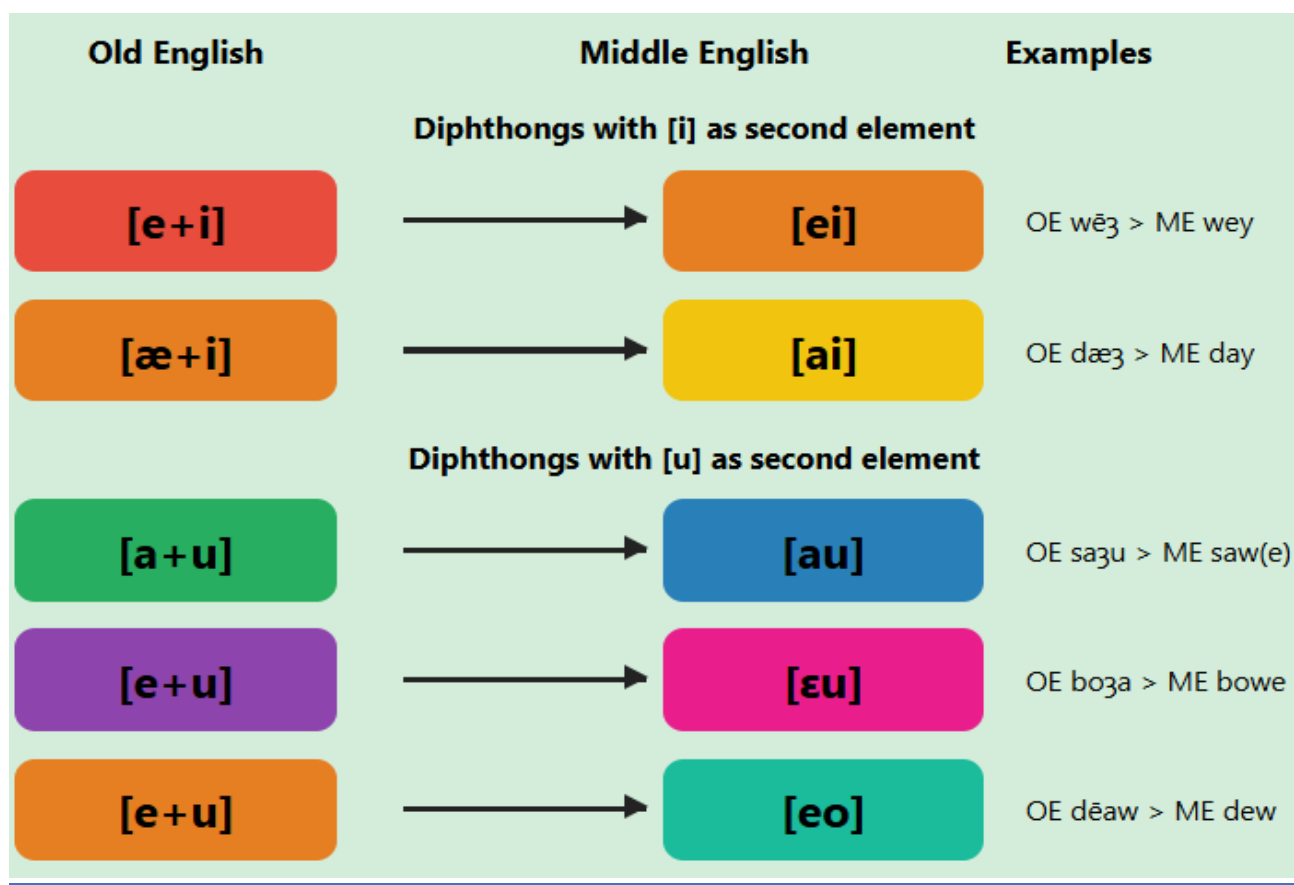
By the eleventh century, the diphthongs of Old English had all evolved into single vowel sounds, or monophthongs. This change typically involved dropping the second element of the diphthong, thereby transforming previously complex vowel combinations into simpler, single vowels.

Pic. 71 – *Reduction of Diphthongs in the Eleventh Century.*



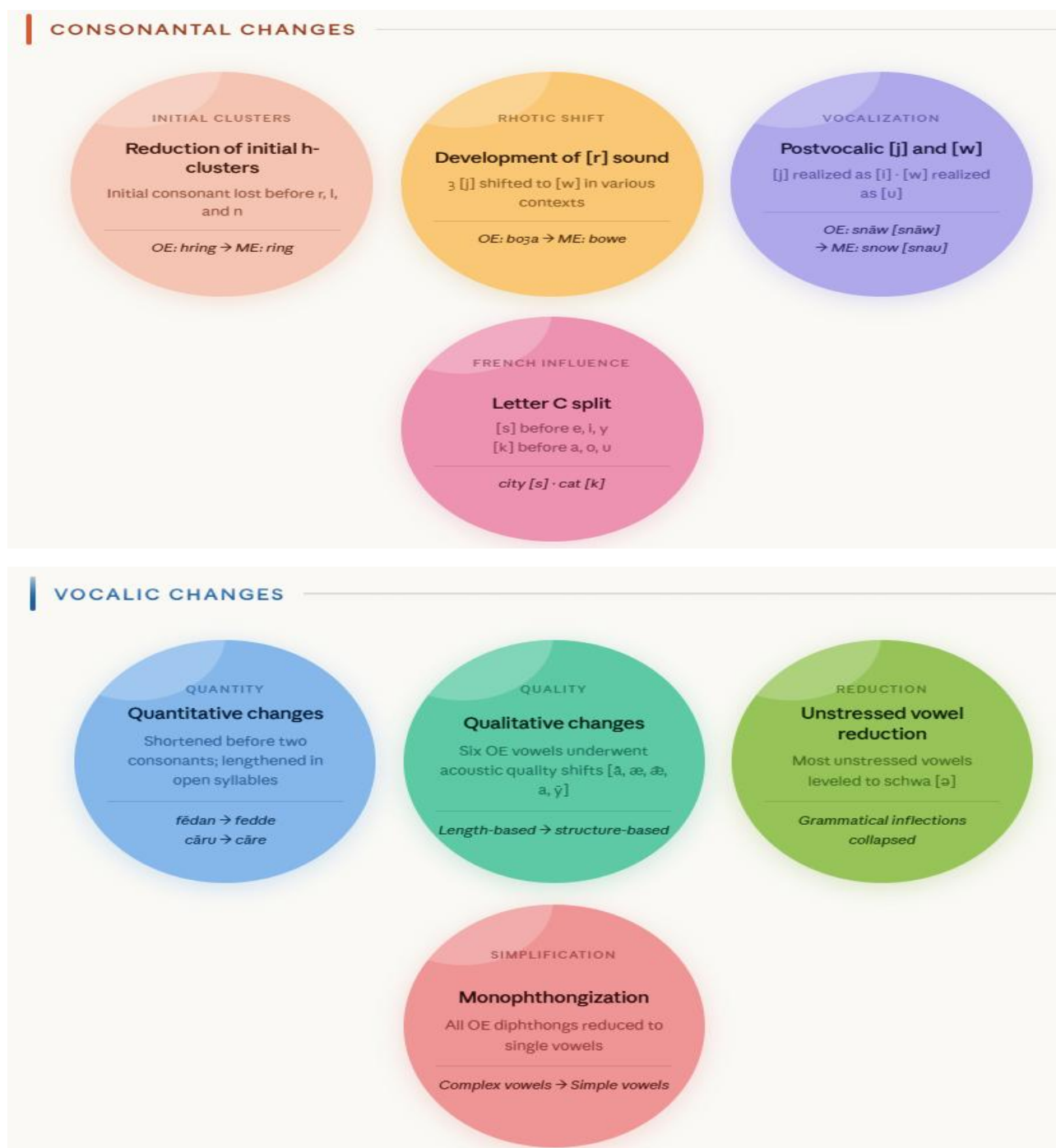
Through the process of vocalizing *[j]* and *[u]*, new diphthongs developed, characterized by *i* or *u* as the second element.

Pic. 72 – *The Development of Diphthongs in Middle English.*



Thus, ME sound transformations can be summarized in the graph below.

Pic. 73 – Middle English Phonology Development.



Texts from the 12th to 15th centuries snap the rapid linguistic evolution of post-Norman England. *The Kentish Homilies* (1150) depict early Middle English religious writing, while the *Orrmulum* (c. 1200) demonstrates experimental spelling and grammatical approaches during this transitional period. The secular song *Sumer is icumen* in (1225–1250), preserved with musical notation, reflects the expansion of vernacular literature beyond religious contexts. John of Trevisa's translation of

Higden's Polychronicon (1387) made historical writing more accessible, coinciding with works like *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*, which revived traditional *alliterative* verse in the Northwest Midlands dialect. Thomas Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes* (1412) continued Chaucer's influence in moral-political writing. Most significantly, Henry V's 15th-century official correspondence demonstrates the rise of English as a primary language in government administration, establishing it as a legitimate language of state power and marking a deliberate move toward the formation of a national identity.

Pic. 74 – *Middle English Manuscripts*.

 Early Middle English PETERBOROUGH CHRONICLE Final continuation of Anglo-Saxon Chronicle • Transitional language 1121-1154	 Early Middle English KENTISH HOMILIES Early Middle English religious writing 1150	 Early Middle English ANCRENE WISSE Guide for anchoresses • West Midlands prose c. 1200-1230	 Transitional ORRMULUM Experimental spelling & grammar c. 1200
 Early 13th Century THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE Debate poem • Sophisticated verse c. 1200	 Mid-13th Century SUMER IS ICUMEN IN Secular song with musical notation 1225-1250	 Late 13th Century CURSOR MUNDI Biblical history in Northern dialect c. 1300	 Early 14th Century AUCHINLECK MANUSCRIPT Romances and religious texts • London English c. 1330-1340
 Late 14th Century SIR GAWAYNE AND THE GRENE KNIGHT Alliterative revival • Northwest Midlands dialect 14th c.	 Late 14th Century PIERS PLOWMAN Langland's allegorical dream vision • Social commentary c. 1370-1390	 Late 14th Century CANTERBURY TALES Chaucer's masterwork • London English becomes standard c. 1387-1400	 Late 14th Century TREVISIA'S POLYCHRONICON Accessible historiography in English 1387
 Early 15th Century THE BOOK OF MARGERY KEMPE First autobiography in English • Mystical experiences c. 1430s	 Early 15th Century REGIMENT OF PRINCES Hoccleve's Chaucerian moral-political prose 1412	 15th Century HENRY V'S LETTERS English replaces Latin/French in government • National identity 15th c.	 Mid-15th Century PASTON LETTERS Private correspondence • East Anglian English 1422-1509
 Late 15th Century LE MORTE D'ARTHUR Malory's Arthurian compilation • First printed English book 1485			

The sources enable scholars to reconstruct the evolution of English across various historical stages and trace its development both after its separation from the Indo-European language tree and as part of the Germanic branch.

TASKS TO CONSIDER:

Task 1. The pace states that unstressed vowels were reduced to [ə] in Middle English (Pic. 64). Compare these word endings:

- OE: *nama, giefu, scipu* → ME: *name, yife, shipe*.
- What happened to the different vowel endings?

Task 2. In Middle English, short vowels were lengthened in open syllables of dissyllabic words. Examine these examples:

- OE: *caru* → ME: *care*
- OE: *talū* → ME: *tale*
- OE: *macian* → ME: *make*
- OE: *bitan* → ME: *bite*
- OE: *cuppe* → ME: *cuppe*

Which vowels underwent lengthening and which remained short? Why did some vowels resist this process?

Task 3. By the eleventh century, all Old English diphthongs were reduced to monophthongs. Analyze this pattern:

- OE: *ēage* [e:a] → ME: *eye* [e:]
- OE: *hēah* [e:a] → ME: *heigh* [e:]

What element of the diphthong was lost in the simplification process? What does this tell us about the direction of phonological change?

Task 4. Kate Burridge explains that scribes substituted ‘o’ for ‘u’ in words with many vertical strokes (minims) to improve legibility. Consider these Modern English words:

- *come*
- *love*
- *son*
- *honey*

What was the original Old English spelling of these words? Why did scribes make this change, and what does this tell us about the relationship between pronunciation and spelling?

Task 5. Under French influence, the letter *c* developed context-dependent pronunciations: [s] before *e, i, y*; [k] before *a, o, u*.

Apply this rule to predict the pronunciation of *c* in these Middle English words:

- *citē* (*city*)
- *corn* (*corn*)
- *cent* (*cent*)
- *cumen* (*come*)
- *certeyn* (*certain*)

What pronunciation would the letter *c* have in each word? How does this pattern differ from Old English, where *c* was consistently [k]?

EARLY MODERN ENGLISH PHONOLOGY

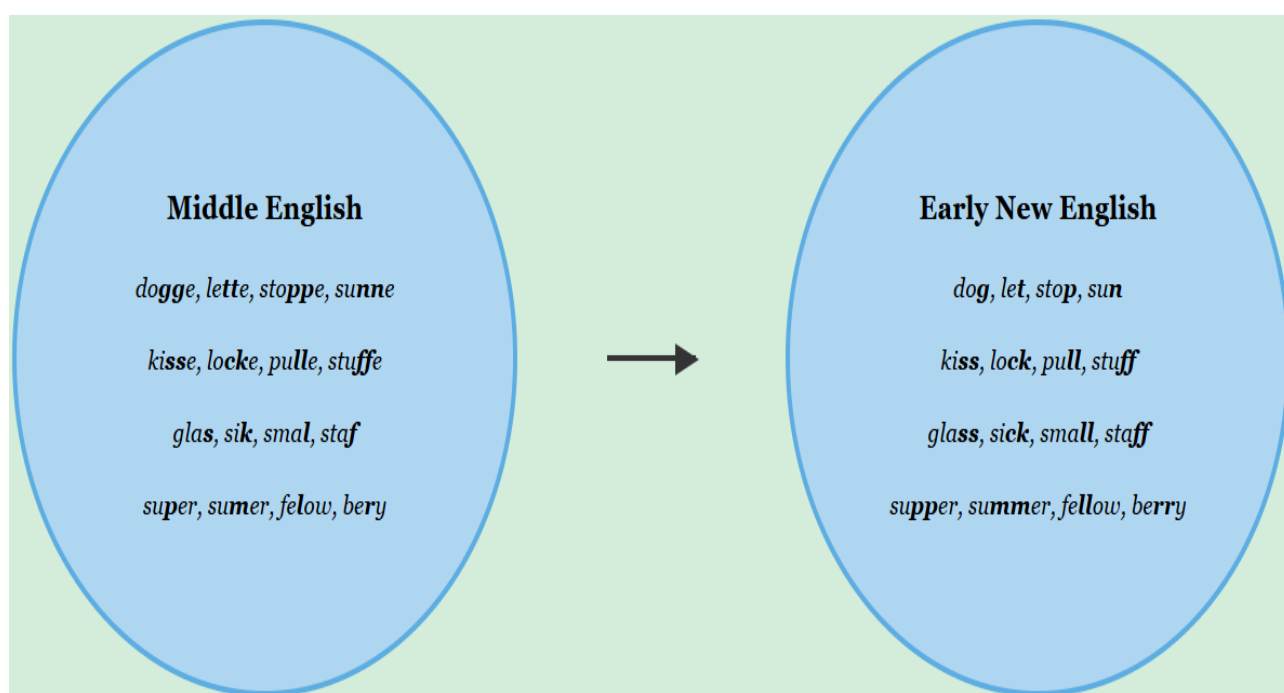
The Early Modern English period witnessed noticeable phonological and orthographic changes. The elimination of word endings completed the transition from an inflected linguistic system to one that was wholly analytic in its organization. Endings were fully removed after short vowels. However, when a syllable contained a long vowel, the final *-e* was preserved in order to signal the proper pronunciation of the preceding vowel. For example, Old English *hnutu* developed into Middle English *nute* and later Early New English *nut*. Similarly, Old English *tacan* became Middle English *taken* ['ta:kən], and eventually *take*, with the final *-e* marking the long vowel in the earlier stage.

In some cases, the vowel in inflectional endings was retained primarily for ease of pronunciation, as in *wanted* and *dressed*. Without this intervening vowel, articulating these endings would have been considerably more difficult.

During the Early Modern English period, complete syllables were sometimes lost in longer words. This phonological reduction was occasionally mirrored in spelling, as illustrated by the development from Middle English *chapter* to Early New English *chapter*.

Additional spelling modifications kept the following:

- 1) *Changes involving consonant doubling:*



2) *Modifications linked to the classical (Latin or Greek) origins* of particular words. These were implemented by scholars to demonstrate acknowledgment of Latin or Greek influence: *ME dette, doute* (from Latin *debitum, debitare*) > *debt, doubt*; *scool* (from Latin *scholar*) > *ENE school*.

Both *schism* and *schedule* illustrate how the attempts of Renaissance scholars to reveal the classical etymology of roots through altered orthography produced enduring pronunciation difficulties that continue to the present day. When *schism* entered the French language in the fourteenth century, it was articulated as [ˈsɪzəm]. However, the insertion of *sch-* to indicate its Greek source generated three competing pronunciations: the original [ˈsɪzəm], as well as [ˈskɪzəm] and [ˈʃɪzəm].

The *schedule* underwent a comparable evolution, arriving in English from French as “*sedule*” before being respelled to highlight its Latin ancestry. This scholarly intervention gave rise to today’s [ˈskɛdʒəl] (favored in America) and [ˈʃɛdjuːl] (preferred in Britain), while the original [ˈsɛdjuːl] pronunciation disappeared by the nineteenth century. These linguistic shifts reveal how scholars’ attempts to restore classical spellings created pronunciation variations that persist to this day. The respellings, though academically motivated rather than misguided, did generate competing pronunciations where simpler patterns had existed before.

3) *Changes related to the introduction of the digraphs **ea** and **oa**.*

<i>ME</i> [ɔ:] rood, boot	<i>ENE</i> road, boat [rɔ:d bɔ:t]	<i>E</i> road, boat [rəʊd bəʊt]
<i>ME</i> [ɛ:] se(e), deel	<i>ENE</i> sea, deal [sɛ: dɛ:l]	<i>E</i> sea, deal [si: di:l]

From the fifteenth century onward, all long vowels of Middle English experienced qualitative changes. This process led to a complete reorganization of the vowel system. Each long vowel was articulated in a closer position, and the closest vowels developed into diphthongs. These systematic sound changes are collectively referred to as the *Great Vowel Shift*.

[i: - ai]	bite [ˈbi:tə – bait]	[e: - i:]	beet [be:t – bi:t]
[a: - ei]	mate [ˈma:tə – meit]	[u: - av]	out [u:t – avt]
[o: - u:]	boot [bo:t – bu:t]	[ɔ: - əv]	boat [bo:t – bəvt]
[ɛ: - i:]	beat [be:t – bi:t]		

Changes in short vowels were less regular and did not follow a uniform pattern. Instead, these vowels are altered according to their phonetic environment.

1) *Development of vowel [a]*. Short [a] occurring in closed syllables generally slides into [æ]: ME [a] > [æ] *map, cat, that, man*. When preceded by the sound [w], it remained unchanged and eventually evolved into [ɔ]: *after [w]: [wa] > [wɔ]* **want, was, quantity**. But: *wag [wæɡ], wax [wæks]*.

The vowel [a] before certain consonant clusters and changed into [ɑ:] when followed by:

<i>a+th</i>	<i>father, rather</i>
<i>a+ss</i>	<i>pass, grass</i>
<i>a+st</i>	<i>fast, disaster</i>
<i>a+sk</i>	<i>ask, mask</i>
<i>a+sp</i>	<i>raspberry, grasp</i>
<i>a+lm</i>	<i>calm, palm</i>
<i>a+lf</i>	<i>calf, half</i>
<i>a+nt, nd, nch</i>	<i>plant, branch, command</i>
<i>a+ft</i>	<i>after, draft</i>

2) *Delabialization*: [u] > [o] > [ʌ]: some ['svmə] – [sʌm]; son [svn] – [sʌn]; [u:] (< [ɔ:] > [ɔ] before [d, t, k]) > [ʌ]: blood, flood.

3) *Development of Middle English diphthongs in Early New English*:

ME [ai, ei] day, wey, seil > ENE [ei]	day, way, sail
ME [av] > ENE [ɔ:]	paw, law, cause, pause
ME [ev] > ([iv]) > ENE [ju:]	new, dew, view
ME [ɔi, əv] remained unchanged	point, boy, snow, flow

4) *Combinative changes of vowels*:

a) Under the influence of [r]

- [r] > [ə] after vowels in medial and final positions;
- Modification of – er in the word-medial position: – er [er] > – ar [ar] (ME *derk, ferm, sterre* > ENE *dark, farm, star*). Contrast: *clerk, sergeant*.
- Short vowels + [r]:

[ar] > ([aə]) > [a:]	park, dark, part, heart
[ɔr] > ([ɔə]) > [ɔ:]	port, form
[er, ir, ur] > [ɛə, iə, uə] > [ɜ:]	term, person, girl, bird, fur, burden

- Long vowels + [r]:

$[e:r] > [iə]$	<i>beer, here</i>	$[a:r] > [εə]$	<i>hare, dare</i>
$[ε:r] > [εə]$ $[ε:r] > [iə]$	<i>bear, wear;</i> <i>beard, dear</i>	$[i:r] > [aiə]$	<i>fire, hire</i>
$[u:r] > [ʊə]$	<i>poor, moor</i>	$[u:r] > [avə]$	<i>hour, our, flower</i>
$[ɔ:r] > [ɔə] > [ɔ:]$	<i>board, oar</i>		

b) Impact of $[l]$: $[a+l] > [av] + [l] > [avl] > [ɔ:l]$ *all, tall*: $[l]$ is not pronounced before $[k, m, f]$: *talk, walk, calm, half, palm*.

c) Modifications to the vowel $[a]$ triggered by fricative consonants and certain consonant combinations: $[a > (æ > ɐ) > a:]$: *after, craft, draft, pass, bath; chance, dance, answer; cast, last, fast; ask, mask, task; clasp, gasp, grasp*.

Early New English consonants underwent a variety of changes:

1) Development of sound $[χ]$ denoted by *gh*. At the end of words: ME *laugh* $[lavχ] > laugh [lavf] > ENE laugh [la:f]$; Medially before *t*: ME *daughter* $[ˈdavχter]$, *eight* $[eiχt] > ENE daughter [ˈdɔ:tə]$, *eight* $[eit]$; Lengthening: $[i > i:]$ ME *night* $[niχt] > [ni:t] > ENE night [nait]$.

2) Voicing of fricatives in weakly-stressed syllables and words:

ME $[f] > NE [v]$ *of, active* (<ME *actif*)

ME $[s] > NE [z]$ *is, his, comes, possess*

ME $[θ] > NE [ð]$ *with, the, they*

ME $[ks] > NE [gz]$ *knowledge* (<ME *knowleche*), *Greenwich* $[ˈgrinnidz]$

3) Simplification of certain consonant clusters:

wr $[r]$	kn $[n]$	gn $[n]$	mb $[m]$	ng $[ŋ]$
<i>wrong</i>	<i>know</i>	<i>gnat</i>	<i>climb</i>	<i>sing</i>

4) Formation of new sibilants:

$[t+j] > [tʃ]$ 'culture, 'century; But: 'tune, 'student;

$[s+j] > [ʃ]$ 'Asia, 'nation; But: 'suit, a'ssume;

$[z+j] > [ʒ]$ de'cision, 'usual, 'measure; But: re'sume;

$[d+j] > [dʒ]$ 'soldier; But: 'duty, in'duce.

Thus, the ENE developments can be summarized graphically below.

Pic. 75 – ENE Phonological Modifications. Summary.



Pic. 76 – *ENE Spelling Development*.



Consequently, the phonological evolution of English from Proto-Indo-European through to Early Modern English represents a remarkable cascade of systematic transformations. Beginning with the Consonant Shift described by Jacob Grimm that distinguished the entire Germanic branch, English subsequently underwent its own unique innovations, setting it apart from its Germanic siblings. The Middle English period witnessed a dramatic restructuring under Norman influence, with the reduction of unstressed vowels accelerating the language's transition from a synthetic to an analytic grammar. Ultimately, the Great Vowel Shift of the Early Modern period significantly reorganized the long vowel system, resulting in the mismatch between spelling and pronunciation that characterizes English today.

Each phonological slide left its mark not merely on pronunciation, but on morphology, orthography, and the very structure of the language. The stress patterns, vowel alternations, and consonantal modifications continue to shape English word formation and inflectional patterns today. Understanding these diachronic processes sheds light on the apparent irregularities in modern English spelling, the unexpected variations within related words, and the mechanisms by which a single Germanic dialect evolved into a phonologically distinctive global language. The genetic traced in

this chapter reveals English not as a static entity, but as the product of continual phonological innovation across two millennia of linguistic history.

TASKS TO CONSIDER:

Task 1. Short vowels lengthen in open syllables. Test this:

- OE “*macian*” → ME “*maken*” [ma:ken] → ModE “*make*” [meik].
- Explain why these vowels lengthened: “*tale*,” “*care*,” “*nose*.”
- Why didn’t “*bit*” or “*cut*” undergo lengthening?

Task 2. Using the chart in the text showing the GVS changes, trace these words:

- ME “*bite*” [bi:tə] → ENE _____
- ME “*boot*” [bo:t] → ENE _____
- ME “*mate*” [ma:tə] → ENE _____

Why do we still spell these words with a silent ‘e’?

Task 3. The pace explains that short [a] changed based on the environment:

- Find 5 words where [a] → [æ] (*cat*, *map* pattern);
- Find 5 words where [wa] → [wɔ] (*want*, *was* pattern);
- Find 5 words where [a] → [ɑ:] before certain clusters (*father*, *pass* pattern).

What determines which change occurred?

Task 4. Using the section on combinative changes with [r]:

- Explain why “*park*” and “*clerk*” developed differently;
- Find 3 words where ‘er’ → ‘ar’ (*dark*, *farm*, *star*);
- Find 3 words where different vowels + ‘r’ → [ɜ:] (*term*, *bird*, *fur*).

Task 5. Scholars added letters to indicate Latin/Greek origins (e.g., *debt*, *doubt*, *school*, *schism*). Research:

- Find 3 other English words with “*scholarly*” silent letters;
- What was the original ME spelling?
- Has this created pronunciation confusion?

Task 6. Imagine you are witnessing a new sound change in progress in modern English. Document:

- A current pronunciation variation you’ve noticed;
- Geographical or social distribution;
- Predict what might happen in 100 years;
- Compare to historical patterns (vowel lengthening, consonant reduction, etc.)

THE TOPICS FOR SELF-STUDY AND REPORTS:

1. Regional accent divergence after the Great Vowel Shift.
2. Why did some English vowels escape the Great Vowel Shift?
3. The phonological status of [r] and the rise of rhotic as opposed to non-rhotic English.
4. Phonological causes of English spelling-pronunciation mismatch.
5. Chain shifts in English beyond the Great Vowel Shift.
6. Phonemic and allophonic variation in Early Modern English.

THE FORMATION AND DIACHRONIC MODIFICATION OF ENGLISH GRAMMATICAL PATTERNS

1. *The structural characteristics of Old English grammar. The role and importance of inflectional suffixes.*
2. *The diachronic development of content words. The shift toward morphological reduction is synchronous with the expansion of temporal verbal categories.*
3. *The emergence of articles and their establishment as grammatical elements.*
4. *The metamorphosis of function words throughout English linguistic history.*

Throughout its history, the English language has undergone a range of historical phases that have modified its phonological structure, grammatical system, lexical landscape, and spelling rules, with the most significant slides occurring between 1100 and 1300 and from 1700 to 1900.

The linguistic systems of most contemporary languages distinguish between open and closed word classes. Content words, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, belong to open classes that systematically expand with new terms (for example, “zoom fatigue⁷,” “covidiot⁸,” “eco-friendly,” “gender-fluid⁹,” “greenwashing¹⁰,” “maskne¹¹”). These words often take part in derivational relationships, as seen in sequences like *zoom* (to move quickly or video platform) → *zooming* (activity) → *zoomer* (person) → *zoom fatigue* (exhaustion from Zoom use) → *zoombombing*¹²; *COVID* (virus/disease) → *covidiotic* (adjective form, mocking

⁷ exhaustion from excessive video calls.

⁸ someone ignoring COVID-19 safety measures.

⁹ describing someone whose gender identity is not fixed.

¹⁰ pretending to be environmentally friendly practices while misleadingly marketing products.

¹¹ acne caused by wearing face masks.

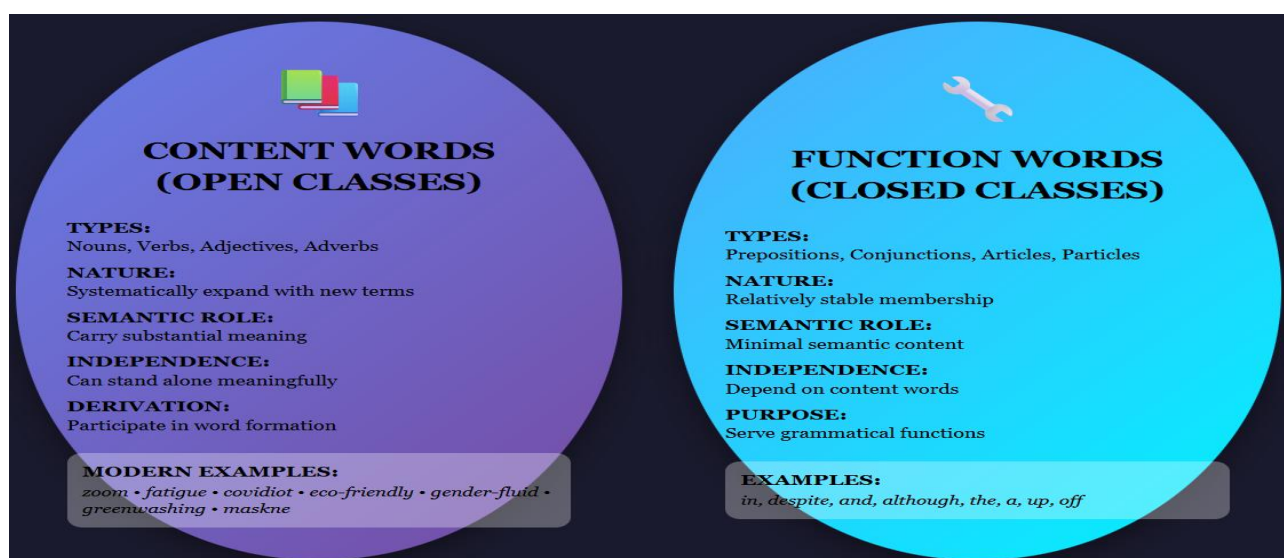
¹² is the act of intruding into an online video meeting (most famously on Zoom) without permission and deliberately disrupting it, often by sharing offensive content, shouting, posting spam in the chat, or displaying inappropriate images or videos.

behavior) → *covidiot* (person) → *covidiotic behavior* (action) → *covidivorce*¹³; *eco* (environment) → *ecology* → *ecological* (adj.) → *eco-friendly* (adj.) → *eco-friendliness* (quality/state); *gender* → *gendered* (adj., socially influenced) → *gender-fluid* (adj.) → *gender fluidity* (n., quality/state) → *gender-fluid identity* (noun phrase); *green* (eco) → *greenwash* (v., deceive with false eco claims) → *greenwashing* (n./v., ongoing act) → *greenwasher* (person/company) → *greenwashed* (adj., describing a product); *mask* (face covering) → *masking* (act of wearing) → *maskne* (acne caused by mask) → *maskne-prone* (adj.) → *maskne treatment* (n., remedy).

Function words, in contrast, make up closed classes with a relatively stable membership. This group includes prepositions (*in*, *despite*), conjunctions (*and*, *although*), articles (*the*, *a*), and particles (*up*, *off*). Their semantic content is minimal; they serve primarily grammatical purposes and depend on content words to express complete meaning.

Pronouns occupy an **intermediate position**, since they can behave like content words (*she*, *it*) while also serving connective or referential functions (*who*, *which*). Moreover, even among open classes, there are restricted subgroups, such as auxiliary verbs (*be*, *have*, *will*), which form **closed systems**. English reveals considerable flexibility in word class usage, allowing a single form, such as “*round*,” to function as an adjective, noun, verb, or preposition, depending on the context.

Pic. 77 – *Classes of Words within Linguistic System.*



¹³ is an informal term referring to a divorce or relationship breakup caused or accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The grammatical system of Old English was far more diverse in its inflectional patterns than that of contemporary English, and this structural sophistication was a core trait of the language. As part of the early Germanic family, Old English inherited a morphological system that echoed the Proto-Germanic predecessor from which it originated. Viewed through the lens of today's language palette, Old English grammar most closely resembles Icelandic, which retains many archaic Germanic forms. To a lesser degree, its inflections also resonate with the structures of contemporary German.

Old English was a synthetic language, meaning that core grammatical concepts were conveyed through modifications to word forms. The language employed three primary grammatical mechanisms: a) suffixation, b) vowel alternation (ablaut), and c) suppletive forms. Old English exhibited extensive inflection. This wealth of inflections arose because declension and conjugation paradigms encompassed numerous grammatical categories, and both systems contained multiple patterns rather than uniform paradigms.

The language had a portfolio of several word classes, in particular, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, numerals, and verbs, each forming its paradigmatic range through inflections, suffixes, and vowel alternations. Analytical formations were entirely absent, so meaning and grammatical relationships were encoded directly within the words themselves. The typical word blueprint followed the pattern *root + stem-forming suffix + inflection*, with the stem-forming suffix governing how inflections were applied. At heart, Old English words functioned like finely tuned machines, all parts synchronizing to deliver both grammatical precision and semantic content.

Old English nouns retained just half of the eight original Indo-European cases, leaving four in active use. Adjectives, along with certain pronouns and numerals, mirrored the nouns they modified, echoing their number, gender, and case. The language distinguished between two adjective declensions, classified as strong and weak. Weak forms were generally dependent, following demonstratives and possessive adjectives, while strong forms functioned independently, fully bearing their grammatical identity within the sentence. Unlike the irregularities found in Romance

languages, Germanic tongues adopted a structured, patterned approach to forming comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, typically adding the suffixes *-er* and *-est*: for example, *long – longer – longest*.

Flexible stress patterns gradually settled into fixed, predictable positions, establishing definite accent rules, with the main stress usually placed on the root's first syllable. Umlaut, as a systematic vowel modification, played a central role in shaping paradigmatic forms, as seen in “*man*” → “*men*”, helping shape the formation of words. Strong verbs evolved through vowel gradation, or ablaut, while weak verbs relied on a distinct mechanism for past-tense formation, employing a dental suffix *ealdian* → *ealdode* (“to age”).

Over the centuries, Old English, once a highly synthetic, inflection-heavy language, gradually shifted toward an analytical structure. By the Middle English period, nominal grammatical categories had been simplified, while verbal categories expanded. The use of fully synthetic forms dwindled to a minimum. However, the use of analytical forms was uneven across the various parts of speech. For nouns, adjectives, and pronouns, the dominant trend was morphological reduction, in which some nominal categories vanished entirely, and the remaining ones were pared down, containing far fewer forms than in Old English.

CONTENT WORDS or NOTIONAL PARTS OF SPEECH

The NOUN.

OLD ENGLISH nouns were grammatically organized according to three categories: number, gender, and case.

GENDER DISTRIBUTION. Most nouns followed regular, established patterns, with terms referring to males typically classified as masculine in gender (*mann* “man”, *fæder* “father”, *abbod* “abbot”), whereas terms denoting females received feminine gender (*modor* “mother”, *sweostor* “sister”, *abbudissa* “abbess”). Even so, the system was riddled with irregularities. Certain female-referencing nouns were categorized as neuter, including *mæzden* (maid) and *wīf* (wife), comparable to the Ukrainian use of neuter forms for lexemes like *хлоп'я* and *дівча*. Notably, *wīfman* (woman) was classified as masculine because its final element, *mann*, was masculine, demonstrating

how compound formations acquire gender from their morphemes. This means that the grammatical gender did not always coincide with the natural gender of the person, and sometimes even contradicted it. The system inconsistently treated the gender of many nouns, requiring memorization. Occasionally, homophonous word forms conveyed distinct meanings, differentiated solely by gender. For example, *lēod* functioned as masculine when signifying “*man*” but as feminine when denoting “*people*.” (See Appendix 5).

Pic. 78 – *Old English Grammatical Gender Categories.*

MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
MALE BEINGS fæder (father) sunu (son) cyning (king)	FEMALE BEINGS mōdor (mother) dōhtor (daughter) cwēn (queen) ȝōs (goose)	LIFELESS THINGS ēaȝe (eye) scipe (ship)
LIFELESS THINGS hlāf (bread) stān (stone) hrōf (roof)	LIVING BEINGS cicen (chicken) hors (horse) mæden (maiden)	ABSTRACT NOTIONS mōd (mood) riht (right)
ABSTRACT NOTIONS stenc (stench) fār (fear) nama (name) dōm (doom)	LIFELESS THINGS tunȝe (tongue) meolc (milk)	
	ABSTRACT NOTIONS trēowþu (truth) huntunȝ (hunting) lūfu (love)	

NUMBER AND CASE. The numerical distinctions in the language encompassed three categories, referring to one item (singular), two items (dual number), or multiple items (plural), derived from Proto-Germanic ancestry. Singular forms marked a single referent, whereas plural forms covered three or more, reflecting a logic shared by most linguistic systems. Despite this, Old English preserved the dual number, a distinct

grammatical category applicable only to pairs of entities, which was signaled by unique inflectional suffixes attached to the nouns themselves. The dual form was most commonly preserved in nouns describing items that occur in natural pairs, especially anatomical pairs such as *handa* “two hands,” *ēazan* “two eyes,” *ēaran* “two ears,” and *sculdru* “two shoulders,” as well as paired articles like *scōs* “two shoes.” The three-part number system, preserved in Old English, underscored the language’s conservatism by retaining Indo-European features, distinguishing it from continental Germanic languages that had largely lost the dual by the early Middle Ages. The dual number in nominal paradigms began to erode during the late Old English period and disappeared completely by the Middle English period, giving rise to the binary singular-plural model that typifies Modern English. Such loss belongs to a wider pattern of morphological simplification through which English shifted away from heavy inflection toward reliance on syntax and analytical forms.

Pic. 79 – Old English Number System.

Word	Nominative Singular (one)	Nominative Dual (two)	Nominative Plural (three or more)
fisc (<i>fish</i>)	fisc	—	fiscas
ēage (<i>eye</i>)	ēage	ēazan	ēagan
tōþ (<i>tooth</i>)	tōþ	—	tēþ
scīp (<i>ship</i>)	scīp	—	scīpu
hand (<i>hand</i>)	hand	handa	handa
fōt (<i>foot</i>)	fōt	—	fēt

The dual number was primarily preserved in pronouns (*wit* = we two, *git* = you two) and certain body parts that naturally occur in pairs. While English lost the dual number grammatically, traces remain in expressions like “*both*” (originally a dual form), “*either/neither*” (from dual pronouns), and the word “*twain*” (archaic for “two”).

Other Indo-European languages, such as Slovene, and some Arabic dialects still maintain a productive dual number today.

THE CASE PARADIGM comprised four separate categories: Nominative (subject function), Genitive (possessive relation), Dative (indirect object role), and Accusative (direct object function). These cases were expressed through a series of inflectional suffixes that indicated the syntactic function of each noun within the sentence.

In traditional grammar, Old English nouns were categorized based on ancient stem-forming suffixes that had largely worn away by the time Old English was in use. Already in Gothic, a Germanic language several centuries older than Old English, these suffixes survived only in a diminished form. By the Old English period, the suffixes had further degraded, making them difficult to isolate or identify. Although the original stem elements had nearly vanished, they continued to shape the formation of nominal inflectional endings. Despite the fact that speakers could no longer identify these archaic suffixes, their remnants still dictated which case and number endings a noun would take. As a result, the classification of Old English nouns ultimately rested not on hidden historical stems, but on observable patterns of declension, specifically, the ways nouns modified their endings to express grammatical distinctions. Grammarians, therefore, prioritized visible inflectional patterns over hidden etymological sources. At the core of the system was a division into **strong** and **weak** declensions, each containing multiple subclasses. By grouping nouns according to their real inflectional endings, the system simplified the task of identifying how individual nouns varied in form.

The **STRONG DECLENSION** consisted of nouns that originally used vowel-infixes to form their stems. However, by the Old English era, these earlier vowels (*a*, *o*, *i*, *u*) had mostly been lost, and previously consistent inflection patterns had begun to diversify.

1. In the ***a-stem*** noun class, masculine and neuter nouns were mostly separated by their nominative endings. Neuter *a-stem* nouns with long vowels sometimes had identical forms in the singular and plural. Modern English retains this feature in words like “*sheep*.” Examples include masculine nouns such as *earm* (arm), *eorl* (earl),

biscop (bishop), and *heofon* (heaven), as well as neuter nouns like *word* (word), *beorn* (child), *feoh* (cattle), and *hūs* (house). Some a-stems originally included *j* or *w* sounds, known as *ja-stems* and *wa-stems*, which occasionally persisted in their inflected forms, though the differences were usually slight. Examples illustrate *hyse* (young warrior), *fiscere* (fisherman), *net* (net), and *bedd* (bed).

Pic. 80 – *A-stem Declension Pattern*.

Gender Case	Masculine		Neuter
Singular	Nominative	fisc (<i>fish</i>)	scīp (<i>ship</i>)
	Genitive	fisc es	scīp es
	Dative	fisc e	scīp e
	Accusative	fisc	scīp
Plural	Nominative	fisc as	scīp u
	Genitive	fisc a	scīp a
	Dative	fisc um	scīp um
	Accusative	fisc as	scīp u

NOTE: *A-stems* are named after their Proto-Germanic ancestors, which ended in *-a* in the nominative singular (e.g., *arm-a*, *word-a*). By the Old English period, this final *-a* had disappeared or changed due to sound shifts, so the “*a*” is no longer visible in the declension forms. The label “*a-stem*” persists for historical reference to the original Proto-Germanic stem vowel.

Ja-stems are a variant of *a-stems* where the Proto-Germanic stem vowel *-a* was preceded by a *-j-* sound (e.g., **harjaz* → OE *here*). This *-j-* caused significant phonological changes: umlaut/i-mutation of preceding vowels, occasional extra-*e* endings in Old English forms (e.g., *fisc-e*), and consonant gemination (e.g., *bedd* from **badjam*). Despite these modifications, *ja-stems* follow essentially the same declension pattern as *a-stems*, which is why they are considered a subtype rather than an independent declension class.

Pic. 81 – *Ja-/Wa-stem Declension Pattern*.

Gender/Case	Masculine	Neuter	
Singular	Nominative	ende / hÿse (end / young warrior)	nett / bedd (net / bed)
	Genitive	endes / hÿses	nettes / beddes
	Dative	ende / hÿse	nette / bedde
	Accusative	ende / hÿse	nett / bedd
Plural	Nominative	endas / hÿsas	nett / bedd
	Genitive	enda / hÿsa	netta / bedda
	Dative	endum / hÿsum	nettum / beddum
	Accusative	endas / hÿsas	nett / bedd

WA-STEMS (INCLUDED IN JA-STEMS)

MASCULINE WA-STEMS

sæow (sea)
Variant form related to the word *sæ*; reflects wa-stem behavior.

bearu (grove)
Retains -u in nominative, from Proto-Germanic *barwō*.

snāw (snow)
From Proto-Germanic *snaiwaz* (shows -w influence in spelling and pronunciation).

NEUTER WA-STEMS

trēow (tree)
Plural *trēow*, no change in nominative/accusative; from *treuwā*.

cnēow(w) (knee)
Modern English "knee," from *knēwā*, sometimes shows alternation like *cnēowum* (dative plural).

feoh (cattle, wealth)
Shows irregularities from wa-stem origins; from *fehwa*.

2. *Ō-stem* nouns were always feminine. Monosyllabic nouns with short roots added the ending *-u* in the nominative case (e.g., *caru* “care,” *scamu* “shame”), whereas longer nouns or those with long root vowels had no ending. This category also included *jō-stems* and *wō-stems*, which featured additional *j* or *w* elements, resembling formations in Ukrainian such as *стаття* and *конія*.

Pic. 82 – *O-/Jo-/Wo-stem Declension Pattern*.

Ō-STEMS DECLENSION

Singular	Nominative	caru / scamu (care / shame)	lār / ȝiefu (lore / gift)
	Genitive	care / scame	lāre / ȝiefe
	Dative	care / scame	lāre / ȝiefe
	Accusative	care / scame	lāre / ȝiefe
Plural	Nominative	cara / scama	lāra / ȝiefa
	Genitive	cara / scama	lāra / ȝiefa
	Dative	carum / scamum	lārum / ȝiefum
	Accusative	cara / scama	lāra / ȝiefa

Ō-STEMS VARIANTS

JŌ-STEMS

sibb

(kinship)

Comparison: similar to Ukrainian сім'я (sim'ja)

WŌ-STEMS

bēadu

(battle)

Comparison: similar to Ukrainian ко́нь (konis)

NOTE: The *o*, *jō*-, and *wō*-stems are based on vowels that existed in their Proto-Indo-European origins rather than on vowels that remain visible in the actual Old English words. Through the course of linguistic evolution, processes like vowel reduction and the dropping of word-final syllables caused these vowels to vanish. Similarly, Ukrainian words like *сім'я* and *ко́ня* descend from PIE *i*- and *j*-stems, with endings that developed from *-jo-* or *-jeh₂-*. Although Old English evolved through Germanic channels and Ukrainian through Slavic and Church Latin/Greek influences, both languages preserve structural remnants of their shared Indo-European ancestry.

3. *I-stem* could belong to any gender. Their case endings largely mirrored existing patterns, with masculine and neuter forms borrowing from *a-stem* endings and feminine forms aligning with those of *ō-stems*. This category includes masculine nouns such as *mere* (sea) and *mete* (food), neuter nouns like *sife* (sieve) and *hilt* (hilt), and feminine nouns including *wiht* (thing), *hyde* (hide), and *woruld* (world).

Pic. 83 – *I-stem Declension Pattern*.

I-STEMS (ALL GENDERS)				
Gender/Case		Masculine	Neuter	Feminine
Singular	Nominative	mēre / mēte (sea / food)	sife / hilt (sieve / hilt)	wiht / hȳde (thing / hide)
	Genitive	mēres / mētes	sīfes / hiltēs	wihtē / hȳde
	Dative	mēre / mēte	sife / hiltē	wihtē / hȳde
	Accusative	mēre / mēte	sife / hilt	wiht / hȳde
Plural	Nominative	mēras / mētas	sifu / hilt	wihtā / hȳda
	Genitive	mēra / mēta	sīfa / hiltā	wihtā / hȳda
	Dative	mērūm / mētūm	sīfūm / hiltūm	wihtūm / hȳdūm
	Accusative	mēras / mētas	sifu / hilt	wihtā / hȳda

The classification of these nouns as *i-stems* comes from their Proto-Germanic origins rather than their Old English appearance, since morphological leveling caused many of them to adopt *a-* or *ō-stem* declension patterns over time. In Proto-Germanic, *i-stems* formed a distinct declension group with characteristic endings: *-i(z)* for masculine and feminine nouns and *-i* for neuter nouns. As Old English evolved, the more dominant *a-* and *ō-stem* patterns gradually absorbed many of these nouns, obscuring their original inflectional characteristics. Even so, certain nouns retained enough archaic features for historical linguists to confidently identify them as true *i-stems*.

4. *U-stem* nouns could be either masculine or feminine. Masculine examples cover *wudu* (wood) and *medu* (honey), while feminine samples are *nosu* (nose) and *hand* (hand). Both *ō-stems* and *u-stems* had only three distinct endings across singular and plural, which was sufficient for communication. In contrast, *i-stems* illustrate the decline of the original noun classes, showing a shift toward reorganization based on gender rather than historical stem type.

Pic. 84 – *U-stem Declension Pattern*.

U-STEMS				
Gender/Case		Masculine	Feminine	
Singular	Nominative	wūdu / mēdu (wood / mead)	nōsu / handu (nose / hand)	
	Genitive	wūda / mēda	nōsa / handa	
	Dative	wūda / mēda	nōsa / handa	
	Accusative	wūdu / mēdu	nōsu / handu	
Plural	Nominative	wūdu / mēdu	nōsa / handa	
	Genitive	wūda / mēda	nōsa / handa	
	Dative	wūdum / mēdum	nōsum / handum	
	Accusative	wūdu / mēdu	nōsa / handa	

THE WEAK DECLENSION was mainly made up of *n-stem* nouns, a once-large group that retained the *-n-* suffix in most cases, though it was lost in the nominative. These nouns occurred in all three genders: masculine, e.g., *wita* (wise man), *steorra* (star), *flota* (ship/fleet); neuter, e.g., *cofa* (chamber); and feminine, e.g., *heorte* (heart), *sunne* (sun), *hearpe* (harp).

Pic. 85 – *N-stem Declension Pattern*.

N-STEMS				
Gender/Case		Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
Singular	Nominative	nāma (name)	tunȝe (tongue)	ēaȝe (eye)
	Genitive	nāmān	tunȝān	ēaȝān
	Dative	nāmān	tunȝān	ēaȝān
	Accusative	nāmān	tunȝān	ēaȝe
Plural	Nominative	nāmān	tunȝān	ēaȝān
	Genitive	nāmena	tunȝena	ēaȝena
	Dative	nāmum	tunȝum	ēaȝum
	Accusative	nāmān	tunȝān	ēaȝān

MINOR GROUPS. Relatively minor noun classes included *s-stems*, which were all neuter and occasionally showed *-r-* in oblique cases¹⁴ because of rhotacism, and *nd-stems*, in which masculine nouns were derived from participles that referred to people. *Nd-stems*, represented by nouns such as *wealdend* (ruler) and *scyppend* (creator), blended characteristics of both *a-stems* and *r-stems*, and in some cases formed their plural forms with no added ending at all.

Pic. 86 – *S-stem Declension Pattern*.

S-STEMS (ALL NEUTER)		
Gender/Case		Neuter
Singular	Nominative	lamb / cēalf (lamb / calf)
	Genitive	lambres / cēalfres
	Dative	lambre / cēalfre
	Accusative	lamb / cēalf
Plural	Nominative	lambru / cēalf <u>ru</u>
	Genitive	lambr <u>a</u> / cēalf <u>ra</u>
	Dative	lambrum / cēalf <u>rum</u>
	Accusative	lambru / cēalf <u>ru</u>

Pic. 87 – *Nd-stem Declension Pattern*.

ND-STEMS <i>Substantivized Participles (All Masculine)</i>		
Gender/Case		Masculine
Singular	Nominative	wēaldend / hælend (ruler / savior)
	Genitive	wēaldendes / hælendes
	Dative	wēaldende / hælende
	Accusative	wēaldend / hælend
Plural	Nominative	wēaldend / hælend (or wēaldendas / hælendas)
	Genitive	wēaldendra / hælendra (or wēaldenda / hælenda)
	Dative	wēaldendum / hælendum
	Accusative	wēaldend / hælend (or wēaldendas / hælendas)

¹⁴ The term “oblique cases” refers to all grammatical cases other than the nominative (the subject case). In other words, they mark nouns, pronouns, or adjectives in roles such as:

- Accusative – direct object;
- Dative – indirect object;
- Genitive – possession;
- Instrumental – means or agent (in some languages).

Root stems lacked stem-forming suffixes. Although few in number, these words were commonly used. The group included compound nouns containing *man*, such as *wīfman* (woman) and *ealdorman* (nobleman), as well as simple nouns like *fōt* (foot) and *mūs* (mouse).

Pic. 88 – *Root-stem Declension Pattern*.

ROOT-STEMS			
Gender/Case		Masculine	Feminine
Singular	Nominative	man (<i>man</i>)	mūs (<i>mouse</i>)
	Genitive	mannes	mūse
	Dative	man	mȳs
	Accusative	man	mūs
Plural	Nominative	men	mȳs
	Genitive	manna	mūsa
	Dative	mannum	mūsūm
	Accusative	men	mȳs

R-stems maintained a limited, fixed set of masculine and feminine nouns, among them *dohtor* (daughter) and *sweostor* (sister).

Usually, there was no correlation between division into declensions and the meaning of nouns, but:

a) -s stem declension included nouns of neuter gender denoting little ones: *cealf* (E calf), *cild* (E child), *æz* (E egg). Compare: *небо – небеса*;

b) -r stem declension included nouns denoting relatives: *fæder* (E father), *mōdor* (E mother), *brōþar* (E brother), *dohtor* (E daughter). Compare: *мату – матеми*;

A lot of the so-called exceptions in English now are remnants of different declensions:

- -n-stem declension – OE *oxa* – *oxan* (plural) >E *ox* – *oxen*;
- -root-stem declension - *man*, *mouse*, *foot* (OE *fōt* > *fōti* > *fēti* (plural) >ME *feet*) (vowel interchange appeared because of frontal mutation under the influence of *i* inflection);

- *-a-stem* declension, neuter gender – *sheep* (OE *sceap* – *sceapu* (plural) > ME *sheep*);
- *-s-stem* declension – *child* (O.E. *cildsu* > *cildru* (plural) > ME *children*) (an interesting case: first *s* developed into *z* and then into *r* according to *rhotacism*. Finally, *n* was added because there were a lot of nouns belonging to *n-stem* declension).

To sum it up, Old English noun declensions were organized into several distinct stem classes, each named according to its characteristic stem element inherited from Proto-Germanic. *Vowel (strong) stems* took their title from the thematic vowel that appeared in the stem, with the *a-stem* representing the most prevalent masculine declension pattern. *Consonant (weak) stems*, by contrast, were classified according to the consonant that concluded the stem, and among these, the *n-stem* emerged as the most frequently occurring weak declension. *Root stems* constituted an ancient category of athematic nouns that exhibited vowel alternation (ablaut) between their singular and plural forms, as demonstrated by the alternation *fōt* → *fēt*. The Modern English regular plural suffix *-s* traces its ancestry primarily to the Old English *a-stem* plural ending *-as*, which eventually generalized across the language to become the dominant pluralization strategy. Meanwhile, irregular plurals such as *feet*, *teeth*, and *geese* preserve the archaic root-stem ablaut pattern, maintaining a direct morphological link to the earliest stages of Germanic noun inflection.

Pic. 89 – *Declensions in Old English. Summary.*

	a-stem	ō-stem	u-stem	i-stem	n-stem	r-stem	s-stem	Root stem
Case & Number	Vowel (Strong) Stems				Consonant (Weak) Stems			Root Stems
	a	ō	u	i	n	r	s	
Example Word	stān (stone)	cāru (care)	sūnu (son)	wīne (wine/friend)	nāma (name)	fāder (father)	lamb (lamb)	fōt (foot)
Nom. Sing.	stān	cāru	sūnu	wīne	nāma	fāder	lamb	fōt
Nom. Plur.	stānas	cāra	sūna	wīne	nāman	fāderas	lamb(ru)	fēt

The Old English nominal system represents a language in transition. Originally based on Proto-Germanic stem classes, the system had already undergone significant erosion by the Old English period, with ancient stem-forming vowels largely lost to sound change. What remained was a complex declension system divided into strong and weak patterns, supplemented by smaller relict groups. Although the historical stem elements that gave each class its name were no longer visible to speakers, they continued to influence inflectional behavior. This system, marked by overlapping patterns and gradual leveling, foreshadowed the dramatic simplification that would characterize later stages of English, illustrating the tension between inherited grammatical complexity and the language's drift toward simpler, more analytic structures.

Pic. 90 – Overview of Declensional Patterns.

Summary of Declension Trends			
DECLENSION PATTERN	WORD-FORMING CAPACITY	GENDER ALLOCATION	LINGUISTIC EVOLUTION
Strong (vocalic)	Originally most productive	All three genders	Breaking down by Old English period
Weak (n-stems)	Stable, well-preserved	All three genders	Preserved distinct features
Root stems	Small but high-frequency	All three genders	Archaic, conservative group
Minor consonantal	Declining or closed systems	Varies by type	Mostly fossilized remnants

During the MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD, English underwent a major structural transformation marked by the disappearance of its noun declension system and grammatical gender. Where Old English had relied on distinct case and number endings to categorize nouns into different inflectional groups, these markers gradually eroded,

simplified, or vanished entirely, making the original classification framework obsolete. At the same time, the **three-gender system** (masculine, feminine, neuter) was completely abandoned, unlike what persists in languages like German or French. Grammatical gender disappeared entirely from nouns, and present-day pronouns like *he* and *she* refer to biological sex rather than grammatical categories, while the singular/plural distinction continued in a reduced and simplified pattern. The four-case structure broke down, preserving primarily subject/object differences, with only the genitive surviving as the possessive form. Plural construction became regularized around the *-s* suffix, inherited from the masculine *a-stem* declension. As inflectional endings diminished, English adopted a rigid *Subject-Verb-Object* scheme and relied increasingly on prepositions to perform the roles once filled by case endings. Collectively, these **developments reshaped English from a heavily inflected tongue into the more analytical, word-order-dependent language familiar today.**

Pic. 91 – *Middle English Noun System Transformation.*

Category	Old English System	Middle English Result
DECLENSION SYSTEM	Multiple stem classes: - Vowel stems: a-, ō-, u-, i- - Consonant stems: n-, r-, s- - Root stems with ablaut <i>Different inflectional patterns per class</i>	Complete disappearance - Case/number endings eroded - Stem distinctions obliterated - Classification framework obsolete <i>Single simplified pattern</i>
GRAMMATICAL GENDER	Three-gender system: - Masculine (stān - stone) - Feminine (cāru - care) - Neuter (scīp - ship) <i>Arbitrary grammatical assignment</i>	Total loss - No grammatical gender on nouns - Pronouns reflect biological sex only <i>He/she</i> = natural gender <i>It</i> = inanimate objects <i>Unlike German/French which retain gender</i>
CASE SYSTEM	Four cases: - Nominative (subject) - Accusative (direct object) - Genitive (possession) - Dative (indirect object) <i>Marked by distinct noun endings</i>	Collapsed to two: - Common case (subject/object merged) - Genitive (possessive -'s survived) <i>Nom./Acc./Dat. → identical forms</i>
NUMBER SYSTEM	Multiple plural patterns: -as (stānas - stones) -a (gīefa - gifts) -u (scīpu - ships) -an (nāman - names) - Ablaut (fēt - feet) <i>Plural form depended on declension class</i>	Regularized to -s/-es: - Generalized from a-stem masculine -as - Became default plural marker - Few irregulars preserved (feet, mice, oxen, children) <i>Modern: stone-stones, ship-ships</i>
WORD ORDER	Flexible: - Case endings marked grammatical roles - SOV, SVO, VSO all possible - Poetry: extreme variation	Rigid SVO pattern: - Subject-Verb-Object fixed - Word position indicates function - Minimal flexibility allowed

By the EARLY MODERN ENGLISH era, the noun system had essentially developed into the structure recognizable in contemporary English. The complex Old English case system was reduced to a form represented by the common nominative and the genitive, the latter functioning mainly to mark possession and used primarily with nouns denoting animate beings. This possessive function became so dominant that the genitive came to be widely known as the “*possessive case*.” The apostrophe as a written marker of possession emerged only around 1680 for singular nouns and wasn’t applied to plural possessives until 1789, a delay that bred lasting confusion, since genitive and plural endings were frequently pronounced identically. The process of forming plurals steadily became more uniform, with the *-es* ending displacing most earlier patterns, though irregular forms like *geese*, *feet*, and *children* survived as holdovers from the older system. Meanwhile, scholarly and scientific writing drew heavily on Latin loanwords that preserved their original plural forms, such as *datum/data*, *formula/formulae*, and *axis/axes*, reflecting the prestige Latin commanded in academic circles. The outcome was a hybrid noun system that combined a plain native structure with lingering irregular forms and learned borrowings, producing the mixed yet broadly regular system that characterizes modern English.

Thus, in the Early Middle English period, the noun system experienced a cascade of changes:

1. Plural formation acquired a stable pattern, with the *-s/-es* ending becoming the norm for most nouns by Shakespeare’s era, replacing the variety seen in Chaucer’s time (*eyen* → *eyes*, *fōr* → *foes*). Yet several irregular plurals persisted as remnants of Old English, including vowel-change plurals (*man–men*, *woman–women*, *tooth–teeth*, *foot–feet*, *goose–geese*, *mouse–mice*, *louse–lice*), *-n* plurals (*ox-oxen*, *child-children*, and older forms like *cow-kine*, *shoe-shoon*, *pea-peasen*, *house-housen*), internal vowel shifts in specific contexts (*brother–brethren*)¹⁵, and zero-marked plurals (*deer*, *sheep*, *swine*, *folk*, *cattle*, *poultry*, *game*, *trout*, *cod*, *salmon*, *pike*, *bream*). The dual number

¹⁵ The word *brethren* is used in its conventional religious sense to describe members of a spiritual fraternity united by shared faith and discipline rather than familial connections. “*Brethren*” is an archaic or formal plural that today is mostly used in religious, monastic, or ceremonial contexts.

disappeared, leaving only singular and plural distinctions, while collective nouns expanded in semantic scope (*flock, herd, school, pride*) and developed distinct agreement patterns (e.g., British *the team are* vs. American *the team is*). Loanwords preserved their foreign plural forms, especially from Latin (*datum/data, alumnus/alumni*), Greek (*criterion/criteria, phenomenon/phenomena*), and French (*château/châteaux*). These developments produced a system that grew more regular over time yet continued to preserve irregular forms alongside learned borrowings.

2. Modern English drew clearer grammatical distinctions between mass nouns (uncountable concepts like *water* and *information*) and count nouns (quantifiable items such as *books* and *ideas*), along with the determiner patterns that correspond to each, such as *much* versus *many*

3. The shift from Chaucer's Middle English to Shakespeare's Early Modern English illustrates how English case endings gradually simplified. In Chaucer's day, nouns bore distinct inflectional suffixes to signal different grammatical roles, such as *kinges* for the genitive to express possession and *kinge* for the dative to mark indirect objects. By Shakespeare's era, this complex system had been reduced to a simpler arrangement, with a single marked form (*king's*) handling possession and the bare noun (*king*) serving all other functions. This reflects English's broader transformation from a synthetic language (one that leaned heavily on inflectional morphology) into an analytic language that relies primarily on word order and prepositions to convey grammatical relationships. Ultimately, only the nominative and genitive cases survived. Alongside this, a new construction emerged in which nouns could be placed in sequence without any genitive marker, as in *mother tongue* or *lady slipper*.

4. Nouns increasingly gained the ability to function in multiple grammatical roles without changing form, as in verbs formed by conversion, such as *to water*, *to google*, *to email*, *to green-light* (meaning "to grant approval"), or *summer* used adjectivally in *summer vacation*.

5. The distinction of grammatical gender was fully abolished.

Pic. 92 – Early Modern & Modern English Noun System.

CATEGORY	Middle English (Chaucer)	Early Modern English (Shakespeare onward)
CASE SYSTEM	Residual case distinctions: - Nominative (common case) - Genitive: <i>kinges</i> (possession) - Dative remnants: <i>kinge</i> (indirect object) <i>Still some inflectional variety</i>	Reduced to two cases: - Common/Nominative: <i>king</i> (all roles) - Genitive/Possessive: <i>king's</i> <i>Genitive = "possessive case" (mainly animate nouns)</i>
APOSTROPHE MARKER	Not yet established: - No orthographic apostrophe - Genitive written as -es or -s <i>kinges, mannes</i>	Apostrophe introduced: ~1680: singular possessives (<i>king's</i>) 1789: plural possessives (<i>kings's</i>) - Confusion: genitive/plural sound identical <i>king's crown vs. kings' crowns</i>
PLURAL FORMATION	Variable patterns: -s/-es emerging as dominant -en plurals still common: <i>eyen</i> (eyes) - Vowel plurals: <i>fōr</i> (foes) - Much variation remains <i>Multiple competing patterns</i>	Regularized -s/-es: <i>eyen</i> → <i>eyes</i>, <i>fōr</i> → <i>foes</i> - Standard pattern by Shakespeare's era - Irregular plurals preserved as fossils <i>Stable, predictable system established</i>
IRREGULAR PLURALS	Inherited from OE: - Vowel-change plurals active -en plurals productive - Zero plurals established <i>Still felt as regular alternatives</i>	Fossilized remnants: Vowel-change: man–men, woman–women, tooth–teeth, foot–feet, goose–geese, mouse–mice, louse–lice -n plurals: ox–oxen, child–children; older: cow–kine, shoe–shoon, pea–peasen, house–housen Internal shifts: brother–brethren Zero plurals: deer, sheep, swine, folk, cattle, poultry, game, trout, cod, salmon, pike, bream
NUMBER SYSTEM	Dual disappearing: - Dual number lost in nouns - Singular vs. plural only <i>Two-way distinction solidifying</i>	Dual completely gone: - Only singular/plural remain - Collective nouns expanded: <i>flock, herd, school, pride</i> - Agreement variation: BrE <i>team are</i> vs. AmE <i>team is</i>
LEARNED BORROWINGS	French dominance: - French plurals common - Limited Latin/Greek loans <i>château/châteaux pattern</i>	Latin/Greek prestige: Latin: datum/data, alumnus/alumni, formula/formulae, axis/axes Greek: criterion/criteria, phenomenon/phenomena French: château/châteaux retained <i>Academic/scientific register</i>
MASS vs. COUNT NOUNS	Emerging distinction: - Basic countability differences - Determiner patterns developing <i>Not yet fully systematized</i>	Precise grammatical distinction: Mass nouns: water, information (non-countable) Count nouns: books, ideas (countable) - Determiner agreement: <i>much</i> vs. <i>many</i> <i>Clear syntactic patterns established</i>
NOUN COMPOUNDS	Genitive linking: - Compounds with genitive marker - Inflectional linking common <i>kinges sone (king's son)</i>	Direct juxtaposition: - Nouns in sequence without genitive <i>mother tongue, lady slipper, summer vacation</i> - Highly productive pattern <i>Noun + noun compounds proliferate</i>
FUNCTIONAL FLEXIBILITY	Some conversion: - Limited noun-verb conversion - Class boundaries stronger <i>Less flexible than later periods</i>	Conversion explosion: Noun → verb: to water, to google, to email, to green-light Noun → adjective: summer vacation, winter coat - Zero-derivation highly productive <i>Multifunctional without form change</i>
GRAMMATICAL GENDER	Already lost: - No grammatical gender on nouns - Natural gender in pronouns <i>Complete by ME period</i>	Fully abolished: - System confirmed as genderless - No revival or retention - Biological sex only <i>Permanent feature of English</i>

Overall, the development of the English noun system represents a slide from inflectional complexity toward syntactic clarity, driven by rigid word order and accelerated vocabulary growth that intensified during particular decisive eras.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Old English had three numbers: singular, dual, and plural. Which modern languages still preserve the dual number? Why do you think English lost this grammatical category while other languages retained it?
2. The word “*wife*” (OE *wīf*) was grammatically neuter in Old English, despite referring to a female person. Can you find three other examples where grammatical gender didn’t match biological sex? What does this tell us about the nature of grammatical gender?
3. Old English distinguished between strong and weak noun declensions. Examine the examples of n-stem nouns (*wita*, *steorra*, *heorte*). Can you identify any traces of the weak declension -*n* suffix in Modern English words? (Hint: think of the word “*oxen*”).
4. Modern English irregular plurals like “*geese*,” “*feet*,” and “*mice*” are remnants of Old English. Using the information about *i-stem* nouns and umlaut, can you explain the vowel change pattern in these words? Try to find three more examples of this pattern in contemporary English.
5. Modern English has borrowed many Latin and Greek words that retain foreign plural forms (*datum/data*, *criterion/criteria*). Create a list of 10 such words and their plurals. Which of these are commonly misused in everyday English? Why do you think confusion occurs? What nouns have developed parallel plural forms?
6. The apostrophe for possession appeared around 1680 for singular nouns and 1789 for plurals. Before this, how do you think possession was marked in writing? Find examples from Early Modern English texts (such as Shakespeare or *the King James Bible*) to support your answer.
7. Create a timeline showing the major changes in English noun morphology from Old English to Modern English. Include: the loss of the dual number, the reduction of cases from four to two, the disappearance of grammatical gender, and the regularization of plural formation.
8. The pace mentions that nouns increasingly gained the ability to function in multiple grammatical roles (“*to zoom*,” “*to water*”). This process is called conversion or zero-derivation. Find ten recent examples from contemporary English (especially from technology, social media, or business language) and discuss whether this represents a continuation of historical trends or something new.
9. Compare the Old English case system (Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative) with the case systems of modern German, Ukrainian, or Latin. What cases did English lose that these languages retained? How does Modern English express the relationships that were once marked by the Dative and Accusative cases?
10. Old English had zero-marked plurals in some neuter a-stems (like “*sheep*” in Modern English). The text lists several Modern English words that preserve this

pattern: *deer, sheep, swine, folk, cattle*. What do most of these words have in common semantically? Why might this semantic category resist the regular *-s* plural?

The ADJECTIVE.

Most historical linguists agree that OLD ENGLISH had a relatively small set of adjectives. These comprised core adjectives originating from prior Germanic eras, along with forms created by attaching suffixes to noun stems. The core inherited adjectives derive from Indo-European sources and convey fundamental concepts, among them *new* (OE *nīwe* < PIE *h₁néwos*), *old* (OE *eald* < PIE *h₂el-*), *good* (OE *Ʒōd* < PIE *Ʒ^{hedh-}*), and color terms such as *red* (OE *rēad* < PIE *h₁rewd^{h-}*). In Old English, adjectives behaved similarly to those in Slavic languages, fully agreeing with their nouns in number, gender, and case, while also retaining characteristics unique to the adjective class.

Old English adjectives displayed a variety of morphological distinctions, including singular and plural number, masculine, feminine, and neuter gender, and a case system that generated four distinct forms for feminine adjectives and five for masculine and neuter ones. They also encoded degrees of comparison across positive, comparative, and superlative forms, and possessed a notable distinction between definite and indefinite inflection, whereby different ending patterns applied depending on whether the adjective occurred alongside a determiner or stood alone.

Old English adjectives generally followed one of two declension patterns, known as the *strong* and *weak* forms. These distinctions, along with their historical development, closely paralleled the patterns found in noun declensions, both of which traced their origins to Proto-Germanic stem-forming suffixes of vocalic stems (*a-*, *o-*, *u-*, *i-*) and consonantal *n-stems*. The strong declension drew its endings primarily from *a-stem nouns* for masculine and neuter adjectives and from *o-stem nouns* for feminine adjectives. However, certain strong adjective endings had no direct equivalents in the noun system and instead resembled pronominal forms, among them *-um* in the dative singular, *-ne* in the masculine accusative singular, and *-r* in some feminine and plural forms. This pronominal influence has led some scholars to characterize *the strong declension* as the “*pronominal declension*.” The *weak declension*, for its part, largely

shared its endings with *n-stem* nouns, though the genitive plural frequently took the pronominal ending *-ra* in place of the typical weak ending *-ena*. Together, these two patterns allowed Old English adjectives to express complex grammatical relationships while preserving the derivational consistency transmitted from earlier Germanic stages.

In Old English, strong and weak adjective forms differed not just in their endings but also in their meaning. Unlike nouns, adjectives were not fixed to a single declension; most could follow either pattern depending on context, including syntactic role, degree of comparison, and whether a determiner was present. Strong forms were used when adjectives stood alone or without a determiner, like *gōd mann* (“a good man”), while weak forms appeared after demonstratives or genitive pronouns, as in *sē gōda mann* (“the good man”). This resulted in a semantic distinction in which strong forms indicated indefiniteness and weak forms flagged definiteness, giving rise to what linguists describe as a grammatical category of *definiteness* versus *indefiniteness*. In OE, there were no articles yet, so the functions now performed by articles were executed by strong and weak declension forms of adjectives. Old English adjectives theoretically could have exhibited up to sixty distinct forms when looking at all possible forms across both declension systems. This figure derives from the fact that adjectives were inflected for three genders (masculine, feminine, neuter), two numbers (singular, plural), and four to five cases (nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, and sometimes instrumental). Each declension type, both strong and weak, could theoretically generate thirty forms (3 genders × 2 numbers (or 3 with dual number) × 5 cases = 30), producing up to sixty distinct patterns across both paradigms. However, this theoretical maximum is somewhat misleading, as strong versus weak declension was determined by syntactic context (the presence of definite articles, demonstratives, or possessives) rather than reflecting independent variation. In practice, widespread syncretism noticeably reduced the number of distinct forms that actually appeared. Syncretism occurs when different grammatical categories share identical patterns; for example, the strong declension form *blindne* could simultaneously represent the masculine accusative singular, the feminine genitive singular, the feminine dative

singular, and the genitive plural across all genders. Due to this extensive syncretism, only about eleven distinct endings actually emerged in practice, meaning that while the grammatical categories remained theoretically distinct, the physical forms used to express them were significantly fewer. This marks a major reduction from the theoretical sixty-form system to a smaller, more practical set of actual phonetic forms. Adjectival paradigms exhibited homonymy almost three times as frequently as noun paradigms, with the influence on grammatical categories varying to different extents. The most consequential simplification involved the erosion of gender distinctions: plural forms showed almost no gender differentiation, most weak singular forms abandoned gender contrasts entirely, and even within the strong declension, masculine and neuter forms remained nearly indistinguishable. This steady wearing away of formal distinctions marks a defining moment in the broader historical simplification of English morphology.

Number, case, and the strong-weak distinction were more transparent than gender. The strong declension preserved clear distinctions in number and case, with neutralization occurring only in the dative for masculine and neuter forms. By comparison, the weak declension lacked morphological variety, with most forms collapsing into *-an*, leading to considerable homonymy across the paradigm.

In the later Old English period, the clarity of adjectival paradigms declined as their formal distinctions eroded. The instrumental case merged completely with the dative, and many variant forms appeared with weakened endings or morphological features borrowed by analogy from other parts of the paradigm. Analogical leveling and phonetic weakening significantly diminished the transparency of grammatical categories throughout the adjectival system.

Most Old English adjectives retained a three-tiered system of comparison, including positive, comparative, and superlative forms. Regularly, comparatives were formed with the suffix *-ra* or *-ira* and superlatives with *-ost* or *-est* added to the positive stem. Some adjectives also showed ablaut, systematic vowel changes in the root that accompanied suffixation. A small group of adjectives followed suppletive patterns, replacing the entire root in the comparative and superlative forms rather than using the

standard suffixes, reflecting irregularities inherited from Indo-European that persisted into the Germanic period.

Pic. 93 – *Degrees of Comparison in Old English Adjectives.*

⚡ 1. SUFFIXATION -RA / -RE -EST / -OST			
POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE -RA (M), -RE (F, N)	SUPERLATIVE -EST / -OST	NEW ENGLISH
sōft	sōftra	sōftost	soft
heard	heardra, heardre	heardost	hard 'brave'
smæl	smæltra	smælest	small
clæne	clænra	clænost	clean
stranȝ	stranȝra	stranȝest	strong
wēriȝ	wēriȝra, wēriȝre	wēriȝost	weary

📦 2. SUFFIXATION + VOWEL INTERCHANGE			
POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE -RA (M), -RE (F, N)	SUPERLATIVE -EST / -OST	NEW ENGLISH
lanȝ	lenȝra	lenȝest	long
eald	ieldra, ieldre	ieldest	old
sceort	scyrtra	scyrtest	short
stearc	stycra	styrcest	stark
hēah	hierra	hiehest	high
ȝeonȝ	ȝinȝra	ȝinȝest	young

🔥 3. SUPPLETION (COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ROOTS)			
POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE	NEW ENGLISH
ȝōd	bet(e)ra	bet(e)st	good
yfel	wiersa / wyrsa	wierrest	evil / bad
lȳtel	læssa	læst	little
micel	māra	mæst	much / great

The adjectival paradigm of MIDDLE ENGLISH underwent substantial simplification relative to its Old English predecessor. Inflectional markers were sharply reduced, and the entire gender category vanished after it disappeared from the noun system. Agreement between adjectives and nouns based on case was entirely abandoned. Of the original system, only two morphological distinctions survived: a plural suffix *-e* and vestiges of the Old English weak declension, with adjectives preceded by articles retaining the *-e* ending. This produced minimal pairs such as *Ʒeonz cniht* versus the *Ʒeonze cniht* in the singular, and *Ʒeonze cnihtas* versus the *Ʒeonze cnihtas* in the plural. This exemplifies a major morphological simplification in English, condensing the diverse Old English system of potentially 60 adjective forms into two basic forms: the base and the *-e* ending. This reduction went hand in hand with the broader morphological changes taking place in Middle English nouns, and together they reflected the language's comprehensive shift from a system built on inflectional endings to one governed by word order and syntax.

THE MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD saw the final simplification of adjectival morphology, leaving only degrees of comparison from the earlier inflectional system. By the end of the Middle English period, adjectives had shed all remaining endings apart from the comparative *-er* and superlative *-est* suffixes. During the Early Modern English period (roughly 1500–1700), the use of synthetic versus analytic comparative forms settled into a consistent pattern. Shorter adjectives, typically monosyllabic and some disyllabic forms, kept the inherited Germanic suffixes, as in *tall/taller/tallest*, while longer adjectives took on analytic constructions using *more* and *most*, as in *beautiful/more beautiful/most beautiful*. This change mirrored the broader tendency of English to move toward a more analytic grammatical structure.

The standardization process also regularized many previously irregular comparative forms, although some suppletive patterns remained, such as *good/better/best* and *bad/worse/worst*. The Early Modern period also introduced prescriptive rules for comparative usage, including the prohibition of “double comparatives” like *more better*, which had been acceptable in earlier stages. This morphological simplification marks the culmination of English's shift from a highly

synthetic language with complex adjectival agreement to a largely analytic system based on word order and auxiliary structures, with degrees of comparison remaining as the only surviving inflectional category for adjectives.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. The pace states that core Old English adjectives derive from Indo-European sources: *nīwe* (new) < PIE *h₁néwos*, *eald* (old) < PIE *h₂el-*, *Ʒōd* (good) < PIE *Ʒ^{hed}h-*, *rēad* (red) < PIE *h₁rewd^h-*. Research linguistically related forms of these adjectives in other Indo-European languages (such as Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, or Slavic languages). What does this tell you about the age and stability of basic adjective vocabulary?
2. Old English adjectives agreed with nouns in number, gender, and case, similar to Slavic languages. Compare the adjectival agreement system in modern Ukrainian or Polish with what you know about Old English. Create a parallel chart showing how adjectives inflect in both systems. What similarities and differences do you observe?
3. Gender distinctions in Old English adjectives eroded more quickly than other categories. In the plural, gender differences nearly disappeared, and most weak singular forms abandoned gender contrasts. Why might gender be more vulnerable to loss than number or case distinctions?
4. Should we consider the parallel forms *older* and *elder* separately? Which of these forms do you think is historically older, and why? Explain why the form *elder* has been preserved in Modern English, particularly in connection with its social and familial meaning (e.g. the status of the elder son).
5. Old English distinguished between strong and weak adjective declensions based on definiteness. Compare “*Ʒōd mann*” (a good man) with “*sē Ʒōda mann*” (the good man). Can you find any traces of this definiteness distinction in Modern Germanic languages like German, Dutch, or Scandinavian languages? How do they mark it?
6. The weak adjective declension in Old English mostly used the same endings as n-stem nouns, but the genitive plural often used the pronominal ending *-ra* instead of *-ena*. Why might adjectives borrow pronominal endings more readily than noun endings? What does this suggest about the grammatical nature of adjectives?
7. Early Modern English prohibited “double comparatives” like “more better,” which had been acceptable in earlier stages. Find three examples of double comparatives from Shakespeare’s plays. Why might this construction have been criticized by prescriptive grammarians? Is there any logical reason to prohibit it?
8. The OE adjectives could be created by attaching suffixes to noun stems in Old English. Research common Old English adjective-forming suffixes (such as *-iƷ*, *-isc*, *-lic*, *-full*). Which of these survive in Modern English? Create ten examples of adjectives formed with each surviving suffix.
9. Create a timeline showing the stages of adjective simplification from Old English to Modern English. Include: the loss of gender agreement, the loss of case

agreement, the loss of the weak/strong distinction, and the standardization of comparison patterns. At which historical period did each change occur?

10. Old English had both synthetic (suffix-based) and suppletive (root-changing) comparison strategies inherited from Indo-European. Modern English retains both but also adds analytic (*more/most*) forms. Research when the analytic comparison first appeared in English. Was it influenced by contact with French or Latin? Find the earliest documented examples.

11. Modern English prohibits adjective-noun agreement, but some fossilized phrases preserve older patterns: “*from time immemorial*,” “*notary public*” (plural: “*notaries public*”), “*court martial*” (plural: “*courts martial*”). Find ten such fossilized phrases and explain what historical pattern each preserves. Are these patterns still productive, or are they limited to fixed expressions?

12. Old English had a relatively small set of adjectives compared to nouns and verbs. Research the proportion of adjectives in Old English texts versus Modern English texts. Has the relative frequency of adjective usage increased over time? What factors might explain any changes you observe?

The ADVERB.

Adverbs fall into two main types: primary, which are original, and those derived from adjectives. As a class, adverbs emerged comparatively late in linguistic history, given that early Proto-Indo-European had none at all. Over time, certain fossilized case forms of nouns and pronouns that had shed their inflectional endings gradually took on the role of adverbial modifiers.

OLD ENGLISH included a set of basic primary adverbs, among them *þa* (“then”), *þonne* (“then”), *þær* (“there”), *þider* (“thither”), *nú* (“now”), *hēr* (“here”), *hider* (“hither”), *heonan* (“hence”), *sōna* (“soon”), *oft* (“often”), *eft* (“again”), *swā* (“so”), and *hwīlum* (“sometimes”).

Secondary adverbs emerged from the instrumental singular forms of neuter adjectives adhering to strong declension patterns. These uniformly adopted the suffix -*e*: *wīde* (widely), *dēope* (deeply), *fæste* (fast), *heard* (hard). A second major category used the suffixes -*līc* and -*līce* with more elaborate adjectives: *bealdlīce* (boldly), *freondlīce* (in a friendly way). Kate Burridge, in her *Weeds in the Garden of Words*, makes a remark on that: “*Around a thousand years ago, forming adverbs was quite straightforward. Most of the time, they were derived from adjectives by the addition of a simple ending – a final vowel e. For instance, you could take the adjective **glæd** (the*

same as our modern word **glad**) and add an **-e** – **glæde** meaning ‘gladly’. Now, the **-ly** ending on **gladly** that has become a feature of our modern adverbs was originally a noun **līc**, meaning ‘body’ or ‘shape’¹⁶. It’s the same word **lych**, ‘body or corpse,’ that is preserved in Modern English as **lychgate**, the gateway before the churchyard where a coffin is placed before burial. This word **līc** was added to nouns in Old English to form adjectives. So from a noun like **cræft** meaning ‘skill’, you would form the adjective **cræftlic** meaning literally ‘having the appearance of skill’, or ‘skilful’. To make the adverb from these adjectives you would, as in other cases, simply add the **-e** onto the **lic** ending; hence **cræftlic** ‘skilful’ became **cræftlice** ‘skilfully’. It was clear-cut.” (Burridge, 2005, p. 85).

Like adjectives, adverbs possessed comparative and superlative forms, exhibiting three degrees of comparison. The patterns varied substantially, spanning from regular formations to highly irregular constructions: a) **Regular comparative patterns**: *wīde* – *wīdor* – *wīdost* (widely – more widely – most widely), *hraðe* (quickly) – *hraðor* – *hraðost* (quickly – more quickly – most quickly). b) **Irregular and suppletive forms**: *lonȝ* – *lenȝira* (long – longer), *feorr* (far) – *fierra* (farther), *sōfte* (softly) – *sēfte* (more softly), *ēaðe* (easily) – *ēaðra* (more easily), *nēah* (near) – *nēar* – *nēhst* (near – nearer – nearest). Within this category, we observe either vowel alternation as in *lanȝa* – *lenȝ* and *feorr* (far) – *fierra*, or vowel alternations combined with irregular suffixes as in *ēaðe* – *ēaðra*. The principal concern was that *sōfte* – *sēfte*, *ēaðe* – *ēaðra*, and *nēah* – *nēar* – *nēhst* are irregular owing to stem modifications (vowel mutations, consonant alterations) rather than being genuinely suppletive (which necessitates completely distinct roots). The suppletive category should be designated exclusively for forms employing entirely different stems. c) **Highly irregular suppletive comparisons**: *wel* (well) – *betera* – *betst/best* (well – better – best), *yfele* (badly) – *wyrsa/wiersa* – *wierrest* (badly – worse – worst), *micelle* (much) – *māra* – *māest* (much – more – most), *lȝtle* (little) – *lāssa* – *lāest* (little – less – least).

¹⁶ Compare with the archaic Biblical «лик» = «облик». However, the Old Slavic «ликъ» was initially linked to “an assembly of angels of the same rank”, or later, “the visage of the Savior as an image.”

Adverbial formation underwent considerable change during the MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD. Adverbs were commonly formed by attaching the suffix *-e* or *-ly*, the latter derived from Old English *-lice*, to adjectives, yielding forms such as *softe* and *quicklye*. As the final *-e* gradually faded from spoken English, the *-ly* ending became the more productive morphological option. The boundary between adjectives and adverbs remained somewhat fluid during this era, with adjectives frequently performing adverbial functions without any morphological change, especially in poetic and colloquial usage. As a result, constructions like “*He spake loud*” and “*He spake loudly*” coexisted, pointing to the continued variability in adverbial formation.

From the MODERN ENGLISH period to the present day, the *-ly* suffix has become the standard and grammatically preferred means of forming adverbs from adjectives (as seen in *slow* → *slowly*, *beautiful* → *beautifully*). However, flat adverbs, forms that share identical morphology with their corresponding adjectives, have remained in use and continue to appear frequently, particularly in informal speech and fixed expressions (*drive safe*, *work hard*, *sleep tight*).

In CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH, especially in informal contexts like advertising, digital platforms, and social media, there is growing stylistic flexibility favouring punchy wording and impactful phrases, such as “*Think different*,” rather than the standard “*differently*”. Thus, modern usage is balanced, with *-ly* forms dominating formal contexts, but conversational English mixes both types, shaped by flow, emphasis, and style.

Pic. 94 – *The Evolution of English Adverbs*.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Kate Burridge mentions that forming adverbs in Old English was "quite straightforward." Explain the two main methods of adverb formation in Old English, providing at least two examples for each method.
- The word *lychgate* preserves an Old English element that was crucial in adverb formation. What does this word mean, and how does understanding its etymology help explain the origin of the *-ly* suffix in modern adverbs like *boldly* or *skillfully*?
- Look at these Old English adverb pairs and identify the pattern of comparison used in each: (a) *wel – betera – best*, (b) *wīde – wīdor – wīdost*, (c) *lanza – lenȝ*. Which represents regular formation, which shows vowel alternation, and which is truly suppletive? Justify your classification.
- During the Middle English period, both "*He spake loud*" and "*He spake loudly*" were acceptable. What linguistic process was occurring that allowed this variation? How does this Middle English flexibility relate to modern expressions like "*drive safe*" or "*work hard*"?
- The text distinguishes between irregular forms and suppletive forms in adverb comparison. Explain why *nēah – nēar – nēhst* (near – nearer – nearest) should be classified as irregular rather than suppletive, while *wel – betera – best* (well – better – best) is genuinely suppletive.
- Modern advertising often uses phrases like "*Think different*" instead of "*Think differently*." Based on the historical development of adverbs described in the text, is this a new phenomenon or a return to an older pattern? Support your answer with evidence from at least two historical periods.
- The adverbs emerged relatively late in linguistic history, and early Proto-Indo-European lacked them entirely. What does this suggest about how languages express

manner and modification? How did Old English compensate for the original absence of true adverbs?

8. Identify which of the following Old English primary adverbs have survived into Modern English with similar form and meaning: *þā, nū, hēr, sōna, oft, swāhwīlum*. For those who have not survived, can you suggest what modern English words or expressions replaced them?

The PRONOUN.

In contemporary English, pronouns form a relatively small but functional class of words that serve as substitutes for nouns and noun phrases. Some pronouns can belong to multiple categories depending on their usage in a sentence. For example, “*that*” can function as both a demonstrative pronoun and a relative pronoun.

Pic. 95 – *Classes of Pronouns in Modern English.*

PERSONAL PRONOUNS	REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS
Subject pronouns act as the subject of a verb. Examples: <i>I, you, he, she, it, we, and they.</i> Object pronouns act as the object of a verb or preposition. Examples: <i>me, you, him, her, it, us, and them.</i> Possessive forms show ownership and come in two types: possessive adjectives (<i>my, your, his, her, its, our, their</i>), which come before a noun, and possessive pronouns (<i>mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs</i>), which stand alone without a noun. Personal pronouns also vary by person and number. <u>First person</u> refers to the speaker (<i>I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours</i>), <u>second person</u> refers to the one being spoken to (<i>you, your, yours</i>), and <u>third person</u> refers to someone or something being spoken about (<i>he, him, his, she, her, hers, it, its, they, them, their, theirs</i>).	Description: Refer back to the subject. Examples: <i>myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.</i>
DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS	INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS
Description: Point to specific things. Examples: <i>this, that, these, those.</i>	Description: Used to ask questions. Examples: <i>who, whom, whose, what, which</i>
RELATIVE PRONOUNS	INDEFINITE PRONOUNS
Description: Introduce relative clauses. Examples: <i>who, whom, whose, which, that.</i>	Description: Refer to non-specific persons or things. Examples: <i>someone, anyone, everyone, no one, somebody, anybody, everybody, nobody, something, anything, everything, nothing, some, any, all, both, each, either, neither, none, one, many, few, several, much, little.</i>
RECIPROCAL PRONOUNS	
Description: Express mutual actions or relationships.	

In the tongue of ANGLO-SAXON FOREBEARS, pronouns were unique among word classes in retaining the dual number in their inflections, which made them more archaic in form than other parts of speech. Most pronouns changed according to number, case, and gender, although in the plural, they typically used a single form regardless of gender.

Pic. 96 – Old English Personal Pronouns: Singular, Plural, and Dual Forms.

1ST PERSON			
	SINGULAR	PLURAL	DUAL
N	<i>īc, ic</i>	<i>wē</i>	<i>wit</i>
G	<i>mīn</i>	<i>ūre</i>	<i>uncer</i>
D	<i>mē</i>	<i>ūs</i>	<i>unc</i>
A	<i>mec, mē</i>	<i>ūsic, ūs</i>	<i>uncit, unc</i>
2ND PERSON			
	SINGULAR	PLURAL	DUAL
N	<i>þū</i>	<i>zē</i>	<i>zīt</i>
G	<i>þīn</i>	<i>ēower</i>	<i>incer</i>
D	<i>þē</i>	<i>ēow</i>	<i>inc</i>
A	<i>þēc, þē</i>	<i>ēowic, ēow</i>	<i>incit, inc</i>
3RD PERSON			
	SINGULAR (M. / F. / N.)	PLURAL (M. / F.)	DUAL
N	<i>hē / hēo / hit</i>	<i>hīe / hēo</i>	—
G	<i>his / hire / his</i>	<i>hiera, heora</i>	—
D	<i>him / hire / him</i>	<i>him</i>	—
A	<i>hine / hīe / hit</i>	<i>hīe / hēo</i>	—

Over the last millennium and a half, the English pronoun system underwent radical transformations that fundamentally reshaped interpersonal communication among speakers. Whilst some evolutionary changes stemmed merely from sound alterations, as when *mīn* shifted to *mine* or *zē* evolved into *you* (though *ye* endured as an informal alternative), other developments reflected broad societal changes. The traditional second-person singular pronouns fell out of standard use, surviving only in poetry and the dialects of northern England. This disappearance makes English almost unique among Indo-European languages, most of which preserve distinct singular

forms, such as French *tu*, German *du*, and Ukrainian *mu*. The shift likely reflects English social norms favoring politeness, whereby formal modes of address progressively displaced familiar ones. This stands in striking contrast to languages like Irish Gaelic, which draw no such distinction at all, using the same pronoun, equivalent to the informal French *tu*, whether speaking to a prime minister or a close friend. While this uniformity may feel unremarkable to English speakers, it appears unusual for speakers of Slavic, Baltic, and Germanic languages as unusual, given that those languages systematically differentiate between familiar and formal address.

The feminine pronoun presents its own etymological mystery. Although Old English used *hēo* for “she,” the modern form most probably derives from the feminine demonstrative *sēo*, itself traceable to Common Germanic *sjó*. Yet the precise origin remains contested: some scholars have suggested Celtic roots, pointing to the Irish *sí*, while others favor Scandinavian influence. What appears to be one of the most ordinary words in English thus turns out to be one of its most genealogically uncertain.

The pronouns *they*, *them*, and *their* deserve special attention, as they represent a rare and significant case of pronominal borrowing in the history of English. Unlike most personal pronouns, which are typically resistant to replacement, these forms were borrowed from Old Norse (*þeir*, *þeim*, *þeirra*) during the period of Scandinavian settlement in England. Over time, they displaced the native Old English third-person plural forms (*hīe*, *him*, *hira*), largely because the Norse pronouns were phonologically more distinct and helped avoid ambiguity with singular forms such as *hē* and *him*. The integration of *they*, *them*, and *their* accordingly demonstrates the deep-seated Scandinavian influence on English and marks an exceptional instance of core pronoun replacement.

The transformation of English personal pronouns from Old English to the present represents a fundamental restructuring of the entire pronominal system. Out of the rich set of Old English pronoun forms, a mere five survived into Middle English (*he*, *his*, *him*, *it*, and *her*), with the remainder either falling out of use altogether or being displaced through a range of linguistic mechanisms. The losses were considerable: the dual number, which had once enabled speakers to distinguish clearly

between exactly two referents and more than two, disappeared, along with the traditional second-person singular forms. Paradoxically, however, the modern system is not merely a simplified remnant of its predecessor. In some ways, it is even more complex, though this complexity now takes different forms, especially since case marking has largely faded from English. The development of pronouns, therefore, is not a tale of gradual, uninterrupted decline, but rather of shifts occurring at specific historical junctures, each leaving a noticeable mark on how English speakers manage both grammatical relationships and social nuance through pronoun use.

The development of personal pronouns, therefore, proceeded through the cascade of the following stages within classes:

I. PERSONAL PRONOUNS.

Pic. 97 – *The Evolution of Personal Pronouns.*

EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH PERSONAL PRONOUNS				
From Old English to Early Modern English				
PRONOUN	OLD ENGLISH	EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH	LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH	EARLY MODERN ENGLISH
1SG. NOM.	<i>īc</i>	<i>Ich</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>I</i>
2SG. NOM.	<i>þū</i>	<i>þou</i>	<i>thou</i>	<i>thou</i>
3SG. MASC.	<i>hē</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>he</i>
3SG. FEM.	<i>hēo</i>	<i>he, heo, ha</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>she</i>
3SG. NEUT.	<i>hit</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>it</i>
1PL. NOM.	<i>wē</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>we</i>
2PL. NOM.	<i>ȝē</i>	<i>ye, you</i>	<i>ye, you</i>	<i>you, ye</i>
3PL. NOM.	<i>hīe (m./n.)</i> <i>hēo (f.)</i>	<i>hi, heo, ha</i>	<i>they</i>	<i>they</i>

SG. · SINGULAR · PL. · PLURAL · NOM. · NOMINATIVE · M. · MASCULINE · F. · FEMININE · N. · NEUTER

II. DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS.

Pic. 98 – *Historical Changes in Demonstrative Pronouns.*

<i>sĒ</i> – THAT (DISTAL)				
	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
N	<i>sē</i>	<i>sēo</i>	<i>þæt</i>	<i>þā</i>
G	<i>þæs</i>	<i>þære</i>	<i>þæs</i>	<i>þāra</i>
D	<i>þæm</i>	<i>þære</i>	<i>þæm</i>	<i>þām</i>
A	<i>þone</i>	<i>þā</i>	<i>þæt</i>	<i>þā</i>
I	<i>þy, þon</i>	—	<i>þy, þon</i>	—
<i>þes</i> – THIS (PROXIMAL)				
	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
N	<i>þes</i>	<i>þeos, þīos</i>	<i>þis</i>	<i>þās</i>
G	<i>þisses</i>	<i>þisse</i>	<i>þisses</i>	<i>þissa</i>
D	<i>þissum, þeossum</i>	<i>þisse</i>	<i>þissum</i>	<i>þissum</i>
A	<i>þisne, þysne</i>	<i>þās</i>	<i>þis</i>	<i>þās</i>
I	<i>þis, þys</i>	—	<i>þys, þis</i>	—

The demonstrative pronoun system in English traces back to two ancient Proto-Indo-European roots: *so-/sa-* and *to-*. The original Indo-European system operated with three degrees of spatial and social proximity with “*this*” for something near the speaker, “*that*” for something near the addressee, and “*that over there*” for something distant from both parties. Germanic languages, however, following a tendency widespread across Indo-European branches, simplified this three-way distinction down to a binary opposition between the proximate “*this*” and the remote “*that*.” A striking phonological feature of these pronouns appears in their oblique case forms, all of which open with *þ-* (the “*th*” sound). This initial consonant reflects the Germanic transformation of the original Indo-European *t-*, which shifted regularly to *þ* in

accordance with Grimm’s Law and related sound changes that set the Germanic branch apart from its broader Indo-European relatives.

III. INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS.

Pic. 99 – *Diachronic Changes in Interrogative Pronoun Systems.*

GENDER / CLASS	CASE	OLD ENGLISH	MIDDLE ENGLISH	MODERN ENGLISH
MASC. / FEM. (PERSON)	NOMINATIVE	<i>hwā</i>	<i>who</i>	<i>who</i>
	ACCUSATIVE	<i>hwone, hwæne</i>	<i>whom</i>	<i>who / whom</i>
	DATIVE	<i>hwām</i>	<i>whom</i>	<i>who / whom</i>
	INSTRUMENTAL	—	—	—
	GENITIVE	<i>hwæs</i>	<i>whos</i>	<i>whose</i>
NEUTER (THING)	NOMINATIVE	<i>hwæt</i>	<i>what</i>	—
	ACCUSATIVE	<i>hwæt</i>	<i>what</i>	<i>what</i>
	DATIVE	<i>hwām</i>	<i>whom</i>	—
	INSTRUMENTAL	<i>hwȳ, hwon</i>	<i>why</i>	<i>why</i>
	GENITIVE	<i>hwæs</i>	<i>whos</i>	<i>whose</i>

The Old English interrogative pronouns *hwā* (“who?”) and *hwæt* (“what?”) were masculine and neuter forms of a single pronoun stem, both traceable to the Proto-Indo-European root *kwis*. The Germanic languages systematically converted *kw* to *hw*. Gothic preserved *hw* as a single phoneme, which supports the view that the Proto-Indo-European *kw* was similarly a unified sound. Later Germanic languages took this sound in different directions: Norwegian kept *hv*, German reduced it to *w*, as in *wer* (“who”) and *was* (“what”), while English developed it into *wh*, pronounced as [w] in most dialects but as [h] or [hw] in others. The modern word “why” traces back to the Old English instrumental form *hwȳ*, making it historically an instrumental case construction derived from an ancient interrogative root.

Old English possessed several additional interrogative forms, all sharing the *hw*-prefix: *hwilc* (“which?”) followed strong adjective declension patterns, whereas adverbial forms such as *hwonne* (“when?”), *hwær* (“where?”), *hwider* (“whither?”), and *hwonan* (“whence?”) remained uninflected. Beyond these interrogatives, Old

English displayed the full range of pronoun classes characteristic of Indo-European languages, many of which have carried through into Modern English in various guises.

Definite pronouns included *æhwā* ('every'), which had the same inflections as *hwā*, along with *æhwilc* ('each'), *æzþer* ('either'), *ælc* ('each'), and *swilc* ('such'), all of which declined like strong adjectives. The form *sē ylca* ('the same') was an exception, following weak adjective patterns. Indefinite pronouns included *sum* ('some') and *æniz* ('any'), both declined as strong adjectives, while negative pronouns *nān* and *nænis* ('no, none') showed similar patterns. The relative pronoun system used two unchanging forms: the simple *þe* and the compound *sēþe*, both meaning 'which' or 'that,' which formed the basis for Modern English relative clauses.

In the ancient Proto-Indo-European language and its early descendants, pronouns followed their own unique set of grammatical rules, separate from those of nouns, adjectives, and numbers. By the time Old English took its shape, this special pronoun system had vanished, and pronouns began following the same patterns as other words. Yet one small trace of this ancient heritage remains: the neuter ending *-t* in words like *hwæt* ('what') and *þæt* ('that'). This simple *-t* suffix is a precious linguistic remnant, a direct link stretching back thousands of years to Proto-Indo-European, where it marked non-living things. It stands as one of the few surviving clues to a distant past when pronouns were treated as fundamentally different from all other words in the language.

IV. DUMMY PRONOUNS, also known as syntactic placeholders or expletive pronouns, occupy a necessary position in sentence structure without carrying any actual meaning of their own. They exist purely to maintain proper sentence form rather than to refer to anything specific. Common examples in English include "*it*" in sentences like "*It is snowing*" (where "*it*" refers to nothing concrete) and "*there*" in constructions such as "*There seems to be a misunderstanding*" or "*There exists a solution to this problem*" (where "*there*" indicates no actual location). Also: "*I left my keys there*" (actual place). These pronouns serve as structural supports, like invisible scaffolding that holds the sentence together while contributing no meaning of their own.

Pic. 100 – *The Transformation of Dummy Pronouns Across Time.*

PERIOD	COMMON DUMMY PRONOUNS	CASE INFORMATION	DETAILS
OLD ENGLISH <i>c. 449–1066¹</i>	<i>(none explicitly used)</i>	N/A	Subjects were often omitted in weather expressions. <i>Reȝnaþ</i> ("it rains," from <i>reȝnan</i> "to rain") required no dummy subject — verb inflection carried the full meaning.
MIDDLE ENGLISH <i>c. 1066–1500</i>	<i>it, there</i>	Nominative case only. <i>It</i> : nom. <i>it</i> . <i>There</i> : uninflected adverbial form becoming grammaticalized.	<i>It</i> and <i>there</i> began emerging as placeholder subjects. Both were restricted to the nominative; case distinctions were already weakening.
EARLY MODERN ENGLISH <i>c. 1500–1700</i>	<i>it, there</i>	<i>It</i> : nom. <i>it</i> ; acc./dat. <i>it</i> . <i>There</i> : uninflected.	Usage became consistent in weather, time, and condition sentences. Case distinctions simplified further for dummy functions. E.g., " <i>It raineth</i> ", " <i>There is no man here.</i> "
MODERN ENGLISH <i>1700–present</i>	<i>it, there</i>	<i>It</i> : subject / object <i>it</i> . <i>There</i> : uninflected.	Fully grammaticalized: " <i>It is raining</i> ", " <i>There will be a meeting tomorrow.</i> " Dummy <i>do</i> also developed for questions and emphasis (uninflected).

V. RELATIVE PRONOUNS.

Pic. 101 – *Grammatical Development of Relative Pronouns Through History.*

PERIOD	RELATIVE PRONOUNS	CASE INFORMATION	DETAILS
OLD ENGLISH <i>c. 449–1066</i>	<i>þe, þæt, sē þe</i>	<i>þe</i> : uninflected. <i>þæt</i> : nom./acc. neuter. <i>sē þe</i> : full declension (<i>sē / þone / þæs / þāem + þe</i>).	<i>þe</i> served as a universal invariant particle; <i>sē þe</i> supplied case marking when needed. No distinction between <i>who</i> , <i>which</i> , or <i>that</i> .
MIDDLE ENGLISH <i>c. 1066–1500</i>	<i>þat (that), which, who</i>	<i>That</i> : uninflected. <i>Which</i> : nom./acc. <i>which</i> , gen. <i>whiches</i> . <i>Who</i> : nom. <i>who</i> , acc. <i>whom</i> , gen. <i>whos</i> .	<i>Who</i> emerged for persons and <i>which</i> for things. The case system began to simplify, though a three-way pronoun distinction was now taking shape.
EARLY MODERN ENGLISH <i>c. 1500–1700</i>	<i>who, which, that, whom, whose</i>	<i>Who</i> : nom. <i>who</i> , acc. <i>whom</i> , gen. <i>whose</i> . <i>Which</i> : nom./acc. <i>which</i> , gen. <i>whose</i> . <i>That</i> : uninflected.	Relative clauses became more structurally consistent. The full case paradigm for <i>who</i> was established. E.g., " <i>He that hath ears to hear</i> ", " <i>the man whom I saw.</i> "
MODERN ENGLISH <i>1700–present</i>	<i>who, whom, which, that, whose</i>	<i>Who</i> : nom. <i>who</i> , acc. <i>whom</i> (declining), gen. <i>whose</i> . <i>Which / That</i> : uninflected. <i>Whose</i> : genitive for all genders.	System is stable, though <i>whom</i> is receding in informal use. <i>That</i> remains fully uninflected. <i>Whose</i> now serves as genitive for both persons and things.

VI. POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS.

Pic. 102 – *Morphological Evolution of Possessive Pronouns.*

PERIOD	POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS	CASE INFORMATION	DETAILS
OLD ENGLISH <i>c. 449–1066</i>	<i>mīn, þīn, his, hire, ūre, ēower, hira</i>	Full declension (masc./fem./neut.): Nom. <i>mīn / mīne / mīn</i> Acc. <i>mīnne / mīne / mīn</i> Gen. <i>mīnes / mīnre / mīnes</i> Dat. <i>mīnum / mīnre / mīnum</i>	Possessives were inflected for gender, number, and case like strong adjectives, yielding complex paradigms for each pronoun.
MIDDLE ENGLISH <i>c. 1066–1500</i>	<i>my/mine, thy/thine, his, her, our, your, their</i>	<i>Mine / thine</i> before vowels; <i>my / thy</i> before consonants. All other forms uninflected.	Inflections were lost; the <i>mine/thine</i> vs. <i>my/thy</i> distribution became phonologically conditioned and then grammaticalized.
EARLY MODERN ENGLISH <i>c. 1500–1700</i>	<i>mine, thine, his, hers, ours, yours, theirs</i>	Conjoint: <i>my, thy, his, her, our, your, their.</i> Absolute: <i>mine, thine, his, hers, ours, yours, theirs.</i>	Conjoint and absolute forms stabilized as a functional distinction. <i>Its</i> began emerging as the neuter possessive.
MODERN ENGLISH <i>1700–present</i>	<i>mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, its</i>	<i>Its</i> fully established. Clear conjoint/absolute pairs: <i>my/mine, your/yours</i> , etc. No case inflection.	<i>Mine</i> and <i>thine</i> are now poetic or archaic in conjoint function. The <i>-s</i> suffix was analogically extended across the paradigm.

VII. RECIPROCAL PRONOUNS.

Pic. 103 – *Historical Development of Reciprocal Pronouns.*

PERIOD	RECIPROCAL PRONOUNS	CASE INFORMATION	DETAILS
OLD ENGLISH <i>c. 449–1066</i>	<i>ǣlces oþres</i> ("each of other")	Genitive construction: <i>ǣlces</i> (gen. sg. of <i>ǣlc</i>) + <i>oþres</i> (gen. sg. of <i>oþer</i>). Various case forms used contextually.	No fixed reciprocal pronoun existed; mutual action was conveyed through phrases. Full case inflection was preserved in each constituent part.
MIDDLE ENGLISH <i>c. 1066–1500</i>	<i>either other, each other</i>	Simplified case marking. <i>Each</i> : uninflected. <i>Other</i> : nom./acc. <i>other</i> , gen. <i>otheres</i> , dat. <i>othere</i> .	Phrasal forms used reciprocally. Case distinctions were maintained but considerably simplified from Old English complexity.
EARLY MODERN ENGLISH <i>c. 1500–1700</i>	<i>each other, one another</i>	<i>Each other</i> : <i>each</i> uninflected; <i>other</i> shows some case (<i>other's, other</i>). <i>One another</i> : similar pattern.	The phrases became more fixed and consistent. Some genitive marking was preserved, as in <i>each other's</i> .
MODERN ENGLISH <i>1700–present</i>	<i>each other, one another</i>	Uninflected base forms. Genitive: <i>each other's</i> , <i>one another's</i> . Used as single syntactic units.	Both forms are standard; the traditional rule assigns <i>each other</i> to two referents and <i>one another</i> to more, though this is not strictly enforced. Both are fully grammaticalized.

VIII. INDEFINITE PRONOUNS.

Pic. 104 – *Diachronic Changes in Indefinite Pronoun Systems.*

PERIOD	INDEFINITE PRONOUNS	DETAILS
OLD ENGLISH <i>c. 449–1066</i>	<i>sum, æniz, ælc,</i> <i>ʒehwā, nān, nāniz</i>	Complex paradigms with full declension following strong adjective patterns. <i>ʒehwā</i> declined like the interrogative <i>hwā</i> .
MIDDLE ENGLISH <i>c. 1066–1500</i>	<i>som, any, ech,</i> <i>non, every, al</i>	Case distinctions greatly reduced. <i>Every</i> developed from the phrase <i>æfre ælc</i> ("ever each").
EARLY MODERN ENGLISH <i>c. 1500–1700</i>	<i>some, any, each, every,</i> <i>all, none, someone, anyone</i>	Compound indefinites emerged: <i>someone, anyone, everyone</i> . Forms became fixed and consistent across usage.
MODERN ENGLISH <i>1700–present</i>	<i>some, any, each, every, all,</i> <i>none, someone, anyone,</i> <i>everyone, somebody,</i> <i>anybody, everybody</i>	Full paradigm of <i>-one / -body</i> compounds established. <i>Some / any</i> distribution became context-dependent (affirmative vs. interrogative/negative contexts).

IX. REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS.

Pic. 105 – *Morphological Evolution of Reflexive Pronouns.*

PERIOD	REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS	DETAILS
OLD ENGLISH <i>c. 449–1066</i>	<i>self + personal pronoun</i> <i>or self alone</i>	<i>Self</i> declined as a strong adjective. Used with pronouns: <i>mē selfne, him selfum</i> . Could also function independently without a supporting pronoun.
MIDDLE ENGLISH <i>c. 1066–1500</i>	<i>self + pronoun,</i> <i>myself, thyself, himself</i>	Early compound forms began to emerge. Mixed case usage produced variants such as <i>me-self</i> vs. <i>my-self</i> . <i>Self</i> was gradually losing its status as an independent word.
EARLY MODERN ENGLISH <i>c. 1500–1700</i>	<i>myself, thyself / yourself,</i> <i>himself, herself, itself,</i> <i>ourselves, yourselves,</i> <i>themselves</i>	The complete paradigm was established. <i>Thyself</i> vs. <i>yourself</i> reflected the <i>thou / you</i> distinction. <i>Itself</i> developed from earlier <i>hit-self</i> .
MODERN ENGLISH <i>1700–present</i>	<i>myself, yourself, himself,</i> <i>herself, itself, ourselves,</i> <i>yourselves, themselves</i>	Fixed compound forms fully established. <i>Yourself / yourselves</i> distinguishes singular from plural. Forms serve both reflexive and emphatic functions.

Throughout the Middle English period, pronouns remained structurally more stable than other word classes, yet they still underwent visible reshaping. The dual number, that ancient distinction between two and more than two, vanished entirely from the language. The case system was fundamentally simplified, with the old Dative and Accusative cases merging into a single Objective case, creating the modern contrast between “*I*” (Nominative) and “*me*” (Objective). Remarkably, this merging happened differently for each gender: masculine and feminine pronouns retained their old Dative forms (*him*, *her*), while the neuter kept the original accusative *hit*. The nominative case survived unchanged during this era. This development correlates with functional tendencies in usage, since persons are more frequently addressed as recipients of actions (indirect objects, historically Dative), while inanimate entities more often function as direct objects (Accusative). The Genitive case developed in a more intricate manner than a simple binary model. Scholars differ on the status of forms like *my* and *your*: some classify them as a separate category of possessive pronouns, comparable to those in Slavic languages, while others interpret them as personal pronouns in the possessive (Genitive) case.

A vital new word emerged in MIDDLE ENGLISH (around 1300) with the appearance of *she*, filling an important gap in the system. At the same time, all third-person plural pronouns were completely replaced by Scandinavian borrowings: *they*, *them*, and *their* substituted the original English forms. This happened because of extensive contact between English- and Old Norse-speaking peoples during the Viking period. When languages interact closely, pronoun systems are often affected because pronouns must be clear and unambiguous in conversation. Pronouns changed less than other word types because they were used constantly in speech. Yet paradoxically, this same frequent use made them targets for replacement when contact between languages created confusion and demanded clearer communication.

The EARLY MODERN and MODERN ENGLISH PERIODS saw several crucial changes in personal pronouns. Most importantly, the second-person pronoun system was completely restructured: the plural forms (*ye*, *you*, *your*) replaced the singular ones, while the original singular pronouns (*thou*, *thee*, *thy*) survived only in

poetry and religious texts. This shift reflected broader social changes in English culture toward greater politeness and formality. Eventually, the nominative plural *ye* disappeared from everyday speech, leaving *you* to function as both subject and object for both singular and plural meanings.

The neuter pronoun underwent its own modification as *hit* lost its initial *h-* to become *it*, while the possessive *its* appeared in the seventeenth century to complete the set. The evolution of possessive pronouns shows linguistic patterns: originally, *my* and *mine* differed only in sound, with *mine* used before vowels and *my* before consonants. This sound-based variation gradually became a grammatical distinction, creating separate forms for use before nouns (*my*, *your*, *her*) and for use alone (*mine*, *yours*, *hers*) with different syntactic roles. The language then extended this template by adding *-s* to create more standalone forms (*hers*, *its*, *ours*, *theirs*), making the possessive system more regular and complete.

Three major developments shaped Modern English pronouns: the split of possessive pronouns into two distinct types (*my* vs. *mine*); the total disappearance of singular second-person pronouns as *you* became universal for both singular and plural by the 1600s; and the loss of *ye* in favor of *you*, demonstrating the ongoing erosion of grammatical case throughout the language's development.

The twenty-first century has brought fresh developments to the pronoun system. Neopronouns are newly coined alternatives to traditional pronouns (*he/him*, *she/her*, *they/them*) that arose primarily within LGBTQ+ communities as a means of expressing non-binary, genderfluid, and transgender identities more precisely. Familiar examples include *xe/xem/xyr*, *ze/zir/zirs*, and *fae/faer/faers*, while some individuals adopt noun-based forms such as *star/stars/starself*. Although efforts to create gender-neutral pronouns go back centuries, contemporary neopronouns represent active language innovation driven by the needs of identity rather than by grammatical pressure. They draw on established English word-formation patterns to build complete paradigms and are used predominantly online and within particular communities, especially among younger speakers. While they have not entered everyday speech broadly, neopronouns illustrate how communities can reshape language to serve their expressive needs,

operating at once as markers of gender identity and as instruments of community-building within wider conversations about gender, identity, and the ongoing evolution of language.

Pic. 106 – *The Paradigm of Neopronouns in Modern Gender Identity Expression.*

SUBJECT	OBJECT	POSSESSIVE ADJ.	POSSESSIVE PRON.	REFLEXIVE
<i>ze / xe</i>	<i>hir / zir</i>	<i>hir / zir</i>	<i>hirs / zirs</i>	<i>hirsself / zirsself</i>
<i>ey</i>	<i>em</i>	<i>eir</i>	<i>eirs</i>	<i>emself</i>
<i>ve</i>	<i>ver</i>	<i>vis</i>	<i>vis</i>	<i>verself</i>
<i>ne</i>	<i>nem</i>	<i>nir</i>	<i>nirs</i>	<i>nemself</i>
<i>fae</i>	<i>faer</i>	<i>faer</i>	<i>faers</i>	<i>faerself</i>
<i>ae</i>	<i>aer</i>	<i>aer</i>	<i>aers</i>	<i>aerself</i>

Among the most established neopronouns are *ze/hir* and *xe/xem* (pronounced [zi:]/[zei] or [ksi:]), which function as explicitly non-binary alternatives that emphasize separation from traditional gender categories, as in “*Ze loves playing guitar*” or “*I borrowed hirs jacket.*” The Spivak pronouns¹⁷ *ey/em/eir*, created by removing “*th*” from “*they*,” offer a simpler approach for those seeking familiar-sounding gender neutrality, as in “*Ey arrived early*” and “*We invited em to dinner.*” *Ve/ver/vis* offers another deliberately designed set for those who find “*they*” too associated with plurality yet still want a gender-neutral option, as in “*Ve works at the library*” and “*This is vis coffee mug.*” Among the less common alternatives, *ne/nem/nir* appeals to those seeking identity markers with no connection to any existing pronoun forms; *fae/faer* is favored by individuals with ties to nature, fantasy, or spiritual identities, as in “*Fae writes poetry*” and “*The cat belongs to faer*”; and *ae/aer* is chosen for its distinctive, lyrical quality, appearing in sentences like “*Ae enjoys painting*” and “*That’s aer laptop.*” These pronouns are typically adopted when someone explicitly communicates their preference, through social media profiles,

¹⁷ The *Spivak pronouns* (*ey/em/eir/eirs/emself*) are a set of gender-neutral pronouns created by dropping the “*th*” from the singular “*they/them/their*.” They were designed to provide a linguistically elegant way to refer to individuals without specifying gender, particularly useful for nonbinary, genderqueer, or gender-neutral contexts. *How they work*: *ey* (subject), e.g., “*Ey is a doctor*”; *em* (object), e.g., “*I saw em yesterday*”; *eir* (possessive adjective), e.g., “*That’s eir book*”; *eirs* (possessive pronoun), e.g., “*The book is eirs*”; *emself* (reflexive), e.g., “*Ey did it emself.*”

email signatures, or direct conversation, often by individuals who identify outside the gender binary and want pronouns that authentically reflect who they are. Many people use more than one set interchangeably or in combination, such as “*fae/they*.”

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Old English pronouns retained the dual number, making them more archaic than other word classes. Explain what the dual number is and provide examples from the Old English pronoun tables. Why do you think this grammatical category eventually disappeared from English?
2. The loss of the second-person singular pronouns (*thou, thee, thy*) makes English “nearly unique among Indo-European languages.” Compare English with at least three other languages mentioned (*French, German, Ukrainian, or Irish Gaelic*). What does this loss reveal about English social conventions?
3. The modern feminine pronoun “*she*” presents an etymological puzzle. What are the three possible origins proposed by scholars? Search online etymological dictionaries to find which theory is currently most accepted and explain why this seemingly simple word remains uncertain.
4. The neuter ending *-t* in words like “*what*” and “*that*” is described as “a precious linguistic remnant” from Proto-Indo-European. Why is this suffix considered so significant? What does it reveal about how pronouns were treated differently in ancient Indo-European languages?
5. Dummy pronouns (expletive pronouns) like “*it*” in “It is snowing” didn't exist in Old English. How did Old English speakers express weather conditions without these pronouns? What linguistic change made dummy pronouns necessary in later periods of English?
6. The possessive pronouns underwent a complex evolution from sound-based variation to grammatical distinction. Explain the original difference between “*my*” and “*mine*” in Middle English, and trace how this pattern was extended to create the modern system (*my/mine, your/yours*, etc.). Why didn't “*his*” follow this pattern?
7. Neopronouns represent “active language creation driven by identity needs rather than grammatical simplification.” Compare the development of neopronouns with the historical pronoun changes. In what ways are neopronouns similar to or different from earlier pronoun innovations like the emergence of “*she*” or the borrowing of “*they*”?
8. Pronouns “changed less than other word types because they were used constantly in speech,” yet “this same frequent use made them targets for replacement when contact between languages created confusion.” Explain this paradox using the example of Scandinavian borrowings in English.

THE ARTICLE.

The Proto-Indo-European language lacked both definite and indefinite articles, a feature common to most ancient Indo-European languages. Although they were not

part of the original language, articles are seen as a significant later innovation in Indo-European, developing only after the language family had fragmented into independently evolving branches. This evolutionary pattern is visible throughout numerous linguistic families. In Greek, articles are absent from both the Homeric epics and Mycenaean inscriptions; however, by the Classical period, the definite article had been fully integrated into the grammar of all Greek dialects. Likewise, the Romance languages exhibit a similar trajectory, as Latin contained no articles, but the languages that emerged from it introduced well-developed article systems. The Celtic languages underwent the same shift: while ancient Gaulish lacked articles, all surviving Insular Celtic languages developed them independently. A parallel chronological pattern can be seen in the Germanic languages. Gothic and Old English lacked articles, but later Germanic languages incorporated them as standard grammatical features. A similar development occurred in some Slavic languages, notably Macedonian and Bulgarian, which acquired articles through participation in the Balkan *Sprachbund*¹⁸, a geographically defined area of linguistic convergence in which neighboring languages influence one another's grammatical features. This widespread emergence of articles among Indo-European languages, despite their separation by both space and time, represents one of the most striking examples of parallel grammatical development in linguistic history.

OLD ENGLISH lacked articles, but they were later molded through the grammaticalization of demonstrative pronouns. Even during the Old English period, texts show systematic placement of demonstratives before nouns, as in *hē heold þæt rice* ("he held the/that kingdom"), where the pronoun *þæt* would eventually evolve into the modern English definite article *the*.

Articles were recognized as a distinct grammatical category only in MIDDLE ENGLISH. The definite article *the* originated from the Old English demonstrative

¹⁸ "*Sprachbund*" is a German term signifying "language union" or "linguistic convergence zone." The Balkan Sprachbund covers languages from multiple families, chiefly Slavic languages like Macedonian and Bulgarian, Romance languages such as Romanian and Aromanian, Albanian (an isolated Indo-European language), Greek from the Hellenic family, and Turkish, a Turkic language outside the Indo-European family that has both shaped and been shaped by neighboring languages in this area.

pronoun *sē* (masculine singular), which gradually lost its emphatic demonstrative force and functional weight. The evolution of *the* process proceeded through several distinct developmental stages.

$sē > þe > the ([\theta\bar{e}] > [\delta\bar{e}])$

The indefinite article traces its origin to Old English numerals, specifically deriving from the numeral *ān*. Over time, *ān* underwent phonetic reduction, shortening to *an*. The emergence of the indefinite article occurred gradually, proceeding through several stages of development.

$\bar{a}n > \bar{a} > a$

Definite and indefinite articles together established a separate grammatical category, termed article determination.

In CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH, both articles remain fundamental grammatical elements. *The* functions to refer to particular or already known things, while *a* and *an* serve to present nonspecific or newly introduced things. The choice between *a* and *an* depends on whether the next word begins with a consonant or vowel sound.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. The Proto-Indo-European language lacked articles entirely. Search for information about at least three modern Indo-European languages that still lack articles (such as Latin, Ukrainian, or Sanskrit). How do these languages express definiteness and indefiniteness without articles?
2. Consider the parallel development of articles in Romance languages. Latin had no articles, but French developed “*le/la/les*” from Latin demonstratives and “*un/une*” from numerals. Search for how Italian, Spanish, or Romanian developed their article systems. Are the sources and evolutionary paths similar to or different from English?
3. Articles are a significant later innovation that developed only after the language family had fragmented into independently evolving branches. What does this pattern of parallel development across unrelated branches tell us about universal tendencies in language evolution?
4. Greek provides a clear example of article development. The articles are absent from Homeric epics and Mycenaean inscriptions but are fully integrated by the

Classical period. Search online for examples of how definiteness was expressed in Homeric Greek. What linguistic mechanisms replaced the function of articles?

5. Look at the Old English example “*hē heold þæt rice*” (he held the/that kingdom). Explain why this sentence is ambiguous in translation. Could “*þæt*” mean “*the*” or “*that*”? At what point in English history would this ambiguity have been resolved?

6. In Modern English, the choice between “*a*” and “*an*” depends on the following sound, not spelling. Provide five examples where the spelling and sound rule conflict (such as “*an hour*” vs. “*a university*”). What does this tell you about the relationship between English phonology and orthography?

7. Definite and indefinite articles established a separate grammatical category, termed article determination. However, some linguists argue that articles should be classified as determiners alongside demonstratives, possessives, and quantifiers. Research this debate and explain the arguments for treating articles as either a separate category or as part of a larger determiner class.

The NUMERAL.

Historically, numerals are classified into **cardinal** and **ordinal** types, and this distinction remains relevant today. In contrast to Proto-Indo-European, which inflected all numerals, Old English applied a declension system to only three numbers, leaving the rest uninflected.

The set of cardinal numerals consisted of the following examples.

Pic. 107 – *A Journey Through Medieval Numbers*. (See Appendix 6).

1 <i>ān</i>	2 <i>twā</i>	3 <i>þrie</i>	4 <i>fēower</i>
5 <i>fif</i>	6 <i>six, syp, siex</i>	7 <i>seofon</i>	8 <i>eahta</i>
9 <i>nigon</i>	10 <i>tien, tyn</i>	11 <i>endlefan</i>	12 <i>twelf</i>
13 <i>þrēotiene</i>	14 <i>fēowertiene</i>	15 <i>fiftiene</i>	20 <i>twentig</i>
21 <i>twentig ond ān</i>	30 <i>þritig</i>	40 <i>fēowertig</i>	50 <i>fiftig</i>
60 <i>siextig</i>	70 <i>siofontig</i>	80 <i>eahtatig</i>	90 <i>nigontig</i>
Large Numbers			
100 <i>hundrahtig hund, hundred</i>	110 <i>hundælleftig</i>	120 <i>hundertwelftig</i>	200 <i>tū-hund</i>
1000 <i>þūsend</i>		2000 <i>tū-þūsendu</i>	

As portrayed in the list above, numbers starting with 13 adopted the suffix *-iene*, forming the “*teen*” numbers. The numbers 20, 30, and 40, in turn, took the ending *-tiz*.

The declension patterns were structured as follows:

1. *ān* followed the same inflectional pattern as strong adjectives. It appeared exclusively in the singular but had masculine, feminine, and neuter forms. This numeral ultimately gave rise to the modern English indefinite article *a/an*. Thus, when we say *a house*, it literally meant “one house,” with the *-n* ending disappearing when the following word began with a consonant.

2. *twā*:

	MASCULINE	NEUTER	FEMININE
N	<i>twezen</i>	<i>tū, twā</i>	<i>twā</i>
G	<i>twēzea, twēzra</i>		
D	<i>twāem, twām</i>		
A	<i>twezen</i>	<i>tū, twā</i>	<i>twā</i>

Therefore, differentiation by gender was limited to the Nominative and Accusative cases, with the Genitive and Dative forms remaining uniform across genders.

3. *prīe*:

	MASCULINE	NEUTER	FEMININE
N	<i>prīe, prī, prȳ</i>	<i>prīo, prēo</i>	<i>prīo, prēo</i>
G	<i>prīora, prēora</i>		
D	<i>prīm</i>		
A	<i>prīe, prī, prȳ</i>	<i>prīo, prēo</i>	<i>prīo, prēo</i>

In contrast to *two*, where MODERN ENGLISH discarded the masculine and neuter forms and generalized the feminine form (*two* < *twā*), the modern numeral *three* is derived directly from the masculine form *prīe*.

The final numeral, *bezen*, *bū*, *bā* (“both”), followed the same declension pattern as *twā* and likewise functioned as a dual number.

Ordinal numerals used the suffix *-ta* or *-þa*, deriving etymologically from a shared Indo-European ancestor.

Pic. 108 – *Old English Ordinal Numerals*.

1st <i>forma, fyresta</i>	2nd <i>ōþer, æfterra</i>	3rd <i>þrida, þirda</i>	4th <i>fēorþa</i>	5th <i>fifta</i>
6th <i>siexta, syxta</i>	7th <i>siofoþa</i>	8th <i>eahtoþa</i>	9th <i>nizoþa</i>	10th <i>tēoþa</i>
11th <i>endlefta</i>	12th <i>twelfta</i>	13th <i>þrēotēoþa</i>	14th <i>fēowertēoþa</i>	15th <i>fiftēoþa</i>
16th <i>sixtēoþa</i>	17th <i>siofontēoþa</i>	18th <i>eahtatēoþa</i>	19th <i>nizontēoþa</i>	
Larger Ordinals				
20th <i>twentizoþa</i>	30th <i>þrittizoþa</i>	40th <i>fēowertizoþa</i>	50th <i>fiftizoþa</i>	100th <i>hundtēontizoþa</i>

The two alternative forms of *first* conveyed different nuances: *forma* meant “forward,” while *fyresta* indicated “the farthest” or “the first.” Similarly, the two forms of *second* expressed “the other” and “the following,” respectively.

In OLD ENGLISH texts, ordinal numerals were generally paired with the demonstrative pronoun *þā*, a construction that in the course of time became the source of the definite article in modern English, as seen in *the first* and *the third*. The numbers like “the 22nd,” were expressed by compound forms, either *twā and twenizoþa* (“two and twentieth”) or *ōþer ēac twentizum* (“second with twenty”). This led to a word order unlike that of Modern English, yet similar to modern German, where “the 22nd” is rendered as *zwei und zwanzig* (“two and twenty”).

As English evolved, its words became much shorter, making the language easier to speak and master. The simplification is most clearly seen in the contrast between Modern English terms like *fourth* and *hundredth* and their considerably longer Old

English versions *fēowertēopa* and *hundtēontiozopa*. Present-day English generally prefers compact vocabulary consisting of one or two syllables.

MIDDLE ENGLISH served as a critical linguistic bridge, transforming the Old English numeral system by reducing its complex endings and shaping it into a form closer to modern English. At this time, numbers like 21 or 22 were expressed as “*one and twenty*” or “*two and twenty*”, with the smaller unit placed before the tens. Over time, this order shifted to the *tens-first pattern* we use today, influenced by both language simplification and the spread of printed texts.

The numeral system has reached a stage of relative stability while preserving its Germanic foundation, enriched by Latin loanwords introduced through French. The adoption of the French-derived *second*, which gradually replaced the native *ōþer* (“other”) as the standard ordinal for the number *two* was another grammatical shift. As Old English shed its heavy grammatical endings, long, phonetically complex numerals like *hundtēontiozopa* were shortened to simpler forms, reflecting a broader trend toward concise, one- or two-syllable words that characterize modern English.

By standardizing the use of the definite article “*the*” before ordinals and moving toward a more straightforward tens-first structure, Middle English laid the foundation for the practical and systematic numeral system that we use today.

The numeral system in MODERN ENGLISH covering both cardinal (*one, two, three...*) and ordinal (*first, second, third...*) numbers demonstrates regular, predictable structures shaped by earlier French influence, with only a few irregular forms remaining, such as *second* (from Latin *secundus*) and *third* (preserving elements of Old English *þrida*). Numerals are grammatically flexible, functioning as determiners (*three cats*), pronouns (*I’ll take two*), and even substantives (*a four-by-four*). Advances in digital technology and worldwide communication have further influenced numerical standards, especially in dating and measurement, where distinctions remain between American and British English usage (e.g., 12/07/2025 vs. 07/12/2025).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

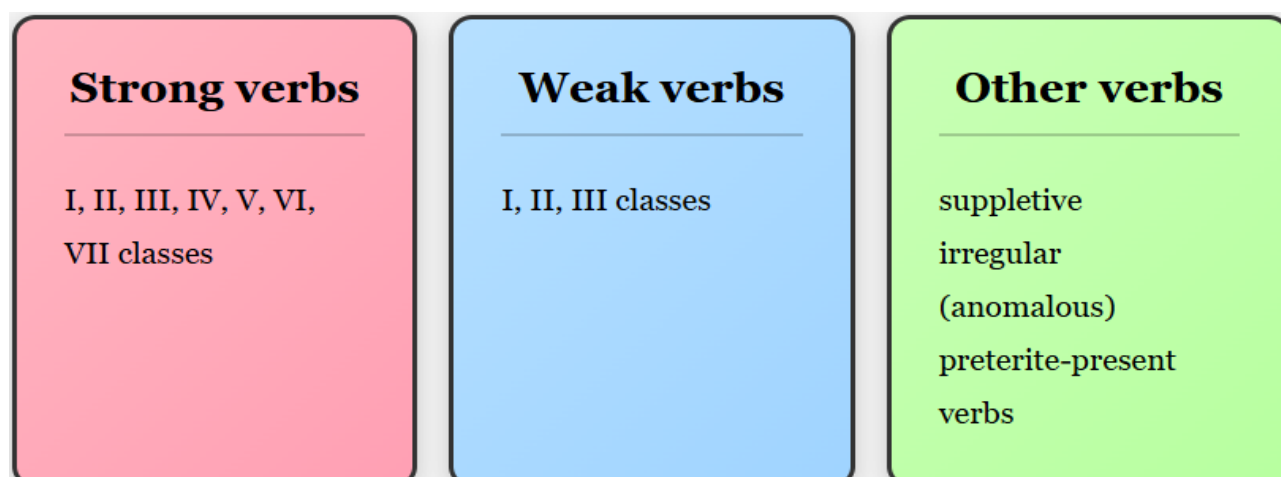
1. Proto-Indo-European inflected all numerals, but Old English applied declension only to three numbers. Which three numerals were inflected in Old English, and why

- do you think the language preserved inflection for these specific numbers while leaving others uninflected?
2. Old English used the suffix *-iene* for “teen” numbers (13-19) and *-tiz* for decades (20, 30, 40). Research the etymology of these suffixes. What do they originally mean, and can you find lexical relatives in other Germanic languages, such as German (*-zehn, -zig*) or Dutch?
 3. “*Bezen, bū, bā*” (both) functioned as a dual number and followed the same declension as “*twā*.” Why did this form survive when other dual forms disappeared?
 4. The French-derived “*second*” gradually replaced the native Old English “*ōþer*” (other) as the standard ordinal for two. Search for when and why this replacement occurred. What does this borrowing reveal about the prestige of French after the Norman Conquest?
 5. Modern English shows differences between American and British usage in date formats (12/07/2025 vs. 07/12/2025). Research the historical origins of these different conventions. What role did cultural, technological, or imperial factors play in creating these divergent systems?
 6. The modern numerals are grammatically flexible, functioning as determiners (*three cats*), pronouns (*I’ll take two*), and even substantives (*a four-by-four*). Provide three additional examples for each grammatical function. What does this flexibility reveal about the grammatical status of numerals in Modern English?

The VERB.

Modern English distinguishes between regular and irregular verbs; a classification rooted in the OLD ENGLISH division between *strong* and *weak* verbs. This system differentiated verbs that formed past tense and participles through the traditional Germanic *process of ablaut* (vowel alternation) from those that relied on the addition of a dental suffix (*-d/-t*) attached to the stem. Strong verbs formed the larger, more dominant group.

Pic. 109 – Morphological Classification of Old English Verbs.



The labels “strong” and “weak” were coined by Jacob Grimm. He regarded strong verbs as being of “a nobler character” than weak verbs, since their conjugation through vowel alternation was seen as a reflection of the language’s prehistoric “golden age.”

According to the traditional classification, based on Gothic and still recognized in modern linguistics, **STRONG VERBS** were categorized into seven classes. Every class displayed its own characteristic patterns of conjugation and stem formation. Ablaut, the primary grammatical method for conjugating Old English strong verbs, manifested in two types: qualitative and quantitative vowel changes. The first five classes of strong verbs were primarily determined by *qualitative ablaut* (distinguished by the phonetic environment following the root vowel: *-i* in Class I, *-u* in Class II, and various consonantal patterns in Classes III–V), while the sixth class is characterized by *quantitative ablaut* (the stems of these verbs were composed entirely of consonants). Verbs in the seventh class originally formed their principal parts by reduplicating the root syllable, but this method gradually disappeared as the language evolved. The strong verb categories show their four principal parts: the Infinitive form, the Singular Past tense, the Plural Past tense, and the Past Participle.

Pic. 110 – *Vowel Gradation Pattern or Ablaut Series in OE Strong Verb Class.*

CLASS	VOWEL PATTERN	INFINITIVE	PAST SINGULAR	PAST PLURAL	PAST PARTICIPLE	EXAMPLE VERBS
I	$\bar{i} - \bar{a} - i - i$	writan	wrāt	writon	written	bifon, clifan, gūpan, bitan, slitan, besmitan, gewitan, blican, sican, stīzan, scēnan, ārisan, biȝan
II	$\bar{e}o \rightarrow \bar{e}a - u - o$	bēodan	bēad	budon	boden	cēosan, crēopan, clēofan, flēotan, gēotan, grēotan, nēotan, scēotan, lēozan, brēowan, drēosan, frēosan, forlēosan
IIIa	$a(i) - a - u - u$	drincan	dranc	druncon	druncen	swindan, onġinnan, sinnan, winnan, ȝelimpan, swimman + nasal consonant
IIIb	$(e) - ea - u - o$	helpan	healp	hulpon	holpen	delfan, swelȝan, sweltan, bellan, melcan + l + consonant
IIIc	$(eo) - ea - u - o$	weorpan	wearp	wurdon	worden	steorfan, feohtan, ceorfan, hweorfan, weorpan, beorzan, beorcan + r/h + consonant
IV	$e - æ - æ - o$	stelan	stæl	stælon	stolen	beran, cvelan, helan, teran, breccan
V	$e - æ - æ - e$	tredan	træd	trædon	treden	cweþan, metan, sweȝan, weȝan, spreccan, wreccan, lesan, etan, wessan
VI	$a - \bar{o} - \bar{o} - a$	faran	fōr	fōron	faren	ȝalan, ȝrafan, hladan, wadan, draȝan, ȝnazan, bacan, seacan, wascan
VII	Various	hātan	hēht	hēton	hāten	feallan, cnāwan, blōndan, ondrædan, lācan, scadan, fealdan, healdan, spannan, bēatan, blōwan, hlēowan, spōwan, māwan, sāwan, rōwan (Reduplicated verbs)

WEAK VERBS marked a later evolutionary step in Germanic linguistic systems, as there was no parallel in Proto-Indo-European, and they were more recent than strong verbs. Many researchers view weak verbs as derived constructions, typically built on noun or adjective foundations (e.g., Gothic *fulljan* “to fill” from *full* “full”). If strong verbs generated their infinitive and past participle by appending *-n-* to the present stem, weak verbs utilized a *-t-* ending, which later became *-d-*, *-ed*, or *-de* throughout past tense expressions. Both endings ultimately derive from Proto-Indo-European participial morphemes. They functioned as an open category in Old English, since newly introduced verbs typically created their forms by following the pattern of weak verbs. Weak verbs were forebears of today’s regular verbs. Based on the type of stem suffix, weak verbs fall into three classes. Whereas strong verbs in English featured four primary forms, weak verbs contained just three: the Infinitive, the Past Tense, and the Past Participle (Participle II). (See Appendix 8).

The *first class* of weak verbs originated from nouns, adjectives, or verbs and often bore a *-j-* suffix in earlier stages (e.g., *dēmjan* “to judge”), though it is not always visible in Old English surface forms. Although the suffix itself often disappeared, its presence left clear phonological traces, such as *i-mutation* (umlaut) of the root vowel and consonant gemination or palatalization. Many of these verbs survive into Modern English as regular verbs, including *fill*, *judge*, and *clean*, reflecting the lasting influence of this weak verb class. Typical infinitive endings included *-an* or *-ian*, depending on dialect and historical development.

The *second class* of weak verbs was marked by the stem suffix *-oi-*, whose *o-* element was preserved in both the past tense and the past participle. In contrast to Class I verbs, which underwent *i-umlaut* (palatal mutation) of the root vowel due to the *i-* element in their stem suffix, Class II verbs retained the original quality of the root vowel, since the preceding *o* prevented such mutation. This development is seen in the sequence: *luf-oian* → *lufeian* → *lufean* → *lufian*.

The *third class* embraced a separate group covering a limited set of verbs, such as *habban* (“have”), *libban* (“live”), *seczan* (“say”), and *hyczan* (“think”). These verbs

lacked a stem suffix entirely and displayed irregular conjugation, distinguishing them from the verbs of Classes I and II.

Pic. 111 – Conjugation of Old English Weak Verbs.

Classes / Forms	Class I	Class II	Class III
	stem suffix <i>-i-</i>	stem suffix <i>-oi-</i>	
Infinitive	<i>cēpan</i> (keep)	<i>lōcian</i> (look)	<i>habban</i> (have)
Present Ind. Sing. 1 2 3 Plur.	<i>cēpe</i> <i>cēpst</i> <i>cēpþ</i> <i>cēpaþ</i>	<i>lōcie</i> <i>lōcast</i> <i>lōcaþ</i> <i>lōciaþ</i>	<i>hæbbe</i> <i>hafast, hæfst</i> <i>hafaþ, hæfþ</i> <i>habbaþ</i>
Present Subj. Sing. Plur.	<i>cēpe</i> <i>cēpen</i>	<i>lōcie</i> <i>lōcien</i>	<i>hæbbe</i> <i>hæbben</i>
Imperative Sing. Plur.	<i>cēp</i> <i>cēpaþ</i>	<i>lōca</i> <i>lōciaþ</i>	<i>hafa</i> <i>habbaþ</i>
Participle I	<i>cēpende</i>	<i>lōciende</i>	<i>hæbbende</i>
Past Ind. Sing. 1 2 3 Plur.	<i>cēpte</i> <i>cēptes(t)</i> <i>cēpte</i> <i>cēpton</i>	<i>lōcode</i> <i>lōcodes(t)</i> <i>lōcode</i> <i>lōcodon</i>	<i>hæfde</i> <i>hæfdest</i> <i>hæfde</i> <i>hæfdon</i>
Past Subj. Sing. Plur.	<i>cēpte</i> <i>cēpten</i>	<i>lōcode</i> <i>lōcoden</i>	<i>hæfden</i> <i>hæfden</i>
Participle II	<i>(3e)cēped</i>	<i>(3e)lōcod</i>	<i>(3e)hæfd</i>

IRREGULAR WEAK VERBS. Most weak verbs belonging to Classes I and II exhibited regular patterns of conjugation. In contrast, Class III weak verbs were considered irregular, as this small group consisted of a few verbs, each characterized by its own distinctive morphological behavior. In addition, certain Class I verbs also displayed irregularities inherited from earlier stages of the language, though these irregularities developed differently in prehistoric times and in Old English. Typical examples include *tellan* – *talde* – *taldon* – *tald* (“to tell”) and *sellan* – *salde* – *sealdon* – *seald* (“to sell”). (See Appendix 9).

The defining feature of irregular weak verbs in Old English was vowel alternation, which is otherwise uncommon in weak verb conjugation. This irregularity took place because the stem-forming suffix *-i-* was absent in the past singular and past participle forms (*talian* – *talde* – *tald*). Only the infinitive underwent palatal mutation

under the influence of the *-i-* element (*talian* > *tellan*), while the remaining principal forms remained unchanged. As a result, these verbs developed vowel alternation within their paradigms.

IRREGULAR STRONG VERBS. A group of strong verbs lost certain forms during the pre-literary period while preserving others, leading to shifts in both their lexical and grammatical functions. Historically, some past-tense forms developed novel meanings and came to express present-time reference. These verbs were known as *preterite-present verbs* because, during the recorded period, their present tense forms were derived from original past (preterite) forms that combined elements of both strong and weak conjugation patterns. In Old English, new past tense forms for these verbs were formed by means of dental suffixation, following a pattern similar to that of weak verbs. Most preterite-present verbs were defective, lacking the full set of forms typical of regular verbs; some forms had lost their place in the paradigm and eventually disappeared. Old English preterite-present verbs included:

Pic. 112 – *Old English Preterite-Present Verbs. Conjugation Table.*

Infinitive	Present Singular	Present Plural	Past Singular	Participle II
āȝan	āȝ	āȝon	āhte	āȝen
cunnan	cann	cunnon	cūðe	cunnen
sculan	sceal	sculon	scolde	—
maȝan	mæȝ	maȝon	meahte	—
—	mōt	mōton	mōste	—

These Old English forms correspond to the following pre-written verb forms:

Pic. 113 – *Pre-written vs. Written Period Comparison.*

Period	Infinitive	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	Form 5
<i>Pre-written</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Past Singular</i>	<i>Past Plural</i>	<i>Participle II</i>	—
⇓	⇓	⇓	⇓	⇓	—
<i>Written</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Present Singular</i>	<i>Present Plural</i>	<i>Past Singular</i>	<i>Participle II</i>

Preterite-present verbs continued to develop along several distinct vectors. The verb *āzan* led to multiple forms in later stages of the language. Its infinitive *āzan* underwent phonetic change and developed into the Modern English verb *owe*, whose past tense and past participle (*owed*) were formed according to the weak verb pattern. The past participle *āzen* produced the Modern English adjective *own*, which subsequently served as the basis for the regular verb *own* (*owned* – *owned*). The singular past tense form *āhte* evolved into the modern modal verb *ought*.

The verb *cunnan* gradually lost its infinitive. The form *can* came to function as the present tense, while the past tense form acquired a dental suffix *-d*, which was spelled *-ou-* in Middle English rather than *-u-*, and later gained the letter *-l-* by analogy with verbs such as *should* and *would*. Similarly, *mazan* lost both its infinitive and its present participle, using *mæz* for the present tense, while the former past tense form *meahte* developed into Modern English *might*. The verb *mōt* retained only a single form, *must*, which originated from the past tense *mōste* and was reanalyzed as a present-tense form, illustrating a secondary semantic shift in which a new past form was reanalyzed as present. The verb *sculan*, like other preterite-present verbs, lost its infinitive; *sceal* functioned as the present tense, while the former past tense *scolde* developed into *should*. Both forms ultimately came to serve as modal or auxiliary verbs. In Modern English, these verbs are distinguished by their modal meanings: they convey possibility, obligation, or necessity. They don't take the particle "to" before an infinitive verb. In Old English, no verbs used this particle with infinitives; when "to" appeared before an infinitive, it functioned as a directional preposition signifying "toward" or "in order to."

SUPPLETIVE VERBS. *Suppletion* represented one of the oldest mechanisms of form formation. All Indo-European languages, including English, possessed suppletive verbs, whose different forms were derived from entirely separate roots, each belonging to a distinct morphological class. In Old English, typical examples included *bēon* – *wesan* ("be"), *gān* – *eode* ("go"), and *dōn* – *dyde* ("do"). In each case, one root supplied the present-tense forms, while another provided the past-tense forms. This phenomenon was widespread across the Indo-European languages, as illustrated by

forms such as German *sein – war – ich bin*, Ukrainian *бути – є, йому – йомує*, Latin *sum – fui*, and French *aller – je vais – j’irai*. In fact, the modern verb *be* derives its forms from three distinct roots: *wes-*, *es-*, and *be*.

Within the temporal organization, where Proto-Indo-European maintained distinct PRESENT, PAST, and FUTURE TENSES, Proto-Germanic reduced this to a binary present-past opposition, expressing futurity through alternative grammatical mechanisms. As Old English did not possess a distinct grammatical future tense, future reference was usually expressed by using the present tense together with a time-adverb pointing to a forthcoming action, or by combining an infinitive with a modal verb, most commonly *sculan* (‘shall’) or *willan* (‘will’). For example: “*Wille ic aseczan mærum þeodne min ærende*”.

The Old English verbal system consisted of two main types of forms: FINITE VERBS and NON-FINITE FORMS, or verbals (the infinitive and the participle). The distinction between these categories was more distinctly exhibited than in Modern English, as verbals were not conjugated like finite verbs but declined in the manner of nouns or adjectives. As a result, the infinitive displayed two case forms, conventionally referred to as the *Common case*¹⁹ and the *Dative case*.

Common Case	Dative Case
writan (to write)	to writenne (so that I shall write)
cēpan (to keep)	to cēpenne (so that I shall keep)
drincan (to drink)	to drincenne (so that I shall drink)

The Common case of the infinitive performed a variety of syntactic roles, whereas the Dative case was more limited, occurring mainly when the infinitive acted as an adverbial to express purpose, as in: *Ic 3ā to drincenne* (“I go to drink”). The

¹⁹ *Common case*: the unmarked form of the Old English infinitive, employed in the majority of syntactic functions such as subject or object roles, as opposed to the marked Dative case form.

participle, by contrast, had a more complex system of forms and was declined much like an adjective. Its only distinctly verbal grammatical feature was tense, as shown in the following examples:

Present Tense	Past Tense
writende	writen
cēpende	cēpt
drincende	druncen

All Old English verbs were based on three distinct stems, so each verb had its own Infinitive stem, Past Singular stem, and Past Plural stem. For example, the verb *writan* had the following stems: *wrīt-* (Infinitive stem, obtained by removing *-an*), *wrāt-* (Past Singular), and *writ-* (Past Plural, without *-on*). **Participles were formed from these stems:** Participle I was created by adding the suffix *-ende* to the Infinitive stem, while Participle II was formed by combining the prefix *ge-* with the Past Plural stem plus the ending *-en* (or *-ed* for weak verbs). For instance, *writan* yielded the present participle *wrītende* and the past participle *zewritten*.

Old English distinguished **THREE GRAMMATICAL PERSONS**: *first, second, and third*. For example:

Person	Form
First person – <i>Ic</i>	write
Second person – <i>þu</i>	writest
Third person – <i>he</i>	writeþ

However, distinct person forms appeared only in the Indicative mood; the Imperative and Subjunctive (Oblique) moods did not mark person. Even within the Indicative, person distinctions were limited to singular forms, while all plural forms were identical across persons, as illustrated by:

Present Tense Indicative (Plural)		Past Tense Indicative (Plural)	
Pronouns	Form	Pronouns	Form
wē	} writaþ	wē	} writon
ȝē		ȝē	
hīe		hīe	

The grammatical category of **NUMBER** was expressed through the contrast between singular and plural forms, as in: *Ic wriþe (singular)* – “I write”; *wē writaþ (plural)* – “we write”.

Old English distinguished **THREE MOODS**: Indicative, Imperative, and Oblique. For example: a) Indicative: *þū cēpst*; b) Imperative: *cēp*; c) Oblique: *cēpe*. The Indicative and Imperative moods functioned much like their Modern English equivalents. In contrast, the Oblique mood differed significantly from Modern English usage. A single Oblique form expressed both hypothetical and uncertain actions, functions that today are covered by the Subjunctive and Conditional moods. Additionally, the Oblique appeared in contexts where Modern English would use the Indicative, such as in indirect speech: *Hē sǣde þæt þæt land sīe swīþe lang* (“He said that that land is very long/large”).

Word formation within the OE verbs utilized numerous suffixes and prefixes commonly found in Old English texts, especially in poetry:

Pic. 114 – *Word Formation in Old English Verbs*.

a) Suffixes

-s-

from noun or adjective stems

mærsian (to announce)

from mære - famous

nēalæcan (to approach)

-læc-

-ett-

bliccettan (to sparkle)

fæstnian (to fasten)

from fæst - firm

-n-

b) Prefixes

ā-

out of, away

ārisan (arise), **āwacian** (awake), **āberan** (bear away)

around, about, thoroughly

beȝān (go around), **beȝencan** (consider),
behēafđian (behead)

be-

for-

destruction, loss, or intensification

fordōn (destroy), **forweorȝan** (perish),
forȝifan (forgive)

wrongly, badly

mislūcian (displease), **misdōn** (do wrong)

mis-

of-

away, off

ofslēan (slay), **oftēon** (withdraw)

onto, change of state

onbindan (unbind), **onlūcan** (unlock),
onȝinnan (begin)

on-

tō-

apart, asunder

tōbrecean (break apart), **tōdælan** (divide)

perfective aspect

ȝewritan (write), **ȝesēon** (see)

ȝe-

Thus, the properties of OE verb can be summarized in a graph below.

Pic. 115 – *The Set of Characteristic Features of OE Verb.*

Morphological Classification		Grammatical Categories	
Strong Verbs	7 classes, ablaut (vowel alternation), 4 principal parts	Person	3 persons (1st, 2nd, 3rd) – only in Indicative singular
Weak Verbs	3 classes, dental suffix (-d/-t), 3 principal parts	Number	Singular vs. Plural (Ic write – wē wriþaþ)
Irregular Weak	Vowel alternation (tellan – talde – tald)	Tense	Present and Past (no distinct future tense)
Preterite-Present	Past forms → present meaning (āȝan, cunnan, sculan)	Mood	Indicative, Imperative, Oblique (Subjunctive)
Suppletive	Multiple roots (bēon – wesan, ȝān – eode)		

Strong Verb Classes		Weak Verb Classes	
Classes I–V	Qualitative ablaut (vowel quality changes)	Class I	Stem suffix -i-, i-umlaut, gemination (dēmjan → dēman)
Class I	-i following root vowel	Class II	Stem suffix -oi-, no umlaut (luf-oian → lufian)
Class II	-u following root vowel	Class III	No suffix, irregular (habban, libban, secgan, hycgan)
Classes III–V	Various consonantal patterns	Status	Open class – new verbs followed weak pattern
Class VI	Quantitative ablaut (vowel length changes)		
Class VII	Original reduplication (gradually lost)		

Verb Stems & Principal Parts

Three Stems: Infinitive stem, Past Singular stem, Past Plural stem
Example: wri^{tan} → wri^{t-} (Inf.), wri^{t-} (Past Sg.), wri^{t-} (Past Pl.)

Strong Verbs	Infinitive Past Singular Past Plural Past Participle (4 forms)
Weak Verbs	Infinitive Past Tense Past Participle (3 forms)
Participle I	Infinitive stem + -ende (wri ^{tende})
Participle II	ge- + Past Plural stem + -en/-ed (gewri ^{tten})

Non-Finite Forms (Verbals)

Infinitive	2 cases: Common (wri ^{tan}) & Dative (to wri ^{tene})
Common Case	Various syntactic roles
Dative Case	Purpose (Ic 3 ^ā to dri ^{ncenne} "I go to drink")
Participles	Declined like adjectives, marked for tense

Future Tense Expression

No distinct future tense

- **Present + time adverb:** present tense verb with futurity marker
- **Modal + infinitive:** sculan (shall) or willan (will) + infinitive
- **Example:** Wille ic asecjan mærum þeodne min ærende

Mood Functions

Indicative	Factual statements, questions (þū cēpst)
Imperative	Commands (cēp)
Oblique (Subjunctive)	Hypothetical, uncertain actions, indirect speech (cēpe) <i>Example:</i> Hē sǣde þæt þæt land sie swiþe lānȝ ("He said that that land is very long")

During the MIDDLE ENGLISH period, all Old English verb categories (strong, weak, preterite-present, and irregular) persisted. Each type, however, underwent modifications due to the phonological developments. Weak verbs became increasingly important and continued to expand, with certain strong verbs transitioning to weak conjugation patterns. This trend wasn't absolute; occasionally, the opposite occurred, with some weak verbs taking on strong characteristics.

Throughout Middle English, *STRONG VERBS* experienced substantial transformations while preserving their fundamental four-form pattern. The erosion of inflectional endings, along with the development of position-based vowel length, led to formal homonymy, in which present participles of some verbs became indistinguishable from their past plural forms. This occurred variably across the seven strong verb classes: Class I verbs like “written” displayed the pattern *writan – wrāt – wrāton – writen*, whereas Class II verbs such as “chesen” showed *chesen – chose – chossen – chosen*. Class III exhibited greater diversity with examples including “drinken” (*drinken – dronk – dronken – dronken*), “helpen” (*helpen – halp – hulpen – holpen*), and “fighten” (*fighting – fought – foughten – foughten*). Classes IV and V showed significant merging of past tense and past participle forms, evident in “beren” (Class IV) (*beren – bar – baren – boren*) and “geten” (Class V) (*geten – gat – gaten – gotten*). Class VI verbs like “shaken” preserved greater consistency with *shaken – shook – shoken – shaken*, while Class VII verbs such as “known” followed *knownen – knew – knewen – knownen*. Some strong verbs began using the dental suffix (-ed) for past-tense formation, essentially switching from strong to weak conjugation. This structural change affected verbs, including *gripen, crepen, wepen, spelen, walken, dreden, and rederi*, which traditionally formed past tenses through vowel alternation rather than suffixation. A clear example appears in “*He slepte namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale*” (he slept no more than does a nightingale), where “slepte” shows the weak past tense of the originally strong verb “slepen.” This shift reflects the broader regularization trend in Middle English verb morphology, as the language progressively simplified its conjugation system by favoring the more consistent weak-verb pattern over irregular strong-verb forms.

During the Middle English period, *WEAK VERBS* expanded significantly, as virtually all loanwords and newly coined verbs derived from other parts of speech adopted the weak conjugation pattern. The principal changes affecting weak verbs were phonological, reflecting broader sound shifts underway in the language. Many verbs underwent simplification of their infinitive forms, with some losing elements of their suffixes (*lufian*, for instance, became *louen*). The traditional class distinctions among

weak verbs also began to erode through the leveling of grammatical endings: Class II verbs dropped their characteristic *-ode* ending in favor of the more widespread *-ed*, while Class III was reduced to just three verbs (*sejjen*, *libben*, and *habben*, which became *seien*, *liven*, and *haven*). In addition, a phonological development in the fourteenth century affected weak verbs whose stems ended in *l*, *n*, or *v*, causing the past tense suffix *-d* to shift to *-t*. Examples include *leornian-leornode* → *lernte* and *felanfelde* → *feelen-felte*.

The adoption of borrowed verbs into Middle English generally followed patterns determined by their linguistic origin. SCANDINAVIAN LOANWORDS mostly conformed to weak conjugation, as in *callen*, *wanten*, and *guessen*. However, some verbs, such as *take*, *thrive*, and *flingen*, retained strong conjugation with vowel alternation in their past tense and participle forms, likely because their phonology resembled that of existing strong verb classes VI, I, and III, respectively. FRENCH-DERIVED VERBS were almost entirely weak (i.e., what are now considered regular verbs), with the exception of *striven*, which adopted the strong Class I pattern. The PRETERITE-PRESENT verbs also underwent notable changes: *geneah* lost its verbal function entirely, becoming the adverb *ynough* (“enough”), as in *he drank ynough biforn*, while other verbs in this group simplified their paradigms.

The MODAL AUXILIARY “*shall/sholde*” broadened its use beyond expressing simple futurity, functioning also as an auxiliary in future-in-the-past constructions and in emerging analytical subjunctive forms. The verb “*motan*” saw a semantic shift, gradually losing its original sense of ability or possibility, sometimes preserved in the present form *moot*, and increasingly conveying obligation, with the past form *moste* used exclusively in this sense, as in: “*Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun, // That moot namoore goon agayn to fighte?*” The suppletive verbs “*ben*” and “*goon*” remained irregular. However, *goon* developed a new past tense stem, *went*, which eventually replaced the older form *eode*.

During the Middle English period, the English verb system, which shifted from the rigid, form-heavy grammar of Old English to the more flexible, ANALYTICAL SYSTEM, laying the foundation for the verbs used today, underwent a profound

metamorphosis, gradually moving away from the tightly inflected, synthetic structures of Old English toward the analytical constructions that define Modern English. Where Old English relied on suffixes, vowel shifts, and stem alternations to convey tense, mood, and person, Middle English began to employ compound verb forms, offering greater flexibility and nuance.

Future time was no longer marked by dedicated endings; instead, it emerged through context, word order, and adverbs. A future action could be hinted at in the connection between main and subordinate clauses or made explicit with temporal markers, as in: *“tomorrow we are writing a test.”* Meanwhile, the auxiliaries “shall” and “will” evolved from expressions of desire, obligation, or unrealized action into true indicators of futurity, with Chaucer’s writings showing their elegant versatility: *“I shal telle yow bitwix us two”* and *“I shal make us sauf for everemore.”*

The era also saw the rise of the perfect tenses, built from the auxiliary *to haven* plus a past participle, sometimes prefixed, sometimes not, as in *“Aprille hath perced to the rote”* or *“so hadde I spoken with hem everichon.”* Perfect infinitives became increasingly important, particularly in analytical subjunctive constructions, exemplified by Chaucer’s line: *“And wolde have kist his feet.”*

In Middle English, the *PASSIVE VOICE*, formed with “*ben*” plus *the past participle*, became widely used to express both states and actions, marking a clear shift from Old English practices. In Old English, the participle had to agree in number with the subject, for example, *“paet arcebiscop was ze-martyrod”* versus *“waeron zemartyrode”*. Middle English, however, dropped this agreement requirement, even though plural endings for adjectives and participles were still retained elsewhere. This change made the participial element in passive constructions invariable, as seen in *“hir yellow heer was broyded in a tresse”* (“her yellow hair was braided in a tress”). The passive voice also extended to non-finite forms, with passive infinitives becoming increasingly common, exemplified by *“This tresor moste ycaried be by nyghte, as wisely and as slyly as it myghte.”* Together with the developments in future and perfect constructions, these changes illustrate Middle English’s growing ability to express different aspectual nuances of action.

NON-FINITE FORMS in Old English, the infinitive and the two participles, gradually shifted from nominal toward verbal properties during the Middle English period. They lost their case endings and no longer agreed with nouns, while new verbal categories emerged, giving rise to the analytical non-finite forms familiar in Modern English, such as the passive infinitive and perfect infinitive.

During this period, a new non-finite verb form, the GERUND, emerged, blending characteristics of both nouns and verbs. Meanwhile, the infinitive underwent significant changes: it shed its earlier case endings and came to be preceded by the particle “to,” although traces of the Old English ending (originally *-an* or *-ian*, later reduced to *-en* or *-n*) still survived in constructions such as *to writen*, *to spenden*, and *to maken*. As the language continued to evolve, the final consonant of these endings gradually disappeared. This process is visible in Chaucer’s own writing, where forms like *to seke* and *to seken*, *to do* and *to doon*, or *to make* and *to maken* appear side by side. Notably, “to” was regularly omitted when certain verbs preceded the infinitive, especially preterite-present verbs that later developed into the modern modal auxiliaries.

The *PARTICIPLE I*, which conveys active or continuing action, underwent notable changes in form over time. The Old English ending *-ende* gradually shifted first to *-inde* and then to *-ynge/-inge*, driven by the weakening of final sounds and the blending of regional dialects. Alongside this development, the Old English suffix *-ung* (as in *liornunge*, meaning “learning”) underwent a parallel shift toward the same *-ynge/-inge* ending. The result was a set of identical forms serving different grammatical functions, which could occasionally lead to ambiguity. This overlap is illustrated by contrasting examples from Middle English: “*The silver dropes hangynge on the leves*,” where the form functions as a participle, and “*A rose gerland, fressh and wel smellynge*,” where the distinction between participial and nominal use becomes less clear-cut.

Initially, the nominalized forms derived from transitive verbs required genitive objects, a pattern that was eventually replaced in Modern English by phrases built with “of.” Once this form became phonetically indistinguishable from the first participle, it

gained considerably more syntactic freedom and could, on occasion, take a direct object. This merging led to what we now call the Gerund, a form that could occur without an article and combine freely with a range of prepositions. The gerund was still quite uncommon in Chaucer's writing, with researchers identifying only around six unambiguous instances throughout his entire body of work, some of which may represent tentative experimentation with the form rather than a reflection of any firmly established grammatical pattern.

PARTICIPLE II continued to make use of the prefix *y-* (derived from the Old English *ȝe-*) across both strong and weak verbs, its occurrence was highly irregular and it had completely disappeared by the Early Modern English period. Chaucer's usage reveals a certain tendency, when in strong verbs, the absence of the *y-* prefix was frequently accompanied by the loss of the final *-n* (as observed in *holpen* versus *y-holpe*), while weak verb participles showed no such sensitivity to whether the prefix was present or not, as illustrated by the parallel forms *broyded* and *y-broyded*.

The Old English prefix *ȝe-* gradually reduced to *y-*, and by the fourteenth century it had disappeared from most dialects. Nevertheless, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* bears witness to its continued presence, preserving numerous examples of the prefix still in active use.

Pic. 116 – *The Key Properties of ME Verb System.*

Strong Verbs	Weak Verbs	Loanwords
Maintained four-form pattern - Class I: writen-wrot-writen-writen - Class II: chesen-ches-chosen-chosen - Class III: drinken-drank-dronken-dronken - Classes IV & V: merging of forms - Class VI: shaken-shok-shaken-shaken - Class VII: knowen-knew-knewen-knowen Key Changes - Formal homonymy (present participle = past plural) - Some adopted -ed suffix (weak pattern) "He slepte namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale"	Expansion & Simplification - Nearly all loanwords adopted weak pattern - Infinitive simplification: lufian → louen - Class II: -ode → -ed - Class III: reduced to seien, liven, haven Phonological Changes - Stems ending in l, n, v: -d → -t leornian-leornode → lernte felan-felde → feelen-felte	Scandinavian Mostly weak: callen, wanten, guessen Some strong: take, thrive, flingen French Almost all weak - Exception: striven (Class I pattern)

Preterite-Present & Modals	Analytical System	Non-Finite Forms
shall/sholde - Expanded beyond simple futurity - Future-in-the-past constructions - Analytical subjunctive forms motan - Semantic shift from ability → obligation - moot (present) vs. moste (past, obligation only) <i>"Who sorveth now but woful Palamoun, // That moot namoore goon agayn to fighte?"</i> Other Changes - geneah → ynough (adverb) - zoon: new past tense went (replaced eode)	Future Tense - Context, word order, adverbs - shall/will as futurity markers <i>"I shal telle yow bituix us two"</i> Perfect Tenses - haven + past participle <i>"Aprille hath perced to the rote" "so hadde I spoken with hem everichon"</i> Passive Voice - ben + past participle - No agreement with subject (unlike OE) - Passive infinitives emerged <i>"hir yellow heer was broyded in a tresse" "This tresor moste yearied be by nyghte"</i>	Infinitive - Lost case distinctions - Acquired particle to -an/-ian → -en/-n → often dropped final -n <i>to writen, to seke/seken, to make/maken</i> Participle I (Present) -ende → -inde → -ynge/-inge - Merged with verbal noun (-ung → -ynge/-inge) <i>"The silver dropes hangynge on the leves"</i> Participle II (Past) - Prefix y- (from OE <i>ge-</i>) inconsistent - Strong verbs: -n often dropped without prefix <i>holpen vs. y-holpe broyded vs. y-broyded</i> Gerund (NEW!) - Combined nominal & verbal features - Could take direct objects - Rare in Chaucer (~6 examples)

The shift into EARLY MODERN ENGLISH triggered a major simplification of the verb system, as verbal endings gradually disappeared and paradigms became far less complex. The old segmentation between *strong* and *weak* verbs gradually gave way to the modern distinction between *regular* and *irregular* verbs, with a significant number of formerly strong verbs crossing over into the weak category by forming their past tense and past participle through the addition of a dental suffix (-*d* or -*t*).

MODAL VERBS underwent especially striking changes. The preterite-present class declined sharply: some verbs vanished entirely (*dowen*, *unnen*, *thurven*, *munneri*), while the survivors lost most of their original forms and became *defective*

auxiliaries. Unlike their preterite-present predecessors, these modals no longer stood alone; they required an infinitive complement without the particle *to*. Yet in Shakespeare's time, a few verbs, such as *witen* ("to know"), still retained some independence.

At the same time, the strong verb system was condensed from four principal forms (the Infinitive, Past Tense, and Past Participle) to just three, reflecting a broader trend toward **morphological economy and regularization** in the evolving English verb system.

During the Early Modern English period, *NON-FINITE VERB FORMS*, including the Infinitive, Participle, and Gerund, underwent significant development, evolving into fully grammatical constructions rather than mere nominal forms. These forms developed **Passive and Perfect variants**, incorporating Passive and Perfect Infinitives, Passive and Perfect Gerunds, Present Participles in the Passive Voice, and Perfect Participles in both Active and Passive Voices, thus collectively reflecting the shape of the emerging verbal system. Shakespeare illustrates the Passive Infinitive in *Julius Caesar* with the line "*I am to blame to be thus waited for.*" The Gerund, which had appeared only sporadically throughout Middle English, grew increasingly frequent during this period, following patterns of use closely resembling those found in contemporary English, as can be seen in *Coriolanus*: "*You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.*"

The *MOOD SYSTEM* kept the threefold division of Middle English, **Indicative, Imperative, and Subjunctive**, while generating novel analytical subjunctive forms that contemporary grammars variously refer to as *Conditional*, *Suppositional*, or *Past Subjunctive II*. These forms were more flexible than their modern counterparts, allowing varied combinations in unreal conditional sentences, as in *Cymbeline*: "*If thou wert honourable, // Thou wouldst have told this tale for virtue.*" Simple Subjunctive expressions of wishes were also frequent, using virtually all available forms, exemplified in *King Lear*: "*O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector.*" Subjunctive I remained common in contexts where modern English uses the Suppositional mood (*should* + *infinitive*), with some of these forms preserved in

American English, as in *Romeo and Juliet*: “*parting is such sweet sorrow, // That I shall say good night.*”

While the *CONTINUOUS ASPECT* had started to take shape in Middle English and could be found occasionally in Early Modern English writing, it had not yet solidified into the fully grammaticalized and systematic construction that would come to define later stages of the language.

The MODERN ENGLISH period marked a critical evolution in verbal morphology, characterized by widespread systematization and the consolidation of analytical structures:

a) The *traditional strong–weak verb distinction largely disappeared*, as many irregular verbs adopted predictable conjugation patterns, with verbs like *help* illustrating this broader trend toward regularization.

b) *Morphological simplification* accelerated through the loss of redundant inflectional markers: the final *-e* disappeared from first-person singular, Plural Present, and Infinitive forms, while Infinitive *-n* suffixes and Present Plural endings (*-n*, *-th*) were systematically abandoned.

c) The *Participle system* grew more uniform, with *-ing* becoming the single consistent marker of the Present Participle, and third-person singular verb forms converging on the *-s* ending in place of the older *-th*. These slides occurred alongside the gradual retreat of the Subjunctive mood, which progressively generated ground for the evolving periphrastic forms that were coming to occupy its role.

d) The *auxiliary system* expanded dramatically, propelled by the grammaticalization of *do* and the proliferation of phrasal verbs such as *shorten up*, *wear out*, and *cut off*, reflecting English’s growing reliance on multi-word verbal expressions.

e) The *aspectual system* reached new levels of sophistication: inherited perfect constructions were systematically refined, continuous forms became fully integrated, and although perfect continuous combinations remained rare, they would eventually stabilize in the nineteenth century, establishing the patterns familiar in contemporary English.

Pic. 117 – Modern English Verb System Evolution.

Early Modern English (c. 1500–1700)	Early Modern English Mood & Aspect	Modern English (1700–Present)
Strong → Weak Shift - Strong/weak → regular/irregular - Many strong verbs adopted weak patterns (dental suffixes -d/-t) 4 principal forms → 3 forms Modal Verbs - Preterite-present class declined sharply - Some vanished (downen, unnen, thurven, munnen) - Survivors became defective auxiliaries - Required infinitive without to - Few retained independence (witen "to know") Non-Finite Forms - Evolved into fully grammatical constructions - Acquired passive & perfect variants - Passive infinitive, perfect infinitive - Passive & perfect gerunds - Perfect participles (active & passive) <i>"I am to blame to be thus waited for" (Julius Caesar)</i> Gerund Development - Became increasingly common (rare in ME) - Usage patterns → modern English <i>"You know the cause, sir, of my standing here" (Coriolanus)</i>	Mood System - Retained threefold: Indicative, Imperative, Subjunctive - Novel analytical subjunctive forms - Conditional, suppositional, past subjunctive II - More flexible than modern forms <i>"If thou wert honourable, // Thou wouldst have told this tale for virtue" (Cymbeline)</i> Subjunctive Usage - Simple subjunctive for wishes (all forms) <i>"O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector" (King Lear)</i> - Subjunctive I common (modern: should + inf.) - Preserved in American English <i>"parting is such sweet sorrow, // That I shall say good night" (Romeo & Juliet)</i> Continuous Aspect - Began emerging in ME - Appeared sporadically in EME - Not yet fully systematic	Morphological Simplification a) Strong-weak distinction largely disappeared - Many irregular → predictable patterns - Example: help (regularization trend) b) Loss of redundant inflections: - Final -e dropped (1st sg., pl. present, infinitive) - Infinitive -n suffixes abandoned - Present plural endings (-n, -th) lost c) Participle system uniformity: -ing as sole present participle marker 3rd person sg. standardized: -s (not -th) - Subjunctive declined → periphrastic constructions Auxiliary System Expansion d) Grammaticalization of do - Rise of phrasal verbs (shorten up, wear out, cut off) - Growing reliance on multi-word expressions Aspectual System Sophistication e) Perfect constructions systematically refined - Continuous forms fully integrated - Perfect continuous rare but emerging - Stabilized in 19th century - Established contemporary patterns

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Look at these Modern English verbs: *write, choose, drink, help, fight, shake, know*. Using the information from the pace, identify which Old English strong verb class (I-VII) each belonged to. What vowel patterns characterized each class? Which verbs have kept their strong patterns, and which have become regular?
- Research these verbs and determine their historical trajectory:
 - help* (historically strong or weak, now regular in some dialects);
 - take* (Scandinavian borrowing);
 - strive* (French borrowing);

- *sleep* (originally strong or weak).
- Which direction did each verb move, and why? What does this tell us about language change?
3. The Old English prefix *ge-* (later *y-*) appears in past participles. Find:
- 5 words in Modern English that retain traces of this prefix (hint: look at archaic or poetic language);
 - Examples in Middle English texts (Chaucer) where *y-* appears.
4. The *-ing* forms became ambiguous in Middle English. Look at these sentences and identify whether each *-ing* form is a gerund or present participle:
- “*The silver dropes hangynge on the leves.*”
 - “*Swimming is fun.*”
 - “*I enjoy swimming.*”
 - “*The swimming pool.*”
 - “*She was swimming.*”
5. Phrasal verbs like “*shorten up*,” “*wear out*,” “*cut off*” emerged in Modern English. Why do you think English developed so many phrasal verbs? Research and list:
- 5 phrasal verbs that exist in Modern English but not in Old or Middle English in Shakespearean texts.
 - What does this tell you about the analytical nature of the English language?
6. Scandinavian loanwords mostly conformed to weak conjugation, while French verbs were almost entirely weak. Test this claim:
- Find 5 verbs of Scandinavian origin in Modern English.
 - Find 5 verbs of French origin.
 - Check whether they’re regular or irregular today.
 - Can you find any exceptions to the patterns described in the chapter?
7. Strong verbs originally had four principal parts (Infinitive, Past Singular, Past Plural, Past Participle) but were reduced to three by Early Modern English. Explain:
- Which two forms merged and why?
 - Give 3 examples showing this merger
 - What phonological changes made this possible?
8. Some irregular verbs have resisted regularization for over 1000 years. Why do you think verbs like *be*, *go*, *have*, and *do* remain irregular when so many others have become regular? What makes them special?
9. Research how different English dialects today handle verb forms:
- Past tense of “*dive*”: *dived* vs. *dove*;
 - Past tense of “*sneak*”: *sneaked* vs. *snuck*;
 - “*He don’t*” vs. “*He doesn’t*.”

NON-NOTIONAL WORDS.

AUXILIARY PARTS OF SPEECH form a broad category that traditionally encompasses *prepositions*, *conjunctions*, *particles*, and *interjections*. While all Indo-European languages possess such elements, modern languages vary considerably in

how these categories are organized. Japanese, for instance, uses postpositive elements in place of prepositions, with these postposed words behaving morphologically like nouns and serving to mark case. Korean takes a different approach, replacing conjunctions with a system of roughly fifty verbal adverbial forms that carry out both coordinating and subordinating functions. Chinese represents an even more divergent model, drawing no clear line between lexical and functional word classes and treating elements that other languages divide into notional and non-notional categories as structurally equivalent. These cross-linguistic differences illustrate the wide range of strategies languages employ to encode grammatical relationships, showing that the auxiliary word classes of Indo-European languages are just one of many possible typological solutions.

Pic. 118 – *Auxiliary Word Strategies: Cross-Linguistic Typology.*



The OLD ENGLISH prepositions form a bridge stretching directly into the contemporary language; their spellings may feel distant, but their bones are familiar. Among the *PRIMARY* prepositions were fundamental spatial and relational words such as *of* (of, out of), *æt* (to), *fram* (from), *tō* (to), *wip* (against), *in*, *mid* (with), *on* (on, at),

be (by, near, about, because of), *þurh* (through), *under*, *ofer* (over), *æfter* (after), *bufan* (above), and *ūt* (out). DERIVED prepositions, often formed derivationally, included words like *beforan* (before), *būtan* (without), and *benorþan* (north of).

In the earlier Germanic stage, prepositions strictly determined the grammatical case of the nouns they governed, requiring either the Dative, Accusative, or Genitive. By the Old English period, however, this system had already begun to break down, leaving only scattered remnants of case government: *mid*, *būtan*, and occasionally *on* and *in* continued to take the Dative, while *fram*, *ūt*, and *æfter* retained their association with the Genitive.

The system of conjunctions followed a similar division between *PRIMARY* and *DERIVED* forms. At its simplest core sat *PRIMARY CONJUNCTIONS*, including *and/ond* (“and”), *ac* (“but”), *ȝif* (“if”), and *or*, each doing the fundamental work of linking clauses and ideas. The *DERIVED* conjunctions, by contrast, were considerably more ornate in both form and function: correlative pairings like *ægþer ȝe... ȝe* encoded meanings equivalent to “both... and” or “either... or”; temporal relationships were handled by *hwonne*, *þa*, and *þonne* (all conveying “when”); *þēāh* introduced concessive clauses (“though”); *þætte* served as a complementizer equivalent to “that”; *ær* marked anteriority (“before”); and the comparative correlative *swā... swā* drew proportional comparisons along the lines of “so... as.” Together, these derived forms gave Old English the grammatical machinery to express nuance, sequence, contrast, and degree far beyond what its simpler primary conjunctions could achieve on their own.

The evolution of prepositions and conjunctions from MIDDLE to Modern English reflects wider structural changes in the language, particularly the loss of inflectional case endings and the influence of contact with other languages. As Old English grammatical endings disappeared, prepositions took on greater syntactic responsibility, a tendency strengthened by borrowings from Norse and French. New compound prepositions such as *because of* developed as English shifted toward a more analytical grammatical system.

Conjunctions underwent a similar evolution: native Old English words like *zif* gradually transformed into modern *if*, while French-derived terms like *because* and *unless* entered the language. As the Subjunctive Mood declined in strength, the language found fresh ways to convey hypothetical and conditional ideas.

The arrival of MODERN ENGLISH marked a period of relative stability for many of these changes. Prepositions specialized their applications, phrasal verbs proliferated, and formal registers adopted ever more complex sentence structures. Conjunctions did not escape evolution either, shifting in their stylistic usage while grammarians' efforts to pin down firm rules for their use were largely unsuccessful.

By Modern English, these changes had largely stabilized. Prepositions became more specialized, phrasal verbs expanded, and formal writing developed increasingly complex constructions. Conjunctions, too, underwent stylistic changes, though attempts by grammarians to impose rigid rules on their use often met with little success.

Pic. 119 – *Historical Development of Non-Notional Words.*

Category	Old English (450–1100)	Middle English (1100–1500)	Modern English (1500–Present)
PRIMARY PREPOSITIONS			
PREPOSITIONS	Forms: of, æt, fram, tō, wiþ, in, mid, on, be, þurh, under, ofer, æfter, bifan, ùt <i>Spatial & relational markers</i>	Phonological changes: æt → at, þurh → thurgh, ofer → over <i>Spelling standardization begins</i>	Stabilized forms: of, at, from, to, with, in, on, by, through, under, over, after, out <i>Recognizably modern</i>
DERIVED / COMPOUND PREPOSITIONS			
PREPOSITIONS	Derived forms: beforan (before), būtan (without), beneōþan (worth of) <i>Derivational formations</i>	Emergence of compounds: Early compound formations developing <i>Analytical trend begins</i>	Compound explosion: because of, in spite of, by means of, on account of, with regard to <i>Increasingly analytical system</i>
CASE GOVERNMENT			
CASE SYSTEM	Strict case government (encoding): - Dative: mid, bifan, on, in - Genitive: fram, ùt, æfter <i>Inherited Germanic system weakening</i>	Case system collapse: Prepositions assume grammatical functions as case endings disappear <i>Functional shift in progress</i>	No case government: Prepositions fully grammaticalized Pronouns retain case (me, him, her) <i>Analytical case marking complete</i>

Category	Old English (450–1100)	Middle English (1100–1500)	Modern English (1500–Present)
PRIMARY CONJUNCTIONS			
CONJUNCTIONS	Simple forms: and/ond (and), ac (but), ȝif (if), or <i>Basic coordinating & subordinating</i>	Phonological shifts: ȝif → if, ac → but (replaced) <i>Some native forms replaced by Norse/French</i>	Modern forms: and, but, if, or <i>Stable inventory</i>
DERIVED / COMPLEX CONJUNCTIONS			
CONJUNCTIONS	Complex forms: • Completive: swāper ȝe...ȝe (both...and) • Temporal: hwonne, þā, þonne (when) • Concessive: þēah (though) • Conditional: būtan (but that) • Comparative: swā...swā (as...as) <i>Rich subordination</i>	French borrowings: because, unless introduced Subjunctive weakening: New conditional expressions needed <i>Expansion through contact</i>	Stylistic evolution: Complex conjunctions for formal writing • however, therefore, nevertheless • Prescriptive rules (often unsuccessful) <i>Specialized uses emerge</i>
PHRASAL VERBS			
PHRASAL VERBS	Limited: Few verb-particle combinations <i>Not a productive pattern</i>	Emerging: Particle usage increasing <i>Norse influence suspected</i>	Massive expansion: give up, take off, put down, look after, come across <i>Highly productive pattern; 1000s of combinations</i>
BORROWING			
BORROWING	Minimal: Native Germanic stock <i>Some Latin (early Christian period)</i>	Significant: • Norse: reinforced preposition use • French: conjunctions (because, unless) <i>Contact-driven expansion</i>	Integrated: Borrowed forms fully naturalized • Latin/Greek in formal register <i>Layered vocabulary</i>

Thus, the evolution of English non-notional words (prepositions, conjunctions, and particles) reflects a fundamental shift from a synthetic to an analytical grammatical system. In Old English, these elements operated within a weakening but still active case-government system, in which prepositions governed specific cases and served primarily spatial and relational functions. The Middle English period witnessed the collapse of this case system, forcing prepositions to assume the grammatical functions previously marked by inflectional endings. This transition was accompanied by foreign borrowings from Norse and French, as well as the emergence of compound preposition formations. By Modern English, the language had evolved into a fully analytical system where non-notional words carry the grammatical weight once borne by inflections. This period saw the massive expansion of phrasal verbs, the development of specialized functions across registers, the proliferation of complex multi-word conjunctions and prepositions in formal writing, and ongoing attempts to prescriptively standardize these productive patterns.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Match these Old English prepositions with their Modern English descendants: *æt*, *fram*, *tō*, *wip*, *mid*, *on*, *be*, *purh*, *under*, *ofer*, *æfter*.

2. The conjunction *zif* became Modern English *if*. Research and explain:

- When did this change occur?
- What phonological process caused *z-* to disappear?
- Find 3 other Old English words where initial *z-* was lost.
- Are there any English dialects or related languages that preserve the *z-*?

3. The French invasion introduced conjunctions like *because* and *unless*. Make a list:

- 5 conjunctions borrowed from French;
- 5 prepositions borrowed from French;
- Identify their approximate dates of entry into English;
- Research native English words (if any) that they replaced.

Did French borrowings enrich English or displace useful native words?

4. Modern English developed compound prepositions like *because of*, *in spite of*, *by means of*. Create:

- A list of 10 compound prepositions used today.
- Which element is the actual preposition?
- When did each compound first appear? (Use OED or etymological dictionaries).

5. Old English used correlative constructions like *æ3þer ze... ze* (both...and / either...or). Compare:

Old English correlatives: *æ3þer ze... ze*, *swā... swā* and Modern English correlatives: *both...and*, *either...or*, *neither...nor*, *not only...but also*. Which ones survive from OE? Which are new formations? Create 3 sentences using different correlative conjunctions.

6. Many Old English prepositions began with *þ* (thorn): *þurh*, *þēāh*. Track their evolution:

- *þurh* → ?
- *þēāh* → ?
- *þonne* → ?
- When and why did initial *þ-* change to *th-*?
- Are there any Modern English dialects that pronounce these differently?

THE TOPICS FOR SELF-STUDY AND REPORTS:

1. Franz Bopp and Indo-European verb morphology.

2. Ben Jonson, *English Grammar* (1640). A grammar guide written by Ben Jonson, published in 1640.

3. Prescriptive grammarians. Robert Lowth (1710-87). The codification of irregular verb forms.

4. Thomas Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution* (1762).

5. Lindley Murray, *English Grammar* (1795). Standardization of noun and verb paradigms.

6. The Flower brothers, *A Dictionary of English Usage* (1926).

THE SYNTACTIC ARCHITECTURE OF ENGLISH ACROSS TIME

1. *Syntactic patterns observable across different linguistic systems.*
2. *How did sentence structure operate in the earliest developmental stages of Old English?*
3. *The morphological restructuring of Middle English and the birth of sophisticated sentence architectures.*
4. *The genesis of Modern English and its radical structural transformation.*

Syntactic structure refers to the different ways of building sentences. These ways can be sliced into: 1) *joining words into groups*, and 2) *forming complete sentences*. Syntax mainly studies how sentences are formed and what patterns they follow. Word arrangement is less central, as it merely provides the building blocks for sentences. This is why sentence patterns remain relatively stable, while word-grouping patterns shift more readily. Thus, contemporary syntactic frameworks partition sentence construction into two fundamental tiers:

a) *Micro-syntax (word/phrase domain)* addresses the foundational processes that fuse individual vocabulary items into phrasal units. This level concentrates on assembling the elementary components that will feed into more complex structures. The precise assembly mechanisms vary from language to language, following language-specific grammatical norms before supplying raw material to clause-formation operations at higher levels.

b) *Macro-syntax (clausal domain)* demonstrates the key organizing mechanisms behind well-formed, rhythmically complete utterances; these are multi-word or single-word expressions serving communicative functions. This tier manages the hierarchical arrangement of syntactic components (word clusters or individual items), assigning discourse roles (topicality, informational emphasis) through universal operations like

*merge*²⁰ (Chomsky's framework), syntactic repositioning²¹, and grammatical agreement verification. This level is seen as foundational and exhibits notable uniformity across languages.

The chronological transformation of English exposes a fundamental asymmetry: a certain stability at the macro-structural level paired with continual transformation at the micro-structural level. Although the relationship between morphology and syntax was extensively reorganized, with synthetic forms gradually replaced by analytic constructions that abandoned case endings in favor of prepositional constructions, auxiliary patterns, and fixed word order, the core principles of clause formation have remained largely unchanged. A verb-driven structure characterizes sentences across different temporal stages, with the predicate functioning as the structural nucleus. The process of nominative assignment, by which subjects are recognized through case indication, has likewise retained its fundamental character. Nominative case marking in pronouns continues to function as a systematic means of distinguishing subjects from non-subject elements. While surviving manuscripts do not allow a full reconstruction of earlier prosody, scholars generally maintain that intonation played a role in Old English comparable to its importance in modern language use.

OLD ENGLISH syntax was shaped by two main factors: its morphological structure and the balance between spoken and written language. As a highly synthetic language, Old English used many inflectional endings to show how words related to each other grammatically. Since it was mostly a spoken language at this time, sentence structure stayed relatively simple and direct. Kate Burridge states: *"Originally, English word order was much freer than it is today. In OLD ENGLISH, it was the information structure that basically determined the position of elements. Flexible word order meant that words could simply move around as required, to get attention and create expectation, for instance."* (Burridge, 2005, p. 93).

²⁰ *Merge* denotes the process of fusing two or more separate components, whether objects, datasets, or conceptual units, into a cohesive singular entity.

²¹ The movement of words or phrases from their original grammatical locations to different positions in the sentence.

PHRASE LEVEL. In OLD ENGLISH, the rich morphological system, with its extensive inflectional endings, inherited from Germanic and Indo-European, allowed for relatively flexible word order within phrases compared to Contemporary English. Despite this flexibility, word sequence was still governed by “closely knit patterns” rather than being entirely free. The case endings played a crucial role in preserving meaning even when the word order shifted. As an example of the Germanic word-order pattern, one can cite the runic inscription on the *Gallehus horn*: “*ek hlewazastir holtijar horna tawido*”. The object *horna* ‘the horn’ appears before the finite verb *tawido* ‘I made’. The clause’s subject is composed of three elements: *ek* ‘I’, the first-person singular pronoun; *hlewazastir*, the person’s name; and *holtijar*, likely meaning ‘from Holt’, used as an attributive to the name. The inscription can thus be translated as ‘*I Hlewazastir from Holt made the horn.*’

Similarly, prepositional phrases, following patterns reminiscent of Latin, could vary in their structure: prepositions sometimes followed the nouns they governed or appeared before modifying adjectives, reflecting a degree of positional flexibility within the phrase. Compare: “*rebus in arduis*” (in adverse conditions), where the preposition “*in*” follows the noun “*rebus*”, it governs and precedes the adjective “*arduis*” (in congruence with “*rebus*”). In *Beowulf*, line 713 “*sele þām hēan*” (to the high hall), literally translates as “in hall the high,” where the noun “*sele*” (hall) is followed by the dative demonstrative “*þām*” (to the) and the adjective “*hēan*” (high) in a non-standard order, which mirrors the Latin pattern.

Thus, Old English phrases exhibited some flexibility in word order, enabled by the rich inflectional system. The extensive case, number, and gender markings on nouns, adjectives, determiners, and pronouns allowed elements within phrases to be arranged in various ways while maintaining grammatical relationships and meaning.

The *noun phrase* in Old English could include determiners (articles and demonstratives), adjectives, and nouns, all inflected to show concord in case, number, and gender. For instance, the demonstrative ‘*sē*’ = ‘the’ had ten distinct forms across masculine, neuter, and feminine genders in singular and plural (nominative *sē/þæt/sēo/þā*, genitive *þæs/þæs/þære/þāra*, etc.), which had to agree with the modified

noun. Noun inflections were often ambiguous. The ending *-e*, for example, could mark at least ten different *case/number/declension* combinations. This meant that while the morphological system was rich, much of the categorial information was actually carried by determiners and adjectives rather than by nouns themselves. Gender, in particular, was primarily a concordial category, realized through agreement between nouns and their modifiers and anaphoric pronouns rather than through inherent noun morphology.

Adjectives followed a dual declension system: the “strong” declension (used after uninflected determiners or when standing alone) and the “weak” declension (used after inflected determiners). This meant that phrases like *sē zōda cyninz* ‘the good king’ required the weak adjective form *zōda* after the definite article *sē*, while *zōd cyninz* ‘a good king’ would use the strong form *zōd*.

Prepositional phrases showed flexibility. While prepositions typically preceded their objects, they could also follow them, especially with pronouns, functioning as postpositions.

Matti Rissanen traces the shift in syntactic features “either to the oral level of language, as ‘*changes from below*’, or to the literate end of the scale, as ‘*changes from above*’ (Rissanen, 1999, p. 188). A dominant trend throughout English linguistic history, particularly during the MIDDLE ENGLISH era, was the progressive decline of synthetic grammatical markers for expressing word relationships and the corresponding emergence of analytical constructions. The erosion of synthetic forms manifested primarily through the gradual weakening, standardization, and eventual disappearance of inflectional endings, a development intimately linked to the stabilization of stress on word-initial or root syllables. Evidence of this process appeared even in Old English, where *zero-indication* already existed in forms such as *man–men*, *stān*, and *zōd*. Additionally, numerous case forms that were historically distinct had already merged; for instance, the Nominative and Accusative cases in most declensions became identical. During the eleventh century, the levelling of endings intensified considerably, accelerated in part by contact with Scandinavian languages. Previously distinct forms of individual words collapsed into single forms, as illustrated

by: OE → ME: *scipe, scipu, scipa* → *shipe* (Modern English *ship*); *sprecan, spraecon, sprečen* → *sp(r)eken* (Modern English *speak*). Such extensive merging of forms had profound and destructive consequences for the grammatical system of inflectional endings.

The Old English noun declension system underwent radical simplification. The *four-case system collapsed into essentially two cases*. The Nominative, Dative, and Accusative forms merged into a single “Common case,” while the Genitive (increasingly restricted to possessive meaning) survived but with narrowed usage. In the plural, case distinctions disappeared entirely, with the *-es* ending spreading to all cases. The variety of Old English declension patterns nearly disappeared, with most nouns adopting the former masculine *a*-stem pattern. However, a few exceptions remained: some nouns retained the weak *-en* plural (e.g., *oxen, eyen*), some preserved uninflected plurals (e.g., *shep, der, hors*), and several root-stem nouns maintained vowel alternations between singular and plural (*man–men, fōt–fēt*). As case inflections eroded, prepositional phrases assumed far greater importance, expressing relationships that had formerly been marked by case endings. The preposition ‘*of*’ took on meanings similar to the Possessive case (*the drohte of March*), while phrases with ‘*to*’ replaced the Dative case for indirect objects (*Frenssh of Paris was to hire unknowe*). However, prepositions were not yet obligatory in all contexts where Modern English requires them (*As it semed me* rather than *to me*).

By the end of the Middle English period, *gender* distinctions had vanished nearly everywhere.

The Middle English period witnessed *the emergence of articles* as a distinct word class: The Old English demonstrative pronoun *sē/sēo/paet* evolved into the invariable article *the*. The initial *[s]* of masculine *sē* and feminine *sēo* was replaced by *[b]* through analogy with Oblique case forms. All gender, case, and number distinctions were lost, producing a completely uninflected form. The Old English numeral ‘*an*’ = ‘one’ developed into the indefinite article through semantic and phonetic weakening. The meaning shifted from “one” to “one of many” or “some,” accompanied by a reduction

in stress. The consonant [n] was retained before vowels but typically lost before consonants, establishing the 'a/an' alternation.

Adjectives underwent even more dramatic simplification than nouns. All gender and case distinctions disappeared entirely during the Middle English period. The *strong/weak* declension system was reduced to a minimal distinction. The weak declension suffix '-en' (from Old English -an) lost its final consonant, leaving only '-e'. By late Middle English, only two contrasts remained possible: strong versus weak forms in the singular (*a yong Squier* versus *the yonge sonne*), and singular versus plural in strong adjectives (*he was wys* versus *hise wordes weren so wise*). A significant innovation was the introduction of analytical means for forming degrees of comparison using *more* and *most*, supplementing the inherited synthetic '-er/-est' suffixes.

These *phrase-level* changes fundamentally restructured English grammar, shifting from a highly inflected, synthetic system that relied on word endings to express grammatical relationships toward an analytical system that relied on word order, prepositions, and auxiliary words. This transformation represents one of the most profound typological shifts in the language's history.

In EARLY MODERN ENGLISH, phrase structure was more flexible than in present-day English, bridging the fluid patterns of Middle English and the standardized grammar of later periods. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, word order became gradually fixed, determiner and modifier combinations grew more restricted, and article usage became more systematic. Phrases became more compact, with premodification increasingly favored over *postmodification*, reflecting both internal grammatical shifts and the influence of eighteenth-century prescriptive norms that shaped the rigid patterns of Modern English.

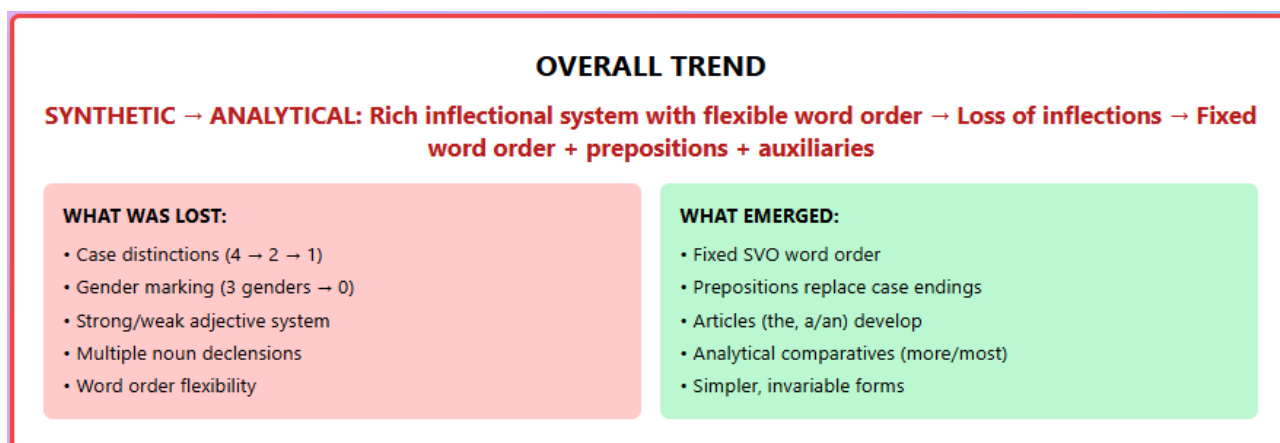
Early Modern English used articles broadly like present-day English, but zero article (omission) was more common in certain contexts: with abstract nouns (e.g., *truth*, *in rage*), subject complements (*'Tis pity*), less concrete prepositional phrases (*in presence of*, *at gate*), coordinated nouns (*head*, *lip*, or *eye*), and river names (*in Thamis*). Conversely, the definite article appeared with language names (*the French*) and scientific fields (*the mechanics*).

EME had a *three-way system* of demonstrative pronouns: *this* (near), *that* (remote), *yon/yonder* (visible, distant). *Yon* and *yonder* were common in the 16th–17th centuries, but later became archaic. *This* could refer more freely to people. Intensified forms combined demonstratives with *same*, *self*, or *ilk* (*that selfe nation* = that very nation). Compound forms of indefinite pronouns in *-one/-body* (someone, anybody) were still developing; simple forms (*some*, *any*, *every*) often headed phrases with *of* (*some of those parts*). ‘*One*’ could indicate a specific, non-specific, or general reference, and, as a pronoun, it combined with adjectives and determiners (*a fayre one*, *many a one*).

Adjectives could function as noun heads (*the Feeble*, *the younger*) and be modified by relative or genitive phrases. Postposed adjectives were common, especially in technical terms (*a tonge vulgare and barbarous*). Indefinite articles could follow adjectives (*of so clere a lyght*). The *s*-genitive favored humans/subjective relations (*A Prince’s love*), while *of*-genitive favored inanimate/objective relations (*the loue of Leda*). Group, absolute, and double genitives appeared, with markers sometimes on the final element (*two of the king of Spaines armadas*).

EME allowed *freer combinations*: a) quantifier + definite article (*any the Purposes*); b) indefinite/relative pronoun + possessive (*each his needlesse heauings*); c) demonstrative + possessive (*This his goodnes*); d) all/both + possessive (*both our blessings*); e) many/such + article + noun (*Many a truer man*). These determiner combinations became increasingly restricted by the 17th–18th centuries as noun phrases grew more fixed.

Pic. 120 – *Visualization of Phrase-Level Shifts in English History.*



CLAUSE LEVEL. OLD ENGLISH. The order of words in the OE sentence was relatively free. The position of words in the sentence was often determined by logical and stylistic factors. There were several most frequent patterns of word order:

- a) **Subject – Predicate:** *Ōthēre sǣde his hlāforde...* (E. ‘Ohthere (name) said to his lord...’);
- b) **Predicate – Subject:** *þā zeascode hē þone cyninȝ* (E. ‘Then he discovered the king’);
- c) **Framing:** **Subject Predicate:** *Hē ealra Norþmonna norþmest būde* (E. ‘He lived father north than all northmen’);
- d) **Object – Subject – Predicate:** *hiene þa Cynewulf on Andred adræfde* (E. ‘Cynewulf then drove him into Andred’);
- e) **Predicate – Object – Subject:** *ða on morzenne zehierdun þæt þæs cyninȝes þeznas* (E. ‘Then in the morning the king’s warriors heard that’).

Prepositions and modifiers often followed their nouns instead of preceding them, sometimes at a considerable distance: *Him mǣra faltum tō com* (E. ‘More help came to him’); *þæs cyninȝes þeznas þe him beæftan wærun* (E. ‘The king’s warriors who were behind him’).

Neither in questions nor in negative sentences did Old English make use of auxiliary ‘do’: *Hwȳ didest þū þæt?* (E. ‘Why did you do that?’); *ic ne zā...* (E. ‘I do not go...’).

Negation is achieved by use of the particle ‘ne’ (usually before the verb): *ic ne dyde* (E. ‘I did not (do it)’).

Multiple negation was common: *hē ne mihte nān þinȝ zesēon* (E. ‘He could see nothing’).

The Subject of a sentence or clause was frequently unexpressed (impersonal verbs): *Norþan snīwde* (E. ‘From the North snowed’); *Buȝon tō bence* (E. ‘[They] bent to the bench’).

The subject of any Old English verb could be omitted if it was implied by the context, especially when the verb followed a clause that expressed the subject: *Hē þē*

æt sunde oferflāt, hæfde mære mæzen (E. ‘He outstripped you at swimming, [he] had more strength.’).

The subject of an Old English verb might be expressed twice – once as a pronoun at its appropriate place in the structure of the sentence and once as a phrase or clause in anticipation: *And þā þe þærtō lāfe wæron, hī cōmon to þæs carcernes dura* (E. ‘And those that were there as survivors, they came to that prison’s door.’). This construction is found in Modern English but is often considered inelegant; it was more frequent in Old English.

Early Old English, soon after it acquired a written form, had underdeveloped complex sentences. Subordinating conjunctions were nearly absent, and demonstrative adverbs often served this role. In subordinate clauses, they functioned relatively, while at the start of the main clause, they retained their demonstrative meaning. For example, *þā he þas andsware onfenz, þā onzan he sona sinzan* (“When he received that answer, then he began to sing”) shows the same word used in both senses. This dual function made it difficult to distinguish main and subordinate clauses purely by form. In the primarily oral context of early English, subordinate clauses were often unnecessary: listeners, present in the situation, could rely on intonation, gesture, and context to parse the structure of thought. Only after English became a written language did structural differentiation between main and subordinate clauses become necessary. Subordinate clauses, particularly relative clauses, employed novel strategies not inherited from Indo-European: Old English used the invariable particle ‘*þē*’ to introduce relative clauses, illustrating the evolving Germanic system. The example from the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Wanderer* shows: “*Nis nu cwicra nan // þē ic him modsefan minne durre // sweotule aseczan*” (There is now no one to whom I dare openly reveal my thoughts). Here, “*þē*” introduces the relative clause, illustrating the evolving Germanic system for subordination. Additionally, the distinction between main clauses (parataxis) and subordinate clauses (hypotaxis) was often blurred, especially in relative-clause constructions, reflecting a flexible, transitional syntactic structure.

Old English displayed *early analytical constructions* through flexible verbal combinations that gradually evolved into systematic tense distinctions. The *habban* +

past participle pattern marked the beginnings of the perfect, which developed later in Middle English into a full system covering present, past, and future time. Auxiliary choice depended on verb transitivity: *habban* ('have') with transitive verbs, *beon* ('be') with intransitive verbs. Examples include: "*Lordings... as ye have understonde, bar I stifly mine olde housbondes on honde*" and "*I hadde unnethe that word y-said... as I have told hit yow, that sodeynly...*"

The participial form *gotten*, now frequently regarded as non-standard or incorrect in British English, was formerly endorsed as proper usage by Bishop Robert Lowth, an influential eighteenth-century grammarian. His *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762) maintained that verbs such as *get* required three distinct principal parts (*get, got, gotten*) and criticized the growing practice of substituting *got* for *gotten*, characterizing it as a "growing abuse." Paradoxically, Lowth himself frequently violated this prescription in personal correspondence, composing phrases like "*I have forgot*" or "*my last was wrote.*" The persistence of 'gotten' in certain dialects and its reemergence in contemporary usage demonstrate how prescriptive regulations can conflict with actual linguistic practice, and how even their proponents may tacitly disregard them. Today, 'gotten' remains standard in American English, while British English generally uses 'got'. The two forms now convey different meanings: *he's got a new car* (possession) versus *he's gotten a new car* (acquisition), allowing subtle semantic distinctions, as in '*I've got to go*' versus '*I've gotten to go*'.

MIDDLE ENGLISH word order occupied an intermediate position between the relatively flexible patterns of Old English and the more rigid structure of Modern English. Kate Burridge marks: "*When English word order became less flexible, we lost the handy ability to simply move elements around in the sentence.*" (Burridge, 2005, p.95). The frequency of direct (subject-verb-object) word order increased progressively, displacing sentences with inverted or free word order. This development was closely linked to the emerging requirement to express subjects explicitly, even in impersonal constructions. The earlier pattern '*Me thinketh*' gradually gave way to '*It seemed me*' and '*It thoughte me*' = 'It seemed to me', 'It occurred to me', reflecting the shift toward obligatory subject expression.

The *erosion and eventual disappearance of inflectional endings* brought about corresponding weakening and loss of grammatical agreement and government. A growing tendency emerged to position modifiers in close proximity to the elements they modified, compensating for the diminished morphological marking of grammatical relationships.

The extensive use of prepositions represented another significant innovation in Middle English grammar. In Old English, most prepositions required the Dative case. Following the collapse of the Dative as a distinct case form, prepositions came to be employed freely with the Common (uninflected) case of nouns. Compare Old English '*On þæm oþrum þrim dæzum*' = 'On those other three days' with Middle English '*in that seson, on a day*'.

The Old English system of relative and correlative markers (*þē, þā...*, *þæt*, etc.) was superseded by new relative pronouns derived from Old English interrogative and demonstrative forms: *who, what, which, that*, and related forms. Single negation began to appear in the fourteenth century, particularly in northern dialects, although cumulative (multiple) negation remained widespread. For example: *Ne schal non werien no linnene cloth* = 'no one shall wear any linen clothes'.

The perfect tense in Middle English worked quite differently from how it works today, particularly in terms of time. Where Modern English ties the present perfect closely to current relevance, Middle English was far more relaxed about this connection, when a completed action could be expressed in the perfect without any implied link to the speaker's present moment. The perfect system itself grew out of the construction *habban* plus a Past Participle, gradually developing a sense of completion before expanding into a full set of forms covering present, past, and future time frames. Which auxiliary verb a speaker chose depended on the type of verb involved: *habban* ("have") went with transitive verbs, while *beon* ("be") paired with intransitive ones, as we can see in lines like "*Lordings, right thus, as ye have understonde*" and "*I hadde unnethe that word y-said.*" The '*be*' plus Past Participle pattern carried a double burden, doing duty both as a present-tense marker and as a way of expressing the passive voice, creating a built-in ambiguity that listeners and readers could only

untangle by relying on context. Meanwhile, the progressive aspect, giving the sense of ongoing action, developed from combinations of *be* with a present participle, a form that originally grew out of the Gerund.

The *Subjunctive* mood operated as a highly flexible grammatical category, used in a wide range of syntactic contexts, including main clauses, complex sentences, and subordinate constructions. Morphologically, it was characterized by the absence of person-specific inflection, resulting in uniform verb forms irrespective of the subject. Functionally, the Subjunctive conveyed non-factual meanings, expressing volition, desire, and hypothetical states rather than actual occurrences, as demonstrated in “*and stepen wollen till the sonne shyne*” (‘and will sleep till the sun shines’). Within subordinate clause structures, Subjunctive usage followed predictable distributional patterns, typically appearing after conjunctions such as *till*, *if*, and *erk* ‘before’. The Middle English period marked a transitional phase where traditional Old English synthetic Subjunctive forms coexisted with emerging analytical alternatives.

The *Subjunctive* in Middle English developed a clear set of time-based distinctions by pairing auxiliary verbs in specific combinations. To express an unreal condition in the present (something imagined rather than actual), writers used *wolde* alongside a plain infinitive. To push that same sense of unreality back into the past, describing something that didn’t happen, they reached instead for *wolde* combined with a perfect infinitive. Both patterns are visible in Chaucer: “*So that I wiste I sholde you nat greve, I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde a tale*” imagines a present situation that isn’t quite real, while “*nere thou our brother, sholdestou nat thryve*” entertains a hypothetical condition and draws out its consequence, suggesting a structure that maps closely onto the modern “*if you were not our brother, you would not thrive.*”

In Middle English, the *Infinitive* underwent a gradual metamorphosis from nominal to verbal status. At first, it functioned as a case-inflected nominal element controlled by “*to*” in expressions of purpose or direction, but over time it acquired more verb-like characteristics and merged into the verb system. The grammatical relationship between ‘*to*’ and the Infinitive shifted considerably over time. The infinitive gradually lost its ‘*-en*’ ending, and ‘*to*’ itself was rethought with no longer a

preposition pointing toward a noun, but a purely functional marker introducing a verbal complement. This transition is visible in forms like “*he was come to tellen*” from the *Knight’s Tale*, where ‘to’ attaches directly to a verb rather than governing a case-marked noun, and in “*she gan so sore longe to seen her suster,*” where the same pattern captures an emotional longing expressed through a verbal complement rather than a noun phrase. The Infinitive’s primary job at this stage was adverbial, above all, expressing purpose. The *Miller’s Tale*’s “*he hadde a chambre to hymselfe*” gestures toward this purposive function in an everyday register, while the infinitival phrase “*the cradil at hire beddes feet is set to rokken*” tells us not what the cradle is but what it is there for. Similar examples from *Piers Plowman* confirm that this was not a peculiarity of Chaucer’s style but a broad feature of late Middle English grammar in the process of stabilizing.

The *Gerund* grew out of an older pattern built on ‘*beon*’ plus ‘*on*’ plus an action noun, forming a combination in which the verbal noun slowly took on verb-like qualities while holding onto its noun-like ones, eventually settling into an awkward but productive middle ground between the two categories. This double identity shows up clearly in “*I slough Samson in schakyng the piler,*” where *schakyng* is doing two things at once, behaving like a noun by sitting as the object of the preposition ‘*in*’, and operating like a verb by reaching forward to govern its own complement ‘*the piler*’.

The *Participle* system contained two distinct forms: the Present Participle, characterized by the ‘*-ende*’ suffix, and the Past Participle. The present participial marker underwent phonological evolution, with ‘*-ende*’ systematically shifting to ‘*-ing*’ through regular sound change processes: *drinkende* > *drinking*. (See Appendix 8).

Essential shifts in Syntax in EARLY MODERN ENGLISH covered:

a) *Established Word Order*. The sequence ‘subject – predicate – indirect object – direct object’ became fixed. Consequently, the position of a noun (rather than its case inflection as in Old English) started to indicate whether it functions as subject or object, and in the latter case, whether it is direct or indirect. Sentence structure in this period mirrored the morphological changes of earlier eras, especially the extensive decline of nominal and adjectival inflections. This erosional process heightened the importance

of word order as the chief means of expressing grammatical relations, leading to the dominance of straightforward word-order patterns in which subjects consistently precede verbs in declarative sentences, with objects following the predicate. Consequently, Modern English exhibits a progressive movement toward verb-second word order. Meanwhile, Kate Burridge notices some relics of the earlier verb-final word order: *“Take, for example, words such as **bloodshed**, **roll call**, **self-pity**, **woodcut**, **leasehold**, or **babysit**. These are noun–verb compounds that involve verbs in combination with their objects; in other words, you shed blood (**bloodshed**); you call the roll (**roll call**); you pity yourself (**self-pity**). What you’ll notice here is that the ordering is always the object followed by the verb, so even though you **shed blood** the compound is **bloodshed**. Examples of the reverse order (namely, verb+object), such as **pickpocket** and **pastime**, are rare. The vast majority of our modern-day compounds show the unusual object+verb order – they’re linguistic leftovers from the earlier verb-final nature of English.”* (Burridge, 2005, p.104).

Morphological agreement, once a widespread grammatical mechanism, became confined to specific environments: demonstrative pronouns retained plural distinctions, while verbs showed subject agreement only with “to be,” its passive forms, or third-person singular present tense markers. Likewise, case government grew limited mainly to personal pronouns and the interrogative-relative contrast “who/whom,” as prepositional relationships came to mark syntactic connections. This prepositional proliferation proved so substantial that certain linguists suggest establishing “prepositional government” as a separate grammatical category to capture the expanded linking role of the elements.

A crucial structural transformation emerged with the establishment of nominative sentence structure, in which the nominative subject became obligatory. Though most Old and Middle English sentences already included subjects, impersonal constructions, characterized by indefinite agents with Dative complements and predicates lacking subjects, had previously functioned as valid alternatives. These older patterns endured in Shakespeare’s works, illustrated by “*But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air*” (Hamlet) and “*And yet me thinks I see it in thy face, // What thou shouldst*

be” (The Tempest), revealing the progressive shift toward contemporary syntactic norms.

The nominative structural trend operated through two principal means: the replacement of impersonal constructions with personal pronoun subjects (*I think, I like*) and the extensive use of the personal subject *it*, which emerged as a defining characteristic of Modern English syntax.

b) *Inversion in Questions*. Inversion (placing the verb before the subject) became the standard pattern in most interrogative constructions. Due to the expansion of analytical verb forms and compound predicates, this inversion typically did not disrupt the established word order, as only part of the predicate (the auxiliary, modal, or linking verb) moved, while the lexical component remained in its fixed position following the subject.

c) *Do-Support*. To maintain the principles of word order, it became necessary to develop means of splitting the remaining synthetic verb forms, such as *write, writes, and wrote*. This was accomplished by introducing special auxiliaries: *do, does, and did*. During the era of Shakespeare, synthetic forms appeared destined for complete replacement by constructions like *do write, does write, and did write*. However, the synthetic forms survived, and the use of *do/does/did* as auxiliaries became restricted to expressing interrogation, negation, and emphasis. Compare: *He smokes. Does he smoke? He does not smoke. He does smoke.*

Kate Burridge comments on the introduction of *do*-pattern: “*We can also see the conservative effects of frequency on grammatical sequences. Some time back I did a study of the changes that have taken place in marking negatives in English and its relatives Dutch and German. What was striking in all these languages was the way common usage verbs like **think** and **know** clung to older patterns of negation. For example, in the course of Early Modern English we acquired a rule called **do**-support. No longer was it acceptable to say something like **I read not**. Negative sentences had to be formed with *do*: in other words, **I do not read**. This rule came into force during the 18th century. Even so, for a very long time common usage verbs like **speak, think** and **know** preserved the earlier, simpler pattern. They formed the negative with **not***

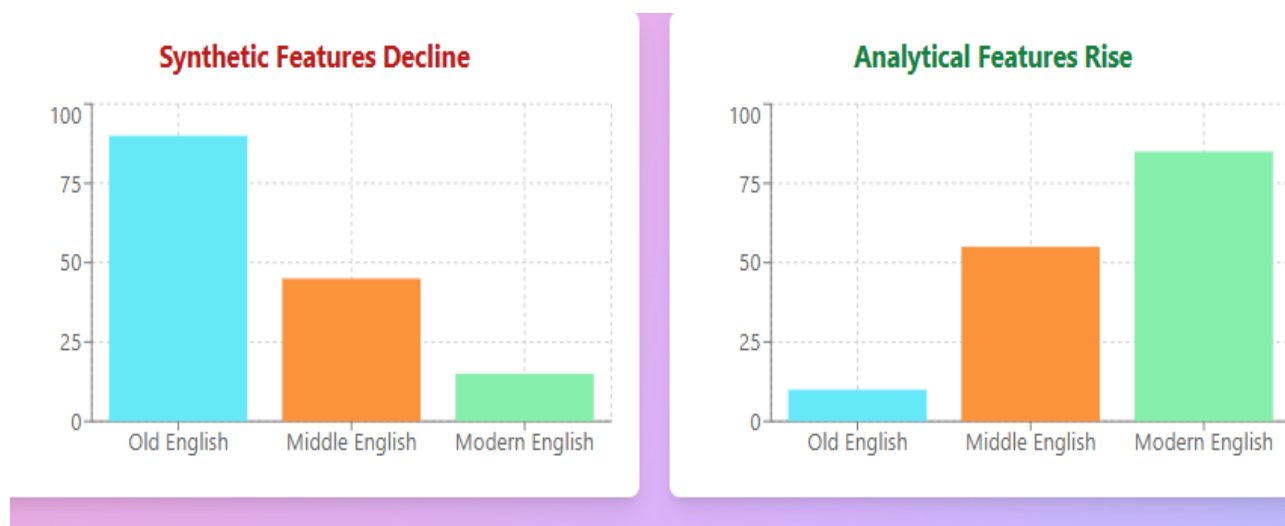
only, as in I speak not, I think not, I know not. It seems that these verbs in combination with not were stored in the memory as individual chunks or units, much like idioms. Their frequency of use meant speakers accessed them easily and they were strong enough to resist the changes that were affecting all the other verbs in the language." (Burridge, 2005, p. 99).

By the seventeenth century, direct word order was firmly established. Question formation used either subject–verb inversion or subject–auxiliary inversion, as in “*Came he or not home tonight*” (Romeo and Juliet) and “*Do you not love me?*” (Much Ado About Nothing). The period also saw the emergence of structural innovations, including existential *there*-constructions, extraposition with formal ‘*it*’, definite article usage, and *do*-support, exemplified in “*There’s a man there*”, “*It is pleasant to dance*”, “*The work is a remarkable one*”, and “*They married just as your father did.*”

Multiple negation, still used by Shakespeare (“*I am not valiant neither*”, *Othello*), began to decline systematically. Predicative constructions expanded, incorporating forms like “*She had no desire for me to stay*” and “*I saw her dancing*”, reflecting growing syntactic complexity and the analytical nature of English.

The possessive *-s* is a legacy of Old English, which had many possessive endings. Initially, it attached only to the possessor (*The Wife’s Tale of Bath*, Chaucer) rather than the modern phrasing (*The Wife of Bath’s Tale*). Both forms coexisted in early Modern English, but the separated version disappeared by the 1500s. Today, ‘*-s*’ can attach to entire phrases (that chap over there in the corner’s wife), though it competes with the *of*-construction (the brother of the guy), which has grown more common since the Medieval period. Traditionally favored with human nouns, the ‘*-s*’ possessive may eventually disappear, reflecting a broader shift toward replacing grammatical endings with separate words like *of*, *more*, and *most*, while reducing ongoing confusion over apostrophe use.

Pic. 121 – *Basic Shifts in Syntactic Relationships Diachronically.*



LINGUISTIC FEATURE	OLD ENGLISH	MIDDLE ENGLISH	MODERN ENGLISH
SYSTEM TYPE	Synthetic (inflectional)	Transitional	Analytical (periphrastic)
PREPOSITION FUNCTION	Spatial/directional primarily	Expanding grammatical roles	Full grammatical markers (case, etc.)
CONJUNCTION INVENTORY	Native stock, correlatives common	Borrowing + native simplification	Mixed inventory, stylistic specialization
OVERALL TREND	Loss of inflection → Increased reliance on word order & auxiliary words → Analytical constructions dominate		

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Which syntactic level has remained more stable throughout English history, and why might this be significant for understanding language changes?
2. Find an example in everyday English speech where the word order is variable for emphasis (e.g., “*That movie I hated*” vs. “*I hated that movie*”). How does this mirror what Old English speakers did more systematically?
3. Middle English had both “*Ne schal non werien no linnene cloth*” (multiple negation) and emerging single negation. Search for modern English dialects or languages that still use multiple negation. Why do you think standard English eventually rejected this pattern despite its persistence elsewhere?
4. Create a timeline showing when these features emerged or disappeared: OV word order, *þē* as a relative marker, multiple negation, obligatory subjects, *do*-support, and articles as a distinct word class. Which changes cluster together historically?
5. Compare the three participial constructions: “*I have understonde*,” “*I hadde y-said*,” and modern “*I have understood*.” What morphological changes do you observe in the participle itself across these periods?
6. Find three popular songs (from any era) that preserve archaic syntactic patterns. Look for inversions like “*Scarce knew I*” (“Exile” by Taylor Swift), multiple negations, verb-final constructions in compounds, or old question formations. Create

an annotated playlist explaining which historical period each syntactic feature comes from and why songwriters might deliberately use “old” syntax.

THE TOPICS FOR SELF-STUDY AND REPORTS:

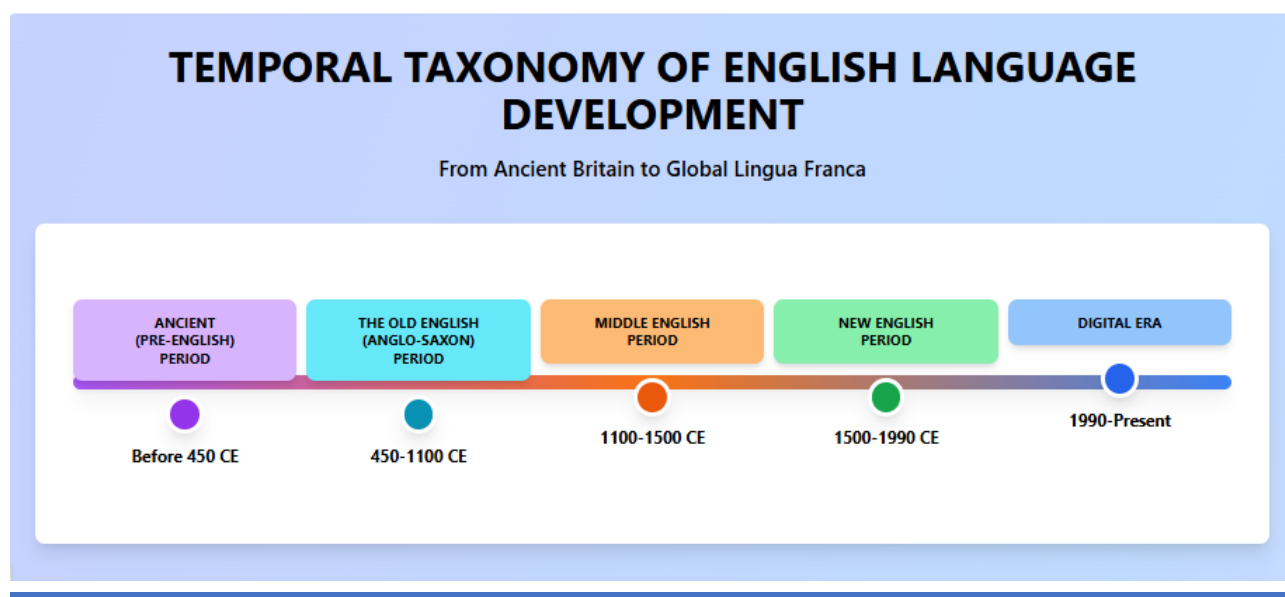
1. Traditional expressions and idioms in Old English.
2. Fredericus T. Visser’s work, *An Historical Syntax of the English Language*.
3. The evolution of auxiliary verbs in English.
4. The impact of Norse on Middle English sentence structure.
5. Social and linguistic influences on changes in English syntax.

SHAPING ENGLISH: HISTORICAL IMPACTS AND REGIONAL VARIATION

1. *The seedbed of Old English. Linguistic influences of the old times.*
2. *Middle English under siege. Norman Conquest and the dimensions of colonial imprint.*
3. *Modern English as a contact zone. A web of linguistic encounters.*
4. *The patchwork of dialects on the domestic scene.*

In its formative centuries, roughly 450 to 1500 CE, English gestated in patches, embodied in a set of regional dialects scattered across the British Isles and spoken by largely monolingual communities without a standardized form. These early varieties bore little resemblance to today's language, diverging substantially in word choice, meaning, spelling, sound, sentence structure, and communicative conventions. Modern English represents the endpoint of centuries-long, complex historical evolution. Its shape has been molded by shifting social orders, power struggles, and civilizational changes, with historic crossroads leaving lasting imprints on both its architecture and its use.

Pic. 122 – *Stages of Linguistic Development within the System of the English Language.*



Pic. 123 – *English Language Profile. Fundamental Features.*

DOMAIN	ATTRIBUTES
FORMAL DENOMINATION	English (British English variant)
GENEALOGICAL CLASSIFICATION	Germanic → West Germanic → Anglo-Frisian → English
RELATED LANGUAGES	West Germanic subdivision: Frisian, Dutch, Low German, German (nearest relatives) North Germanic/Scandinavian: Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Faroese (more distant, separated at earlier historical stage)
GRAPHEMIC SYSTEM	Latin alphabet (26 letters)
CANONICAL WORD ORDER	Subject-Verb-Object (SVO)
LEGAL STATUS	• De facto official language of UK • Global lingua franca

THE OLD ENGLISH STAGE. The vocabulary set of Old English was branched, resembling layers of evolution. A sizable portion of ancient wordstock was transmitted to English, along with its Indo-European sister languages, from this common etymological reservoir, which means that the lexical foundation was derived from the Proto-Indo-European parent language.

Pic. 124 – *The Words of Indo-European Origin.*

"MOTHER" <table> <tr> <td>Old English mōdor</td> <td>New English mother</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Latin mater</td> <td>Ukrainian мати</td> </tr> </table>	Old English mōdor	New English mother	Latin mater	Ukrainian мати	"NIGHT" <table> <tr> <td>Old English niht</td> <td>New English night</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Latin nox</td> <td>Ukrainian ніч</td> </tr> </table>	Old English niht	New English night	Latin nox	Ukrainian ніч
Old English mōdor	New English mother								
Latin mater	Ukrainian мати								
Old English niht	New English night								
Latin nox	Ukrainian ніч								
"NEW" <table> <tr> <td>Old English nēowe</td> <td>New English new</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Latin novus</td> <td>Ukrainian новий</td> </tr> </table>	Old English nēowe	New English new	Latin novus	Ukrainian новий	"TO BEAR/CARRY" <table> <tr> <td>Old English beran</td> <td>New English bear</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Latin ferre</td> <td>Ukrainian брати</td> </tr> </table>	Old English beran	New English bear	Latin ferre	Ukrainian брати
Old English nēowe	New English new								
Latin novus	Ukrainian новий								
Old English beran	New English bear								
Latin ferre	Ukrainian брати								

A younger lexical layer contained words descended from the Proto-Germanic parent tongue to English and its Germanic linguistic relatives.

Pic. 125 – *The Germanic Word Stock.*

OLD ENGLISH	NEW ENGLISH	MODERN GERMAN
eorpe	earth	Erde
land	land	Land
sǣ	sea	See

The third lexical blanket, notably narrow in range, catalogued words exclusive to English, such as ‘*clypian*’ (“to call”), whose etymological root lived on in the archaic term ‘*yclept*’ (“named”).

Pic. 126 – *Words Generated by OE.*

OLD ENGLISH (UNIQUE)	MODERN ENGLISH	OTHER GERMANIC USED
andwlita	face	German: Gesicht, Dutch: gezicht
ǣmettan	leisure	German: Muße, Dutch: rust
tunzol	star/heavenly body	German: Stern, Dutch: ster
wlenco	pride/arrogance	German: Stolz, Dutch: trots
ǣrende	errand/message	German: Botschaft, Dutch: boodschap
middanƷeard	middle-earth/world	German: Mittelerde (literary compound)
cræft	craft/skill/strength	German: Kraft (cognate)
wīsdōm	wisdom	German: Weisheit, Dutch: wijsheid
folcrist	common law/people's right	Unique OE legal term
wītenaƷemōt	council of wise men	Unique OE political term

Vocabulary evolved through steady renewal, marked by the obsolescence of older forms and the introduction of innovative terms that diversified the wordstock. English created new words mainly via endogenous mechanisms, including morphological affixation (*frēond*+*scip* = friendship), apophonic alternation (*sonƷ* –

sinzan), and root compounding (*Engla* + *land* = land of the Angles, England). Outer lexical absorption occurred through word borrowing resulting from contact with multiple civilizations. Given the Germanic peoples' relatively isolated existence in the early centuries A.D., the volume of loanwords in Old English stayed comparatively small. The most significant external linguistic influence on Old English came through the adoption of Latin and Celtic vocabulary.

The *first* **LATIN** loanwords sneaked into Germanic languages before the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Frisians invaded Britain, during their residence on the European continent. Through commercial exchanges with the Roman Empire to the south, Germanic groups adopted words like *pound*, *inch*, *pepper*, *cheese*, *wine*, *apple*, *pear*, *plum*, *dish*, and *kettle*.

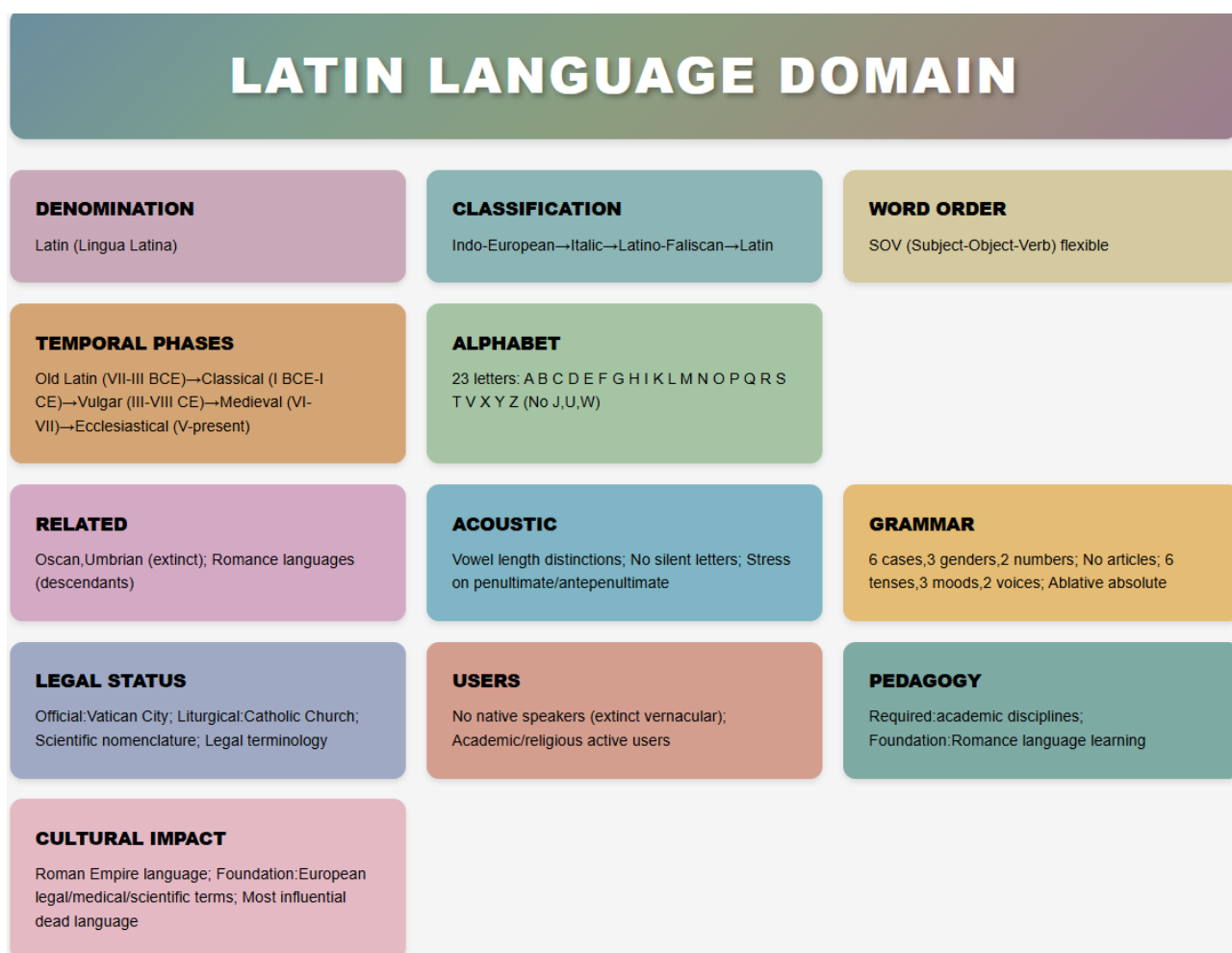
The *second* influx of Latin vocabulary came with the conquered Celtic population in fifth-century Britain. The defeated Celts, having been previously Romanized, passed along Latin terminology to their new rulers. This borrowed lexicon focused heavily on the built environment and infrastructure. Enduring words like *tile*, *street*, *wall*, *port*, and *caster* (denoting military camps, preserved in place names such as Lancaster and Winchester) became a part of the Germanic tongue.

The arrival of Christianity brought the *third surge* of Latin vocabulary into English. This wave was dominated by ecclesiastical language: *altar*, *bishop*, *candle*, *church*, *devil*, *apostle*, *monk*, *nun*, *pope*, and *psalm*. Beyond the sanctuary walls, the status of Latin as the *lingua franca* of medieval scholarship opened additional linguistic channels. Academic and intellectual terminology seeped into everyday English, introducing words unconnected to faith, such as *master*, *school*, *lion*, *tiger*, *plant*, and *astronomy*.

The Renaissance hunger for knowledge (15th-16th centuries) also triggered a massive importation of Latin terminology. Unlike earlier borrowings, these words arrived through literary channels, introduced by educated elites who deliberately preserved their classical forms. This explains why certain plurals still follow Latin conventions: *antenna* becomes *antennae*, *index* becomes *indices*, singular *datum* becomes *data*, *stratum* becomes *strata*, *phenomenon* becomes *phenomena*, *axis*

becomes *axes*, and *formula* becomes *formulae*. Distinctive Latin suffixes mark the linguistic imports of this era like fingerprints: verbs adorned with *-ate* and *-ute* endings (*aggravate*, *abbreviate*, *exaggerate*, *frustrate*, *separate*, *irritate*, *contribute*, *constitute*, *persecute*, *prosecute*, *execute*), alongside adjectives bearing *-ant*, *-ent*, *-ior*, and *-al* suffixes (*arrogant*, *reluctant*, *evident*, *obedient*, *superior*, *inferior*, *senior*, *junior*, *dental*, *cordial*, *filial*). The linguistic journey of the Latin code into English reveals both the structural gulfs separating the two languages and the bridges built between them over centuries.

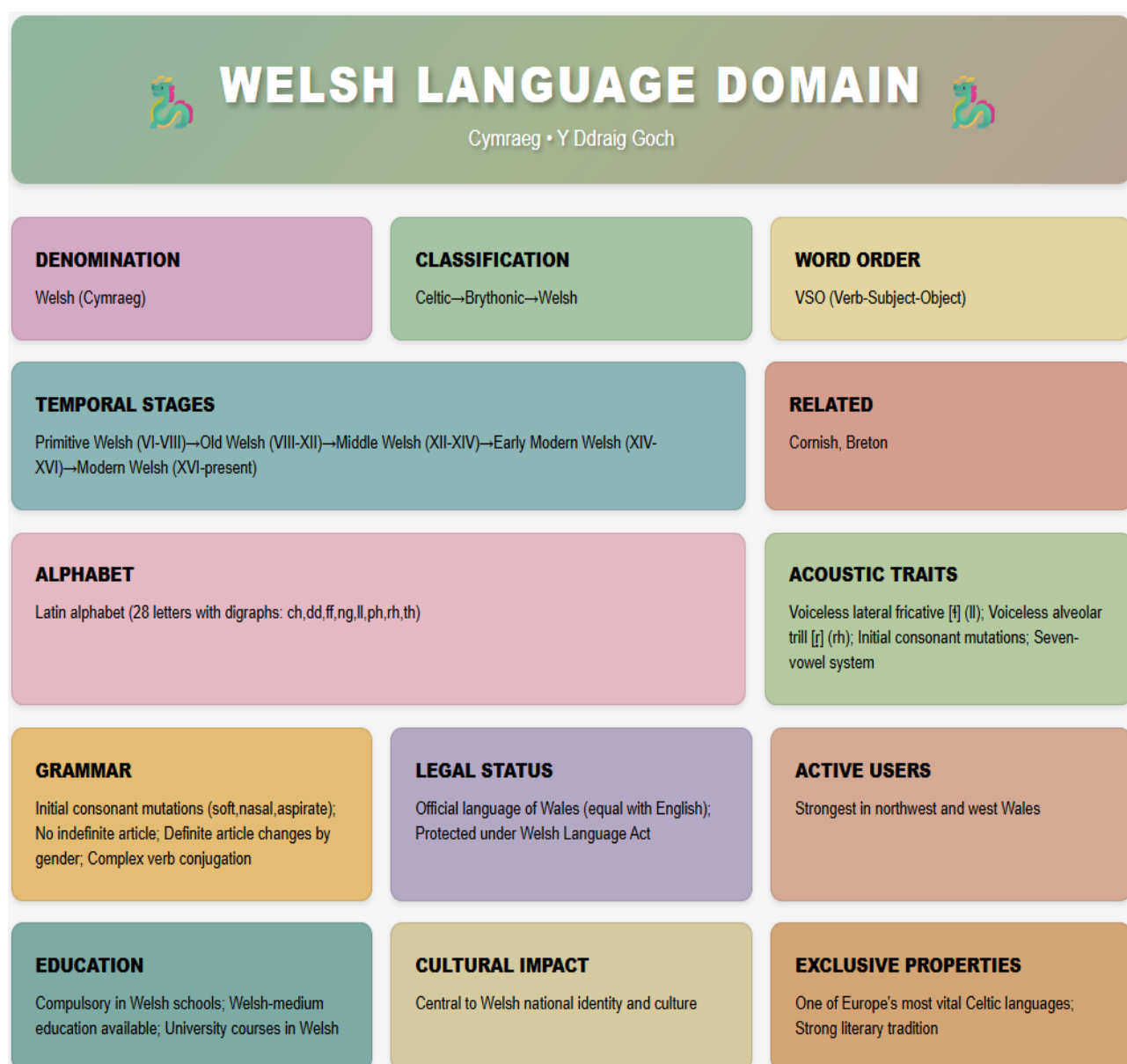
Pic. 127– *Latin Language Profile. Fundamental Features.*



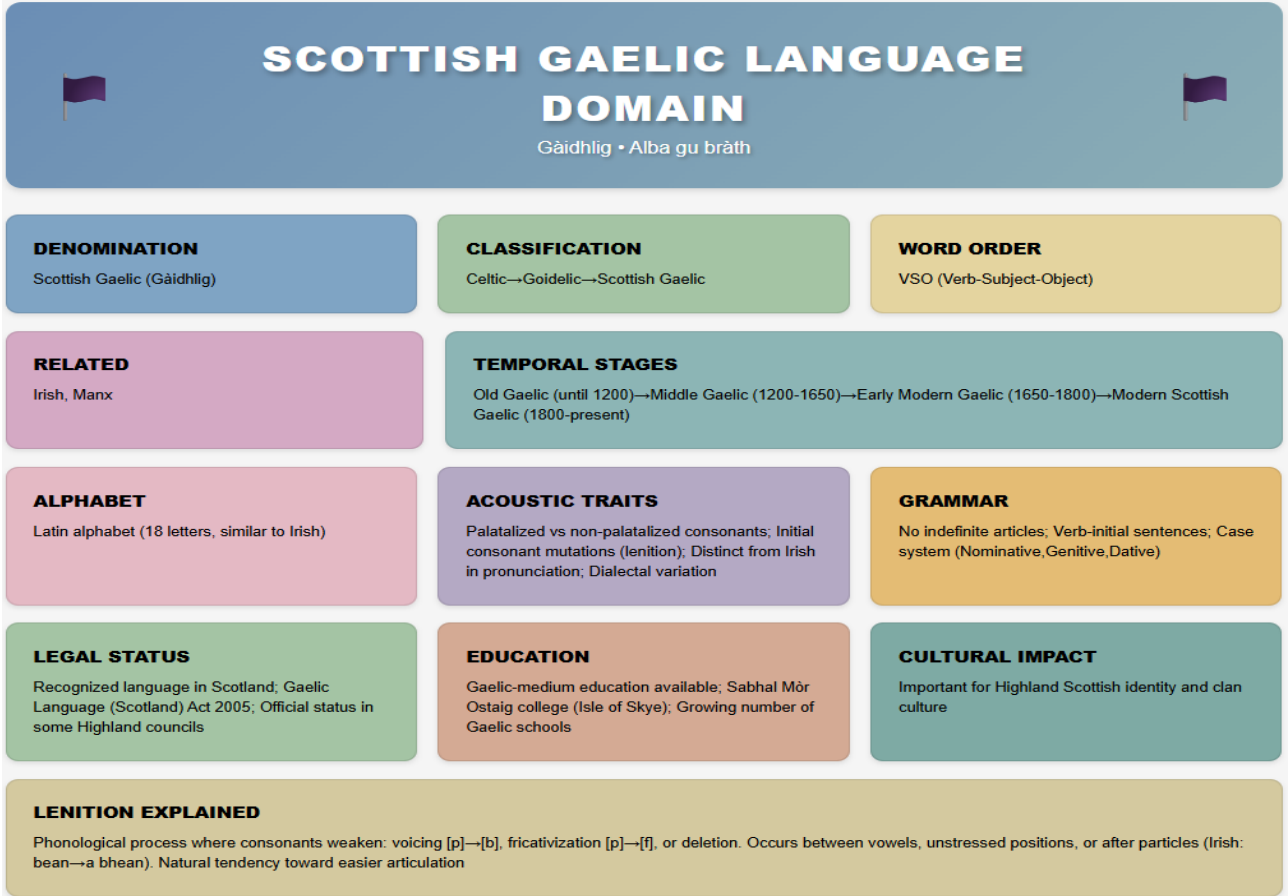
NOTE: The *Classical Latin alphabet* had 23 letters, most of which were derived from the *Etruscan script*. When adapted for Old English, it was expanded to represent sounds absent in Latin, adding the runic letters *þ* (*thorn*) and *ƿ* (*wynn*), along with *æ* (*ash*) and *ð* (*eth*), bringing the total to roughly 24–27 letters depending on regional variations. In 1011, the monk Byrhtferð recorded the alphabet, listing the Latin letters first, followed by additional English characters. Over time, further distinctions developed: *i* split into *i* and *j*, *v* into *u*, *v*, and *w*, with *w* evolving from the doubled *vv* form that replaced *wynn*. By the 16th–17th centuries, these changes produced the modern 26-letter English alphabet, reflecting the gradual evolution of the Latin alphabet rather than borrowings from a single foreign source.

The **CELTIC** tongues left barely a whisper in the English vocabulary. The Germanic newcomers either slaughtered the native population outright or drove the survivors into distant highland sanctuaries. Those Celts who stayed within Germanic domains found themselves reduced to slavery, their numbers diminished, their language suppressed. This genocidal displacement left only a handful of ghostly markers of the civilization that once thrived across the British Isles, such as “*down*” (preserved in Dover’s famous chalk hills) and “*bin*” (originally meaning basket), “*kil*” (church, as in *Kilbrook*), “*ball*” (house, as in *Ballantrae*), and “*esk*” (water, as in river *Esk*). Celtic languages are split into several distinct branches, each with its own unique linguistic fingerprint.

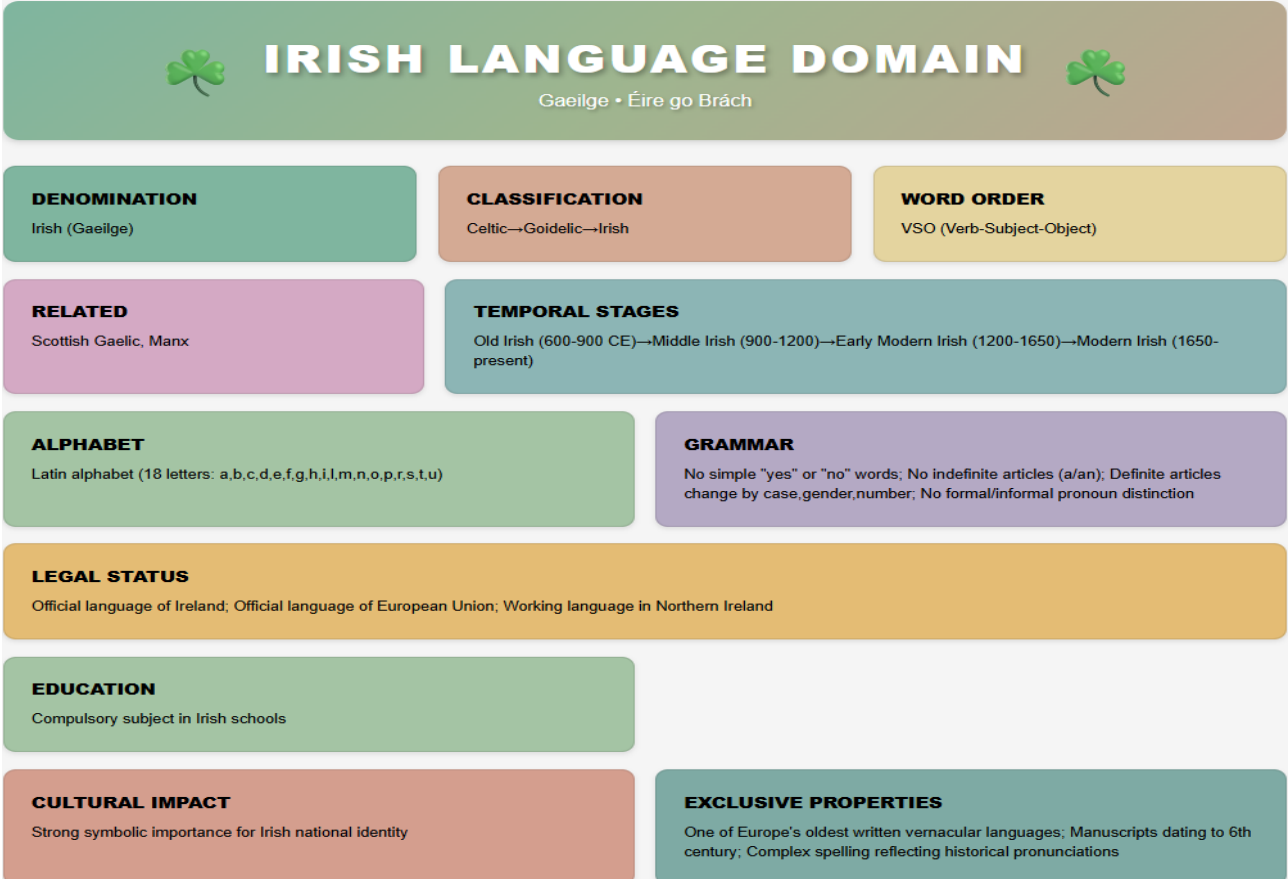
Pic. 128 – *Celtic Languages Profile. The Characteristic Features of Welsh (Cymraeg).*



Pic. 129 – Celtic Languages Profile. Scottish Gaelic (Gàidhlig).



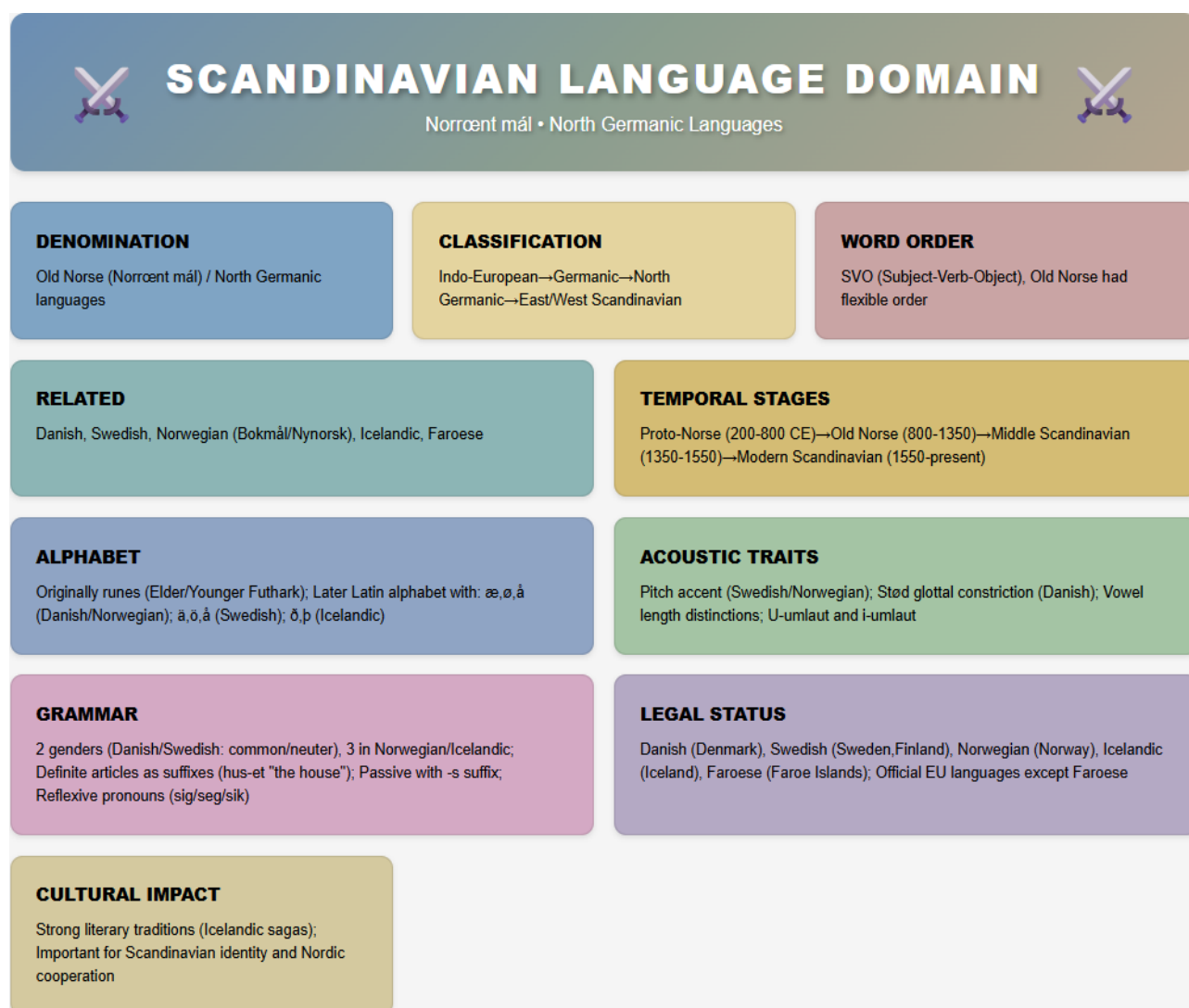
Pic. 130 – Celtic Languages Profile. Irish (Gaeilge).



Today, Celtic languages retain a living presence in isolated pockets of the United Kingdom.

The SCANDINAVIAN conquest and the settlement of Norse communities across England extended the linguistic embrace, leaving its mark on vocabulary and penetrating deeper into the language's grammatical architecture and phonological fabric. Anglo-Scandinavian interactions created conditions highly conducive to linguistic fusion, permitting elements from both languages to blend fluidly. This lexical borrowing brought numerous word lines, such as *law, fellow, sky, skirt, skill, skin, egg, anger, knife, root, bull, cake, husband, leg, wing, guest, loan, race, big, week, wrong, ugly, twin, call, cast, take, happen, scare, and want*. The grammatical core of English was reached through the replacement of native pronouns with the Scandinavian third-person plural forms *they, them, and their*.

Pic. 131 – *Distinctive Features of the Scandinavian Language.*



The mechanisms and consequences of Scandinavian lexical adoption followed three distinctive trajectories:

PATTERN ONE: Sometimes Norse words simply plugged vocabulary holes, entering English unopposed because no native term existed for the concept: e.g., *law*, *fellow*.

PATTERN TWO: Scandinavian *imports conquered and eliminated their English rivals entirely*. The Norse verbs *taken* (to take) and *callen* (to call) ruthlessly supplanted their Old English counterparts *niman* and *clypian*, erasing them from the language completely.

PATTERN THREE: A third scenario unfolded when both the native English term and its Scandinavian challenger survived side-by-side, though rarely as true synonyms. Over time, these paired words diverged semantically, carving out distinct meanings and usage contexts. Examining Modern English reveals numerous doublets in which the homegrown word and its Scandinavian transplant coexist with subtly differentiated meanings:

NATIVE ENGLISH	SCANDINAVIAN BORROWING
HEAVEN <i>spiritual/religious realm</i>	SKY <i>physical atmosphere above</i>
STARVE <i>death by lack of food</i>	DIE <i>general cessation of life</i>
HIDE <i>more for animal pelts</i>	SKIN <i>for living beings</i>
CRAFT <i>more specialized/artistic</i>	SKILL <i>more general ability</i>

PATTERN FOUR: Sometimes, borrowed Norse vocabulary and their native English cognates turn out to be linguistic “twins separated at birth”, etymological doublets sharing a common ancestor in the Proto-Germanic parent language. Although

these word pairs entered English via different routes and at different times, they derive from the same ancient Germanic root, making them distant relatives reunited within a single language rather than true linguistic outsiders:

NATIVE ENGLISH	SCANDINAVIAN BORROWING
SHIRT	SKIRT
	
SHATTER	SCATTER
	
RAISE	REAR

PATTERN FIVE: In some cases, an English word and its Scandinavian equivalent carried identical semantic weight yet differed only in their sound patterns. When these near-twins collided, the Scandinavian pronunciation consistently triumphed, driving its English rival into extinction. Modern English verbs like *to give* and *to get* descend directly from their Norse ancestors, *gefa* and *geta*, which systematically ousted the native Old English forms *ziefan* and *zietan*. This same pattern echoes through words like *gift*, *forget*, *guild*, *gate*, and *again*, where Scandinavian sound forms replaced their English equivalents despite semantic equivalence.

PATTERN SIX: Meaning itself could migrate under Scandinavian influence. The English word *dream* originally conveyed “joy, pleasure”, but as a result of contact with its Norse word, it fundamentally rewired its semantic content, moving it toward its present-day sense of dreams and nighttime imagery. This represents a shift in which the Scandinavian relative did not replace the English word structurally, but rather colonized its meaning from within, transforming its semantic range while preserving its phonetic form.

Unlike the infiltration of Latin into English, Scandinavian vocabulary seeped into the language through grassroots channels. The close linguistic kinship between Old Norse and Old English allowed Scandinavian words to enter English seamlessly without sounding foreign or requiring explanation. Identical root words could appear in dual phonetic forms, one with Scandinavian pronunciation, the other with Old English phonology. Initially, these parallel forms functioned as accentual variants of the same word; for example, *skirt* and *shirt* might have been heard as regional pronunciations rather than separate vocabulary. Over time, however, this phonetic bifurcation led to semantic divergence. Pronunciation variants gradually hardened into distinct lexical items, each occupying its own conceptual space. Modern English inherited these etymological twins as fully independent words, their shared ancestry obscured by centuries of semantic differentiation. Contemporary examples cover: *dike* and *ditch* descend from the same Germanic root, split by the phonological evolution of Norse versus Anglo-Saxon. Likewise, *scrub* and *shrub*.

The Norse vocabulary absorbed into English between the 9th and 12th centuries reads like a catalogue of everyday life with mundane yet essential words such as *bag*, *call*, *cast*, *die*, *fellow*, *knife*, *hit*, *root*, *skin*, *sky*, *ill*, *unit*, and *wrong*, alongside directional prepositions like *till* and *fro*, immortalized in the expression “to and fro.” The feminine pronoun *she*, and the determiners *both* and *same* may all reflect Norse ancestry, demonstrating a remarkable penetration into English’s functional core. Regional dialects preserve linguistic fossils of this Viking legacy: *garth* versus *yard*, *kirk* beside *church*, *nay* against *no*, and *trigg* paralleling *true*.

Beyond external linguistic influences, Old English harbored profound internal fragmentation, reflected in a dialectal mosaic that directly mirrors settlement patterns of Germanic tribes who colonized Britain. Each invading group carved out its own territorial domain, and these divisions solidified into distinct linguistic varieties: West Saxon dominated the southwest kingdom of Wessex, Mercian spread across the Midlands heartland of Mercia, Northumbrian prevailed in the northern realm of Northumbria, and Kentish held sway in the southeastern kingdom of Kent.

Pic. 132 – *The Regional Linguistic Variety within Old English Britain.*



THE MIDDLE ENGLISH STAGE. The Norman invasion of 1066 transformed English vocabulary, with FRENCH lexical imports clustering precisely where Norman authority persisted for generations. The distribution pattern reveals the sociology of conquest: governance and jurisprudence terminology (*government, noble, judge, parliament, prison*) arrived from the French because the Normans monopolized administrative and legal machinery. Military language (*army, battle, victory, colonel*) bears French ancestry, reflecting Norman military supremacy. Ecclesiastical vocabulary (such as *religion, sermon, saint*) reflects Norman control of the Church, whereas urban occupational labels (*painter, tailor, carpenter*) reveal Norman control over city guilds, though countryside occupations stubbornly preserved English labels (*shepherd, smith*). The culinary lexicon offers a particularly class system, within which meat consumed at the table carries French gastronomic words (*pork, beef, mutton*), whereas the living creatures bear English names (*pig, cow, sheep*) represent a linguistic fossil preserving the social hierarchy where Norman aristocrats feasted while Anglo-Saxon peasants labored in the fields, tending livestock they could not afford to eat.

Everyday spatial and material terms (*air, place, large, chair, table*) alongside kinship vocabulary (*aunt, uncle, cousin*) demonstrate how Norman French migrated from courtly chambers into cottages, marketplaces, and fields.

Pic. 133 – *Hallmarks of the French Linguistic System.*



NOTE: The French *subjonctif* and the English subjunctive are false friends; they are grammatically misaligned despite sharing the same name. The *subjonctif* operates as a desiderative mood, expressing wishes, wants, and subjective judgments rather than hypothetical or counterfactual scenarios in English. When English uses its subjunctive to express “if-then” speculation or imagined alternatives, it more closely mirrors the French *conditionnel* than the *subjonctif*.

French vocabulary infiltrated English through multiple pathways:

1) French loanwords entered English to express ideas previously lacking lexical representation. Words such as *government*, *parliament*, *general*, and *colonel* did more than expand the vocabulary; they introduced institutional models and hierarchical structures unfamiliar to Anglo-Saxon society, carrying their referents into English for the first time.

2) In some domains, French imports displaced existing English terms, driving native synonyms into obsolescence until they disappeared entirely, leaving the French terms as the sole survivors.

ENGLISH (DISPLACED)	FRENCH (VICTOR)
MICEL	LARGE ✓
	
HERE	ARMY ✓
	
EA	RIVER ✓

3) Both terms survived the contact period, yet they underwent semantic or register differentiation.

ENGLISH (INFORMAL/COMMON)	FRENCH (FORMAL/ELEVATED)
TO BEGIN <i>everyday, neutral</i>	TO COMMENCE <i>formal, ceremonial</i>
TO WORK <i>everyday, neutral</i>	TO LABOUR <i>formal, literary</i>
TO LEAVE <i>everyday, neutral</i>	TO ABANDON <i>formal, dramatic</i>
LOFE (LIFE) <i>everyday, common</i>	EXISTENCE <i>formal, philosophical</i>
LOOK <i>everyday, neutral</i>	REGARD <i>formal, elevated</i>
SHIP <i>everyday, common</i>	VESSEL <i>formal, technical</i>

Words borrowed from French usually took on a more formal or academic tone, whereas the original English words stayed in common, everyday use. However, sometimes the native English term became the more sophisticated option, as illustrated by *foe* (English origin, now considered literary) compared to *enemy* (French origin, now the usual term).

4) As English absorbed large numbers of French loanwords sharing common morphological elements, speakers gradually began to recognize these affixes as productive tools for word formation. Once integrated into English morphology, these foreign suffixes were attached to native English roots, producing *hybrid forms*. The suffix *-ment* illustrates this process: initially introduced through borrowings such as *government*, *parliament*, and *agreement*, it was later added to English verbs, yielding forms like *fulfillment* and *amazement*.

A similar development occurred with *-ance* and *-ence*. First encountered in loans such as *innocence* and *ignorance*, these suffixes were eventually combined with native roots to form hybrids, such as *hindrance*. Likewise, *-able*, originally borrowed in words such as *admirable*, *tolerable*, and *reasonable*, became productive in English and was applied to native verbs, producing forms such as *readable*, *eatable*, and *unbearable*.

5) French borrowings generated numerous *etymological doublets* in English, i.e., pairs of words with related meanings but distinct origins. These include doublets inherited from a shared Indo-European ancestry: (*fatherly* (native) vs. *paternal* (borrowed)); from Germanic sources filtered through French (*yard* vs. *garden*, *ward* vs. *guard*, *choose* vs. *choice*); and from different stages of Latin borrowing (*inch*, adopted in Old English, vs. *ounce*, borrowed later in Middle English).

6) The scale of French influence also produced mixed-origin word families, in which semantically related terms stem from different etymological sources, such as *mouth* (native) vs. *oral* (borrowed), *sun* (native) vs. *solar* (borrowed), and *see* (native) vs. *vision* (borrowed).

7) Beyond individual words, French shaped English through loan translations of entire phrases, including *it's no doubt* (from *ce n'est doute*), *without doubt* (from *sans doute*), and *out of doubt* (from *hors de doute*).

The dialects of the Middle English period included Northern (maintaining Norse influence and conservative vowel sounds), Midlands (centrally located, particularly East Midlands, which subsequently became the foundation for Standard English), Southern (strongly shaped by West Saxon traditions and French lexicon), and Kentish (retaining certain distinctive Old English characteristics). The East Midlands dialect secured its dominant position through a powerful combination of factors: a) London's emergence as the nation's power center, b) the influential writings of literary giants like Chaucer, and c) the revolutionary arrival of the printing press, ultimately evolving into the linguistic foundation upon which Modern English was built.

Pic. 134 – *Middle English Dialects*.

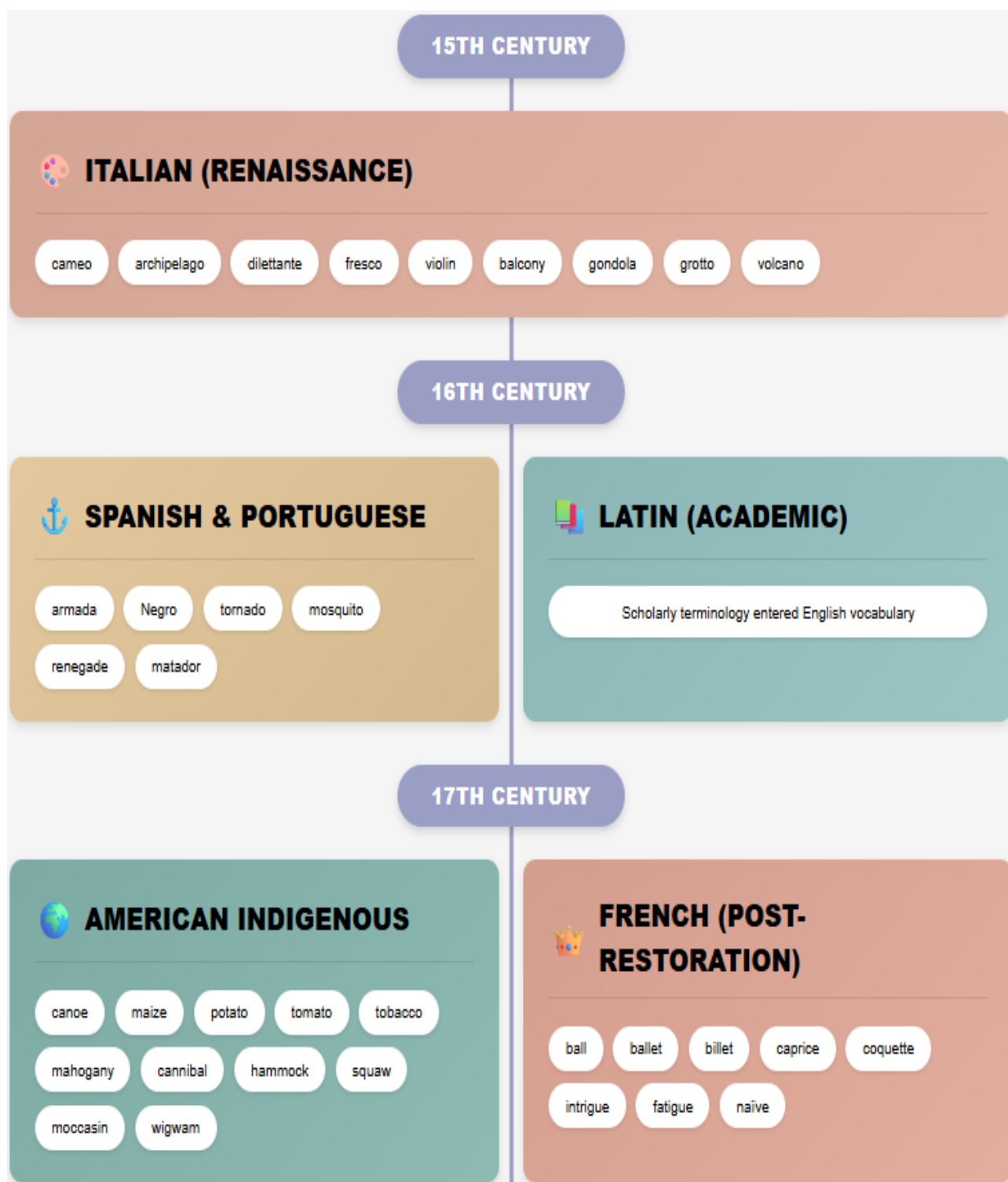


THE MODERN STAGE. CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH vocabulary is in a state of continuous growth. The prevalent internal mechanism in Modern English is conversion (or zero derivation), in which words develop new grammatical roles without any formal modification, thus transforming their paradigms and syntactic behavior. For example, *book* as a noun follows the pattern *book – books*, whereas as a verb it conjugates *book – books – booked – booking* (contrast “*the book is on the table*” with “*He booked a room*”). This mechanism also produces forms such as *man* (noun) → *man* (verb), and *stone* (noun) → *stone* (verb) → *stone* (adjective, as in “*stone bench*”).

Historically, Modern English borrowing can be divided into three distinct phases: *Early Modern English* (15th-17th centuries), predating the establishment of literary norms, *Late Modern English* (18th-20th centuries), and *Digital (post-human epoch) English* (21st century).

Early Modern English borrowings resembled both inner and outer metamorphoses, extending at the cost of Britain's imperial reach and plunging the English into unfamiliar linguistic environments worldwide.

Pic. 135 – *Early Modern English Borrowings*.



Late Modern English incorporated vocabulary from contact languages of the period.

Pic. 136 – *Late Modern English Borrowings.*



Modern English also produces the updated scientific and technical vocabulary by utilizing Greek and Latin components.

Pic. 137 – *Greek & Latin Word Components.*

GREEK COMPONENTS	LATIN COMPONENTS	MIXED GREEK-LATIN
TELEPHONE Greek: tele (far) + phone (sound/voice)	ELECTRICITY Latin: electrum (amber)	SOCIOLOGY Latin: socius (companion) + Greek: logos (study)
TELEGRAPH Greek: tele (far) + graphos (writing)	REFRIGERATOR Latin: re (again) + frigerare (to cool)	TELEVISION Greek: tele (far) + Latin: visio (sight)
MICROPHONE Greek: mikros (small) + phone (sound/voice)	AVIATION Latin: avis (bird)	AUTOMOBILE Greek: autos (self) + Latin: mobilis (movable)
MICROSCOPE Greek: mikros (small) + skopein (to look at)	NAVIGATION Latin: navis (ship) + agere (to drive)	NEUROLOGY Greek: neuron (nerve) + Greek: logos (study), though used with Latin medical terminology
BIOLOGY Greek: bios (life) + logos (study)	CONSTITUTION Latin: con (together) + statuere (to set up) / constituere (to establish)	
PSYCHOLOGY Greek: psyche (mind) + logos (study)	POPULATION Latin: populus (people)	
DEMOCRACY Greek: demos (people) + kratos (rule)	ADMINISTRATION Latin: ad (to) + ministrare (to serve)	
PHOTOGRAPHY Greek: photos (light) + graphos (writing)		
GEOLOGY Greek: geo (earth) + logos (study)		
ANTHROPOLOGY Greek: anthropos (human) + logos (study)		

Structural differences in English are observable in Modern English, referring to accents and dialects in the hereditary territory of the British Archipelago. *Accents* are linked to regional pronunciation differences within a single country, while *dialects*²² differ from the standard language in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, often corresponding to distinct geographic or social and cultural regions.

The systematic study of English dialects began more than a hundred years ago. Modern Britain has at least 37 recognized dialects. Standard English, also known as *Queen's English* or *Received Pronunciation (RP)*, is the prestige variety associated with the royal family and used in BBC programming and World Service broadcasts.

The British Library, however, maintains an exceptionally *extensive archive of accents and dialects from across the country*. The main categories of British accents include:

1. *Cockney* is closely associated with London's cultural identity. It is a *geographically bounded sociolect that originated in London's East End*, traditionally within earshot of St. Mary-le-Bow church. It originated in the working-class areas, especially the poor districts. Cockney speech developed *Rhyming Slang*, which can still be heard among East End market traders at their stalls. Key characteristics include frequent glottal stops and *[th]* sounds shifting to *[ff]* sounds: *think* becomes *fink*, *three* becomes *free*, *thanks* becomes *fanks*. In *Pygmalion* (1912) by George Bernard Shaw, the accent is illustrated through the speech of characters from particular social backgrounds, such as Eliza Doolittle. In the *Weeds in the Garden of Words* Kate Burridge writes: "*While clearing out my library I chanced upon a collection of linguistic curiosities taken from Cockney slang. Among them was a range of wonderful rhyming slang terms for food, or what in rhyming slang might be called **tooting bec***

²² Varieties like *Scottish English*, *Irish English*, and *Brummie* (Birmingham English) complicate the accent-dialect distinction because they diverge from *Standard British English* in both pronunciation and grammar. Scottish and Irish English, for instance, use distinctive syntactic structures such as the "after"-perfect (*I'm after seeing him*) and plural second-person pronouns (*youse*, *yiz*), along with vocabulary borrowed from Scots or Gaelic. Brummie, though grammatically closer to Standard English, still shows variation in auxiliary verb use (*I'm sat here*) and past tense forms (*I done it*), demonstrating that even English regional varieties have recognizable grammatical differences. These features elevate such varieties beyond simple accents to full dialects in sociolinguistic terms. This linguistic diversity has historical foundations: the United Kingdom is a political union of previously independent kingdoms, each with separate linguistic histories and characteristics.

(bec rhymes with 'peck' and presumably food is something you peck at). Here are some examples of this ingenious lingo: a Cockney **me and you** (in other words, a 'menu') might begin with **loop the loop** 'soup' or else lillian gish 'fish' followed by a nice bit of **kate and sydney** 'steak and kidney' or, if you'd prefer, some braised **down the drains** 'brains' – served of course with an assortment of **hasbeens** 'greens'. And for afters, highly recommended by **the babbler** (in other words, the babbling brook or 'cook'), comes **smack in the eye** (or 'pie') and cream washed down with a fine selection of **string and twine** 'wine,' and perhaps a platter of the best of English **stand at ease** 'cheese'. Now, the surprising thing about this kind of slang is just how recent it is. There's really no sign of it before the 1800s. I couldn't find a single example in my copy of **Captain Grose's Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue**, which dates from the 1780s. It's interesting that the later edition, from the 1850s, has around sixty-two rhyming slang entries. Most people assume these terms began life within criminal 'slanguage'. Certainly, this was where rhyming slang was first discovered, but this doesn't necessarily mean it originated there. Most likely it was the lexical invention of Cockney and Irish navvies and only later made its way into the cant of the Victorian underworld. But its criminal connections probably do account for the strong presence of rhyming slang in Australian English." (Burridge, 2005, p. 27).

Pic. 138 – Cockney Rhyming Slang Examples.

a) Pronunciation Peculiarities.

FEATURE	COCKNEY	STANDARD ENGLISH	EXAMPLES (COCKNEY)	EXAMPLES (STANDARD ENGLISH)
'h' dropping	Completely dropped	Always pronounced	"ouse" (house), "eart" (heart)	"house", "heart"
'th' sounds	[f] and [v] substitution	Distinct [θ/ð] sound	"fink" (think), "bruvver" (brother)	"think", "brother"
't' sounds	Glottal stop replacement	Clear [t] pronunciation	"bu'er" (butter), "li'le" (little)	"butter", "little"
'l' vocalization	[w] sound when not initial	Clear [l] sound	"miwk" (milk), "Awbert" (Albert)	"milk", "Albert"
Diphthong changes	Distinctive vowel shifts	Standard diphthongs		
'ay' sound	"ahy" sound	Standard long [a:]	"dahy" (day), "wahy" (way)	"day", "way"

b) Vocabulary Formation.

COCKNEY RHYMING SLANG	STANDARD ENGLISH	COMMENTARY
Apples and pears	Stairs	"Pears" rhymes with "stairs".
Trouble and strife	Wife	"Strife" rhymes with "wife".
Dog and bone	Phone	"Bone" rhymes with "phone".
Adam and Eve	Believe	"Eve" rhymes with "believe".
Bees and honey	Money	"Honey" rhymes with "money".
Pork pie	Lie	"Pie" rhymes with "lie".
Mince pies	Eyes	"Pies" rhymes with "eyes".
Daisy roots	Boots	"Roots" rhymes with "boots".
Whistle and flute	Suit	"Flute" rhymes with "suit".
Mickey Mouse	House	"Mouse" rhymes with "house".
Raspberry tart	Heart	"Tart" rhymes with "heart".
Rabbit and pork	Talk	"Pork" rhymes with "talk".
Sherbet dab	Cab	"Dab" rhymes with "cab".
On the floor	Poor	"Floor" rhymes with "poor".
Plates of meat	Feet	"Meat" rhymes with "feet".

c) Grammatical Patterns.

FEATURE	COCKNEY EXAMPLE	STANDARD ENGLISH ILLUSTRATION
Double negatives	"I ain't got nothing"	"I haven't got anything"
Past tense 'be'	"I was", "You was", "We was"	"I was", "You were", "We were"
Present tense 'do'	"I do", "You does"	"I do", "You do"
Auxiliary deletion	"You coming?"	"Are you coming?"
Past participles	"I done it", "I seen him"	"I did it", "I saw him"
Reflexive pronouns	"I hurt meself"	"I hurt myself"
Comparative forms	"More better"	"Better"
Question tags	"Nice day, innit?"	"Nice day, isn't it?"

2. *Estuary English* is geographically concentrated around the Thames Estuary region and has since become one of the most widespread accent varieties in southern England. It occupies a middle ground between the prestige of Received Pronunciation (RP) and the working-class features of Cockney. Its characteristic phonetic traits include the use of the glottal stop, as in *bottle* pronounced *bo 'le* and *better* pronounced *be 'er*.

Pic. 139 – *Estuary English: Phonological Characteristics.*

FEATURE	ESTUARY ENGLISH	RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION (RP)	PRONUNCIATION (RP) EXAMPLE
t-glottalization	Glottal stop [ʔ] replaces [t]	Clear [t] sound	"water" → "wa'er" vs "water"
Final [t] dropping	[t] omitted in final position	[t] clearly pronounced	"get" → "ge" vs "get"
h-dropping	[h] dropped in unstressed words	[h] retained	"Where's 'e gone?" vs "Where's he gone?"
l-vocalization	[l] becomes vowel sound [w/u]	Clear lateral [l]	"milk" → "miwk" vs "milk"
yod-coalescence	[tj], [dj] become [tʃ], [dʒ]	Separate consonants	"Tuesday" → "Choosday" vs "Tuesday"
Final consonant clusters	Simplified clusters	Full clusters maintained	"facts" → "facs" vs "facts"
Vowel change	More open vowel sounds	Conservative vowel system	"face" [ɛɪ] vs [eɪ]
Intrusive r	[r] inserted between vowels	No intrusive [r]	"idea of it" → "idea-r of it"
th-fronting	[θ] becomes [f]	Clear [θ]	"think" → "fink" vs "think"
dh-fronting	[ð] becomes [v]	Clear [ð]	"brother" → "brover" vs "brother"

Estuary English emerged as a hybrid dialect in Southeast London, fusing the characteristics of working-class Cockney with those of prestigious Received Pronunciation. The variety adopts specific London phonological traits, including *l-vocalization* (rendering *milk* as [miwk]), *th-fronting*, and intermittent *t-glottalization*, yet preserves more conservative pronunciation patterns in formal settings.

Grammatically, it diverges minimally from standard English, exhibiting only minor variations such as streamlined question tag constructions.

3. *Yorkshire*. This large northern county generates numerous dialectal variations. Known colloquially as ‘*God’s Own County*,’ Yorkshire exhibits characteristic speech patterns. Words terminating in ‘*ee*’ sounds shift to ‘*eh*’ pronunciations: *happy* becomes *happeh*, *money* becomes *moneh*, *lovely* becomes *loveleh*. Further distinguishing features include distinctive vocabulary items such as *owt* (anything) and *nowt* (nothing).

Pic. 140 – *Yorkshire Dialect: Characteristic Traits*.

a) *Phonological Characteristics*.

 YORKSHIRE DIALECT 			
FEATURE	YORKSHIRE	STANDARD ENGLISH/RP	ILLUSTRATION
FOOT-STRUT ^[1] merger	[ʊ] for both sets	[ʊ] vs [ʌ]	"luck" and "look" sound similar
Short [a] in BATH words	[a]	[ɑ:]	"bath" [bɑθ] vs [bɑ:θ]
FACE monophthong ^[2]	[e:]	[eɪ]	"face" [fe:s] vs [feɪs]
GOAT monophthong	[o:]	[əʊ]	"goat" [go:t] vs [gəʊt]
g-dropping	-in' ending	-ing ending	"walking" → "walkin"
h-dropping	Initial [h] omitted	[h] retained	"'appy" vs "happy"
t-glottalization	Glottal stop [ʔ]	Clear [t]	"pat" → "pa"

Notes

[1] The FOOT–STRUT merger is a vowel merger in many Southern British English accents where the vowels /ʊ/ (as in foot) and [ʌ] (as in strut) are pronounced the same, typically as [ʊ]. This causes pairs like put and cut to become homophones. The merger is absent in most Northern English, American, and Scottish accents, where the distinction remains. It's a key marker of Southern English phonology and highlights regional variation in vowel systems.

[2] The term FACE lexical set was introduced by John Wells in *Accents of English*, 1982, and refers to words like face, day, say, make, which historically had a monophthong but have since shifted to a diphthong in most modern varieties of English.

b) *Unique Lexical Features*.



YORKSHIRE VOCABULARY



YORKSHIRE WORD/PHRASE	STANDARD ENGLISH	USAGE
Thee/Tha	You	"Where's tha been?"
Nowt	Nothing	"There's nowt left."
Owt	Anything	"Have you seen owt?"
Reyt	Right/very	"That's reyt good."
Nah then	Hello/well then	Greeting
Ey up	Hello	Informal greeting
Mardy	Moody/sulky	"Don't be mardy."
Ginnel/Snicket	Alley/narrow passage	Regional variants
Bairn	Child	Northern England usage
Chuffed	Pleased	"I'm right chuffed."
Frame thissen	Behave yourself	"Frame thissen, lad."
Parky	Cold (weather)	"It's a bit parky."
Tyke	Yorkshire person	Regional identifier

c) Grammatical Patterns.



YORKSHIRE GRAMMAR



FEATURE	YORKSHIRE	STANDARD ENGLISH
Definite article reduction	Going to t'shop.	Going to the shop
Plural 'you'	Youse/You lot	You (all)
Past participles	I were sat.	I was sitting
Double modals	Might could.	Might be able to

Yorkshire English represents a Northern dialect with deep connections to Anglo-Scandinavian heritage, retaining Old Norse terms such as *beck* (for *stream*) and *gill* (for *ravine*). The dialect displays distinctive sound patterns, including the absence of vowel extension in *bath-class words*²³ and the characteristic prolonged [ʊ:] pronunciation. Grammatically, it incorporates elements like contracted definite articles (such as *t'pub*) and innovative temporal constructions.

4. *Northern Irish*. This accent commonly drops letters in pronunciation: *Northern Irish* is rendered as *Nor'n Ir'sh*, *water* as *wa'er*, *little* as *li'le*, and *getting* as *ge'in*. The accent demonstrates the impact of Irish Gaelic through its characteristic vowel sounds.

Pic. 141 – *Linguistic Features of the Northern Irish Dialect.*

a) *Phonological Patterns.*

 NORTHERN IRISH PRONUNCIATION 		
FEATURE	NORTHERN IRISH	STANDARD ENGLISH
'th' sounds	Often pronounced as [d] or [t]: e.g. "dis" (this), "dat" (that), "tink" (think)	Distinct [θ/ð] sound
'a' in words like 'cat'	Pronounced like [e] in 'bet': e.g. "cet" (cat), "hend" (hand)	Short [a] sound
'ou' sounds	Often pronounced as 'oo' = [u]: e.g. "hoose" (house), "about" (about)	Diphthong [au]
'ow' in words like 'now'	Often pronounced as 'oo' = [u]: e.g. "noo" (now), "doon" (down)	[au] diphthong

²³ *Bath-class words* are a specific set of English words that contain the vowel sound before certain consonants (like [f], [θ], [s], [n], [m]) and are pronounced differently across English dialects.

b) *Lexical Variation.*

NORTHERN IRISH VOCABULARY

NORTHERN IRISH	STANDARD ENGLISH	NOTES
Wee	Small/little	Universal in NI: "a wee bit", "wee one"
Craic	Fun/news/gossip	"What's the craic?" = "What's happening?"
Boke	Vomit/be sick	"That makes me boke."
Scundered	Embarrassed	"I was pure scundered."
Foundered	Very cold	"I'm foundered."
Melted	Very hot	"I'm melted."
Dead on	Good/nice/okay	"He's dead on." = "He's a good person."
Class	Great/excellent	"That's pure class."
Bout ye?	How are you?	Casual greeting
Catch yourself on	Get real/wise up	"Catch yourself on!"
Quare	Very/quite	"Quare good" = "very good."
Till	To	"I'm going till the shop."
Thon	That	"Thon house over there."
Youse/Yiz	You (plural)	"Are youse coming?"
Messages	Shopping/groceries	"Getting the messages."
Press	Cupboard	"It's in the press."
Gurn	Complain/whine	"Stop your gurning."
Baltic	Extremely cold	"It's baltic out there."

c) *Key Grammatical Patterns.*

 NORTHERN IRISH GRAMMAR 		
FEATURE	NORTHERN IRISH	STANDARD ENGLISH
Double modals	"I might could do that."	"I might be able to do that."
Past participles	"I seen him yesterday."	"I saw him yesterday."
Present perfect scheme	"I'm after doing it."	"I have just done it."
Continuous tenses and their formula	"I do be working late."	"I am often working late."
Question formation	"Where's he at?"	"Where is he?"
Prepositions	"I'm going till the shop."	"I'm going to the shop."
Plural 'you'	"Are youse coming?"	"Are you coming?"
Reflexive pronouns	"I hurt meself."	"I hurt myself."

d) *Typical Phrases and Expressions.*

 NORTHERN IRISH PHRASES 		
NORTHERN IRISH	STANDARD ENGLISH	CONTEXT
"What's the craic?"	"What's happening?/How are things?"	Greeting
"I'm away on."	"I am leaving now."	Departure
"Keep her lit."	"Keep going/don't give up."	Encouragement
"Right enough."	"That's true/fair point."	Agreement
"Away and shite."	"Don't be ridiculous."	Dismissal (mild profanity)
"Wise up."	"Be sensible."	Advice
"He's a header."	"He's crazy/foolish"	Description
"Pure mental."	"Completely crazy."	Intensifier
"Dead good."	"Very good."	Praise
"Wind your neck in."	"Mind your own business."	Rebuke
"That's me away."	"I'm leaving now."	Departure
"Catch you later."	"See you later."	Farewell

e) *Internal Regional Variation in Northern Ireland.*

NORTHERN IRISH REGIONAL VARIATIONS	
REGION	CHARACTERISTICS
Belfast	Stronger glottal stops, distinctive vowel shifts
Derry/Londonderry	Softer consonants, different intonation patterns
Mid-Ulster	Mix of Ulster Scots influences
Border areas	Some Southern Irish influences
Antrim Coast	Strong Ulster Scots heritage in vocabulary

f) *Sources of Influence on the Northern Irish Dialect.*

NORTHERN IRISH LINGUISTIC INFLUENCES	
INFLUENCE	CONTRIBUTION
Ulster Scots	Vocabulary, pronunciation patterns
Irish Gaelic	Grammatical structures, some vocabulary
Scottish English	Vowel systems, some vocabulary
Standard English	Formal register, education system
Local innovation	Unique expressions and pronunciations

Northern Irish English is a dialect shaped by historical colonization patterns and ongoing contact among English, Scots, and Irish Gaelic. This variety demonstrates consistent rhotic pronunciation, distinct vowel production where the [aʊ] diphthong shifts to [u:] (producing [hu:s] instead of [haʊz]), and grammatical innovations such as paired modal verbs (“might could”) and the aspectual “*be after* + *V-ing*” structure (where “*I’m after doing it*” means “*I have just completed it*”). The vocabulary reflects multiple linguistic layers, incorporating Ulster Scots terms (“*wee*”, “*craic*”) and Irish-influenced meanings, along with locally created words like “*scundered*” meaning embarrassed. Speech patterns differ according to geography and social demographics,

with variation influenced by religious community membership, metropolitan versus countryside locations, and proximity to the border with the Republic of Ireland.

5. *Scottish English* shows stronger Irish influences, and northern regions retain Norse features. More isolated communities maintain particularly strong accents and speech from places such as Shetland can be difficult for outsiders to understand. The Glasgow accent is notably challenging even for other Scots. Characteristic features include a trilled *[r]* and vocabulary such as *ken* (“to know”), *wee* (“small”), and *bonnie* (“beautiful”). Kate Burridge, in her introduction to her work *“Weeds in the Garden of Words”* (2004, 2005), writes: *“Many people make tea and wine out of that delightful weed, the dandelion. There are even some who grow it as a crop. Scotch (or English) broom is also a glorious-looking pest. Like so many other ‘garden escapes’, it does particularly well in the pasture land and bushland of North America and Australia.”* (Burridge, 2005, p. 2).

Pic. 142 – *Linguistic Features of Scottish English.*

a) *Phonological Patterns.*

 SCOTTISH ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION 		
FEATURE	SCOTTISH ENGLISH	STANDARD ENGLISH
'r' sounds	Always pronounced (rhotic): e.g. "car", "far", "mother" – all [r]'s pronounced	Often dropped in non-rhotic accents
'ou' sounds	Often pronounced as 'oo' [u]: e.g. "hoose" (house), "aboot" (about)	Diphthong 'ou'
'oo' in words like 'book'	Often pronounced as in 'boot' [u]: e.g. "book" sounds like "buke"	Standard "book"
'ch' sound	Guttural 'ch' [x] as in "loch": e.g. "loch", "nicht" (night)	"lock", "night"
Vowel length	Distinctive vowel length rules: the Scottish Vowel Length Rule (SVLR) is a phonological rule in Scots and Scottish English that governs the contextual variation in vowel duration for a restricted set of vowels, namely [i], [u], [e] or [ɛ], [o], and, in some Scots varieties, [a]. Unlike systems where vowel length is phonemic, the SVLR conditions vowel length allophonically: these vowels are realized as long primarily before voiced fricatives, [r], and in word-final position, but remain short elsewhere, such as before voiceless consonants or nasals.	Different vowel length patterns: in Standard Southern British English (SSBE), vowel length is phonemic and stable across contexts, meaning that contrasts such as [i:] vs. [ɪ] in beat vs. bit are part of the underlying phonological system and not conditioned by surrounding sounds. Unlike Scottish English, which applies the SVLR to determine vowel duration based on phonetic environment, SSBE maintains consistent vowel length regardless of context. While a minor phonetic process called pre-fortis clipping slightly shortens vowels before voiceless consonants (e.g. seat vs. seed), this does not alter the phonemic identity of the vowel.
'i' in words like 'time'	Often sounds like 'eh' [ei]: [tʰɛɪm]	Long 'i' diphthong = [ai]

b) Distinctive Vocabulary.

SCOTTISH ENGLISH	STANDARD ENGLISH	NOTES
Wee	Small/little	"a wee bit", "wee one"
Ken	Know	"Do you ken?" = "Do you know?"
Bairn	Child	"The bairns are playing."
Kirk	Church	From Old Norse
Bonnie	Beautiful/pretty	"A bonnie lass." = "A beautiful girl."
Dreich	Dull, wet, miserable (weather)	No direct English equivalent
Scunnered	Fed up/disgusted	"I'm scunnered with this."
Fash	Worry/bother	"Don't fash yourself."
Outwith	Outside of/beyond	"Outwith the city limits."
Dinnae	Don't	"Dinnae do that."
Cannae	Can't	"I cannae manage"
Nae	No/not	"Nae bother." = "no problem."
Aye	Yes	Universal Scottish affirmative
Hoose	House	Pronunciation difference
Aboot	About	Pronunciation difference
Guid	Good	"That's guid."
Greetin'	Crying	"Stop your greetin'."
Haver	Talk nonsense	"You're haverin'."
Skelp	Slap/hit	"I'll skelp you."
Thrawn	Stubborn/twisted	"He's pure thrawn."

c) Grammatical Patterns.

FEATURE	SCOTTISH ENGLISH	STANDARD ENGLISH
Double modals	"I might could do it."	"I might be able to do it."
Past tense 'be'	"I was" / "You was"	"I was" / "You were"
Formation of present tense negation	"I dinnae ken."	"I don't know."
Present continuous	"I'm away working."	"I'm going to work."
Possessive pronouns	"That's mines."	"That's mine."
Question tags	"You're coming, are you no?"	"You're coming, aren't you?"
Prepositions	"I'm away to the shops."	"I'm going to the shops."
Perfect aspect	"I'm just after eating."	"I've just eaten."

d) Frequently Used Expressions.

SCOTTISH ENGLISH	STANDARD ENGLISH	CONTEXT
"How's it going?"	"How are you?"	Greeting
"I'm away."	"I am leaving."	Departure
"See you later"	"Goodbye"	Farewell
"Nae bother."	"No problem."	Response
"What's the script?"	"What's happening?"	Inquiry
"I'm fair scunnered."	"I'm really fed up."	Complaint
"That's pure dead brilliant."	"That's absolutely excellent."	Praise
"Don't fash yourself."	"Don't worry."	Comfort
"Away and bile your heid."	"Don't be ridiculous."	Dismissal
"Keep the heid"	"Stay calm."	Advice
"I'm fair puffed."	"I'm exhausted."	Tiredness
"You're having a laugh."	"You must be joking."	Disbelief

e) Subregional Variation in Northern Ireland.

REGION	CHARACTERISTICS
Glasgow (Weegie)	Distinctive vowels, glottal stops, urban slang
Edinburgh (Morningside)	More 'refined' accent, closer to RP
Aberdeen (Doric)	Strong local dialect, Norse influences
Highlands	Gaelic influences, different rhythm
Borders	Influence from Northern English
Dundee	Distinctive local vocabulary and pronunciation
Islands (Orkney/Shetland)	Strong Norse heritage, unique vocabulary

f) External and Internal Influences on Scottish English.

INFLUENCE	CONTRIBUTION
Scots Language	Core vocabulary, grammar structures
Scottish Gaelic	Some vocabulary, place names
Norse/Viking	Northern dialects, island varieties
French (Auld Alliance)	Some vocabulary items
Standard English	Formal registers, education
Irish English	Some shared features via Ulster Scots

  SCOTTISH vs NORTHERN IRISH ENGLISH  			
FEATURE	SCOTTISH ENGLISH	NORTHERN IRISH ENGLISH	SHARED ORIGIN
"Wee"	Universal usage	Universal usage	Ulster Scots
Rhotic 'r'	Always pronounced	Always pronounced	Scots heritage
"Away" meaning "going"	Common	Common	Shared Scots roots
"Youse" plural	Some dialects	Common	Ulster Scots influence
Double modals	Present	Present	Scots grammatical pattern

Scottish English exists along a linguistic spectrum stretching from traditional Scots to Standard English, shaped by foundational influences from Gaelic, Norse, and European language contact. Phonologically, it is marked by rhoticity (consistent pronunciation of *r*), systematic vowel length distinctions, and retention of the voiceless velar fricative [x] (as in *loch*). Grammatically, it exhibits innovations such as double modals (*might could*), while its vocabulary reflects multiple layers: core Scots terms (*ken* “know,” *bairn* “child”), Norse-derived words in northern dialects, and Gaelic borrowings in the Highlands. Regional variation is significant, from urban Glaswegian speech with distinctive vowel patterns to rural forms like Northeast Doric, which preserves extensive Norse vocabulary.

6. *Brummie*.²⁴ Birmingham residents speak a characteristically soft, elastic, undulating dialect. Vowel sounds undergo distinctive lengthening: *right* becomes *roight*, *nice* becomes *noice*, *house* becomes *hahse*.

Pic. 143 – Comparative Features of Brummie and Standard English.

a) Key Phonological Traits.

²⁴ *Brummie* evolved from Middle English dialects of the West Midlands, which trace their ancestry to the historical Mercian variety of Old English.



BRUMMIE PRONUNCIATION



FEATURE	BRUMMIE	STANDARD ENGLISH
An 'ing' endings	Pronounced as 'ink': e.g. "nothink" (nothing), "somethink" (something)	Standard 'ing'
'a' in words like 'bath'	Short [a] as in 'cat': e.g. "bath", "laugh", "dance" with short [a]	Long [a:] as in 'father' (RP)
'oi' sounds	Often pronounced as 'oy' [ɔɪ]: e.g. "boy" for "boil", "toy" for "toil"	Standard 'oi' = [ɔɪ]
Final 'y' sounds	Often pronounced as 'eh': e.g. "happ-eh" (happy), "funn-eh" (funny)	Standard 'ee' [i] sound
'u' in words like 'cup'	More towards 'oo' [u] sound	Standard short [ʌp]
Rising intonation	Sentences often rise at the end	Falling intonation for statements

b) Lexical Differences.

BRUMMIE	STANDARD ENGLISH	NOTES
Bab	Term of endearment	"Alright, bab?" (Hello dear/love)
Bostin'	Excellent/great	"That's bostin'"
Yampy	Mad/crazy	"You're a bit yampy."
Ow am ya?	How are you?	Standard Brummie greeting
Mom	Mum/Mother	Distinctive Midlands usage
Bost	Broken	"It's gone bost"
Fittle	Food	"What's for fittle?"
Donnies	Hands	"Wash your donnies" ^[1]
Outdoor	Off-licence/liquor store	"Going to the outdoor"
Gambol	Forward roll/somersault	Physical education term
Cob	Bread roll	"Chip cob" ^[2] = chip sandwich
Batch	Bread roll	Alternative to "cob"
Pop	Fizzy drink/soda	"Fancy a pop?"
Entry	Alleyway ^[3]	"Down the entry"
Snicket	Narrow passage	Between houses
Ackers	Money	"Haven't got any ackers"
Going down the Bull Ring	Going shopping	Birmingham's main shopping area
Pikelets	Crumpets ^[4]	Midlands baking term
Tararabit	Goodbye	Playful farewell
Wammal	Unwell/queasy	"I'm feeling wammal."

[1] The word “*Donnie*” (plural “*donnies*”) is not part of Brummie slang; it comes from the Black Country dialect, which is different from the speech used in Birmingham. In the Black Country, an area just west of Birmingham, “*donnie*” is a traditional, friendly word meaning “hand.” It is often used when talking to children. For example, “*Give us yer donnie!*” means “*Give me your hand!*” The word is also historically related to the Ukrainian word долоні (“palms”). Both words come from the ancient Proto-Indo-European root *del-d^hel-*, which referred to a flat surface. Although Ukrainian and certain Germanic dialects developed separately, they kept the original meaning connected to the flat part of the hand.

[2] A *chip sandwich* is a sandwich filled with hot, fried potato chips (what many people call French fries).

[3] An *alleyway* is a narrow path or lane between or behind buildings, usually in a city. It is smaller and less formal than a street and is often used by pedestrians, for deliveries, or as a shortcut. In different places, it may also be called an *alley*, *lane*, or *backstreet*.

[4] *Crumpets* are a traditional British food. They are soft, round, sponge-like cakes cooked on a flat griddle. Because they have many small holes, they easily absorb melted butter or other spreads. People usually eat them toasted for breakfast or at tea time, often with butter, jam, or honey.

c) Grammatical Characteristics.

FEATURE	BRUMMIE	STANDARD ENGLISH
Past tense 'be'	"I was", "You was", "We was"	"I was", "You were", "We were"
Double negatives	"I ain't done nothing."	"I haven't done anything."
Present tense 'do'	"I do", "You does", "He does"	"I do", "You do", "He does"
Auxiliary verbs	"I'm going down the shops, am I?"	"I'm going to the shops, aren't I?"
Prepositions	"I'm sat on the chair."	"I'm sitting on the chair."
Past participles	"I seen him yesterday."	"I saw him yesterday."
Questions	"Where you to?" (Where are you going?)	"Where are you going?"
Contractions	"I ay" (I haven't), "He ay" (He hasn't)	"I haven't", "He hasn't"

d) Linguistic Features of Brummie English.

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Monotone delivery	Less pitch variation than other accents	Relatively flat pitch when saying "That's bostin', that is"
Distinctive rhythm	Characteristic timing and stress patterns	Equal stress on syllables: "BIR-ming-HAM" vs. "Bir-MING-ham"
Nasal quality	Some sounds are produced nasally, especially with 'a' sounds	Nasal quality in "bab", "bath", "path"
Pace	Generally slower, more deliberate	Elongated vowels: "Alriiiight, bab?"
Relaxed speaking style	Informal, easy-going manner of speaking	"Ow am ya, bab? You alright?"
Question intonation	Rising tone even on statements	"I'm going to work?" (with rising intonation)

e) Black Country and Birmingham Contrasted.



BIRMINGHAM vs BLACK COUNTRY



FEATURE	BIRMINGHAM	BLACK COUNTRY	NOTES
"You"	You	Yow	Black Country is more distinctive
"Nothing"	Nothing	Nothink / Nowt	Different negative forms
"Going"	Going	Goink / Gooin	Pronunciation difference
"Yes"	Yes	Ah / Yeah / Ar	Black Country more archaic
"Can't"	Can't	Canna / Cor	Different negative contractions

f) Variations Across Social and Geographic Factors.



BRUMMIE SOCIAL & REGIONAL VARIATIONS



AREA/GROUP	CHARACTERISTICS
City Center	More standardized, less broad accent
Outer Birmingham	Stronger traditional Brummie features
Younger speakers	May use more modern slang, less traditional grammar
Older speakers	Stronger traditional dialect features
Working class	Broader accent, more dialect vocabulary
Middle class	Code-switching between dialect and standard

The Birmingham accent is a unique urban dialect spoken in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands region. It evolved from ancient Mercian English and has been shaped by the neighboring Black Country industrial speech patterns. The accent has several recognizable sound features: it adds a *[k]* sound to words ending in ‘-ing’ (saying “*nothink*” instead of “*nothing*”), uses specific vowel sounds, and employs a rising tone at the end of sentences, even when making statements rather than asking questions. Brummie includes distinctive local words like “*mom*” for mother, “*cob*” or “*batch*” for bread rolls, and “*bostin*” meaning excellent. The accent varies slightly across Birmingham but remains clearly distinct from the Black Country dialect spoken nearby.

7. *Scouse* is the nasal accent spoken by people from Liverpool, which gained recognition through the Beatles. The dialect exhibits characteristic nasal sounds, with words like “*fair*,” “*there*,” “*hair*,” and “*care*” pronounced as “*fer*,” “*der*,” “*her*,” and “*ker*.” Speakers commonly use “*like*” as a filler word throughout conversations and “*la*” as a friendly, informal term of endearment.

Pic. 144 – *Analyzing Scouse in Relation to Standard English.*

a) *Phonetic Differences.*

 SCOUSE PRONUNCIATION 		
FEATURE	SCOUSE DESCRIPTION (WITH EXAMPLE)	STANDARD ENGLISH (WITH EXAMPLE)
'k' and 'g' sounds	Often fricative, like 'ch' or soft 'g' – e.g., bach [bax] (back), chicken (chicken)	Hard stops – e.g., back [bæk], chicken
'ng' endings	Often pronounced as 'nk' – e.g., nothink (nothing), somethink (something)	Standard 'ng' – e.g., nothing, something
'th' sounds	Often [d] or [t] substitution – e.g., dese (these), dat (that), tink (think)	Distinct 'th' [θ] sound – e.g., these, that, think
'ur' sounds	Often pronounced as 'err' – e.g., berdd [berd] (bird), werdd (word)	Standard 'ur' – e.g., bird [bɜ:d], word
Final consonants	Often dropped or softened – e.g., righ' (right), nigh' (night)	Clearly pronounced – e.g., right, night

b) Specificity in Language Use.

SCOUSE WORD	STANDARD ENGLISH	NOTES
Sound	Good/great	"That's sound, lad."
Boss	Excellent/great	"That's boss, that."
Scran	Food	"What's for scran?"
Bevvy	Alcoholic drink	"Fancy a bevvy?"
Bifter	Cigarette	"Got a bifter?"
Wool/Woollyback	Someone from outside Liverpool	Mildly derogatory
Lid	Person/mate	"Alright lid?"
Our kid	Brother/mate	"Where's our kid?"
Jarg	Fake/rubbish	"That's proper jarg."
Made up	Very pleased/happy	"I'm made up with that."
Heavy	Very/really	"That's heavy good."
Geg in	Join in/participate	"Come on, geg in."
Devoed/Devvo	Devastated	"I'm devoed about that."
Bizzies	Police	"The bizzies are coming."
Arlarse	Stupid person	"Don't be an arlarse."
Calm down	Relax/be reasonable	"Calm down, calm down." (stereotype)
La/Lad	Mate/friend	"Alright la?"
Soft lad	Gentle teasing term	"You soft lad."
Divvy	Stupid person	"He's a right divvy."
Gizza	Give us/give me	"Gizza go on that."

c) Grammatical Patterns.

FEATURE	SCOUSE EXAMPLE	STANDARD ENGLISH EXAMPLE
Past tense 'be'	"I was", "You was", "We was"	"I was", "You were", "We were."
Present tense questions	"You coming town."	"Are you coming to town?"
Double modals	"I might could do that."	"I might be able to do that."
Past participles	"I seen him", "I done it."	"I saw him, I did it."
Auxiliary deletion	"You going out?"	"Are you going out?"
Contractions	"Youse going?"	"Are you going?"
Prepositions	"I'm going town."	"I'm going to town."
Question tags	"That's good, that."	"That's good, isn't it?"
Reflexives	"I hurt meself."	"I hurt myself."

The sound patterns and grammatical structures in Scouse derive primarily from heavy Irish linguistic influence brought by Great Famine refugees, as evidenced by shared syntactic constructions and speech rhythms. Additional linguistic layers came from Welsh industrial workers and maritime trade connections, creating a multi-substrate foundation. The phonological trait involves systematic softening of velar stops as *[k]* and *[g]* weaken to fricatives *[x]* and *[ɣ]*, yielding pronunciations like *[bax]* for “back.” This process, uncommon in English but aligned with Celtic lenition principles. The vocabulary blends borrowings (such as “sound” meaning “excellent”) with locally coined terms, including specialized maritime language that has been absorbed into everyday speech.

8. *Geordie* is the dialect spoken by people in Newcastle, who are known as Geordies. A key feature is the loss of word-final *[r]* sounds, which are replaced with “*ah*”. For example, *sugar* becomes *sug-ah*, *paper* becomes *pap-ah*, *finger* becomes *fing-ah*, and *computer* becomes *comput-ah*. The dialect also has distinctive vocabulary, such as *canny* (good), *bairn* (child), and *howay* (come on).

Pic. 145 – *Geordie and Standard English: A Comparative Study*.

a) *Differences in Pronunciation*.



GEORDIE PRONUNCIATION



FEATURE	GEORDIE	STANDARD ENGLISH	EXAMPLES
'ou' sounds	Pronounced as 'oo' [u]	Standard [au] diphthong	Geordie: "hooose" (house), "about" (about); Standard: "house", "about"
'ow' sounds	Pronounced as 'oo' [u]	Standard [au] diphthong	Geordie: "noo" (now), "broon" (brown); Standard: "now", "brown"
'a' in words like 'talk'	Short [a] sound	Long [ɔ:] sound	Geordie: "talk", "walk", "hall" with short [a]; Standard: Long vowel in these words
'ur' sounds	Often pronounced as 'err'	Standard 'ur'	Geordie: "berrd" (bird), "werdd" (word); Standard: "bird", "word"
Rising intonation	Distinctive rising pattern	Different intonation	Geordie has a characteristic rising intonation pattern

b) Distinctive Vocabulary.

GEORDIE	STANDARD ENGLISH	NOTES
Gan	Go	"I'm gan yem." = "I'm going home."
Yem/Yam	Home	From Old English "ham"
Howay	Come on	"Howay man!"
Canny	Good/nice/quite	"That's canny good."
Bonny	Pretty/beautiful	"A bonny lass."
Bairn	Child	From Old Norse "barn"
Hinny	Term of endearment	"Alright, hinny?"
Pet	Term of endearment	"How are you, pet?"
Marra	Friend/workmate	"Alright, marra?"
Gadgie	Man/bloke	"He's a canny gadgie."
Netty	Toilet	"Where's the netty?"
Hacky	Dirty	"That's hacky."
Haddaway	Go away/nonsense	"Haddaway and shite!"
Divvent	Don't	"Divvent be daft."
Cannit	Can't	"I cannit do it."
Hadnt	Hadn't	"I hadnt seen him."
Wor	Our	"That's wor kid."
Nowt	Nothing	"I've got nowt."
Owt	Anything	"Is there owt to eat?"
Radge	Mad/crazy	"That's radge, man."

c) *Grammatical Features.*

FEATURE	GEORDIE	STANDARD ENGLISH
Past tense 'be'	"I was", "You was", "We was"	"I was", "You were", "We were"
Negative contractions	"Divvent" (don't), "Cannit" (can't)	"Don't", "can't"
Past participles	"I've gan" (I've gone), "I've did it"	"I've gone", "I've done it."
Present continuous	"I'm gan" (I'm going)	"I'm going."
Auxiliary verbs	Often omitted in questions	Always present
Possessive pronouns	"That's wors." (that's ours)	"That's ours."
Question formation	"Where you gan?"	"Where are you going?"
Double negatives	"I divvent knaa nowt."	"I don't know anything."

Geordie represents one of Northern England's most complex linguistic systems, shaped by over a thousand years of different cultural influences and settlement patterns. Its basic structure comes from Anglo-Saxon English, but its most recognizable words and sounds show strong Viking influence from Scandinavian settlement. Many core Geordie words come directly from Old Norse, including *"bairn"* (child), *"gan"* (go), and *"yem"* (home), which have survived in Geordie while disappearing from most other English dialects, creating a direct linguistic link to North Germanic languages.

The historical industries of the area, represented by coal mining and shipbuilding, developed specialized vocabularies that became part of everyday Geordie speech. This industrial language strengthened community identity and helped maintain clear linguistic boundaries between Geordies and outsiders. Additionally, the Roman heritage near Hadrian's Wall contributed occasional Latin-derived words, while proximity to Scotland led to shared features with Lowland Scots, particularly in vowel pronunciation and grammatical patterns. Geordie varies significantly across the region. Newcastle city center speaks the strongest form (*"broad Geordie"*), while nearby Gateshead and North Tyneside have related but slightly different pronunciation patterns. Moving toward Wearside and Durham, the accent gradually transitions toward

Sunderland's distinct Mackem dialect. Rural Northumberland maintains a unique vocabulary reflecting farming life rather than industrial terminology.

Thus, British English dialects divide into distinct regional patterns based on their historical influences. From a historical perspective, northern dialects preserve older linguistic features, while southern dialects reflect recent urban development and immigration patterns. Industrial heritage has shaped many urban dialects, though media and educational pressures are weakening some traditional characteristics. Nevertheless, cultural revival movements and strong community identity continue to keep these dialects alive, demonstrating how British English variation reflects a complex interplay of history, geography, and social factors.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. The pace describes six distinct patterns of how Norse words entered English. For each pattern below, find 3 additional examples beyond those given in the text:

- Pattern One: Words filling vocabulary gaps.
- Pattern Two: Norse words that completely replaced English equivalents.
- Pattern Three: Pairs where both survived with different meanings.
- Pattern Four: Etymological doublets from Proto-Germanic
- Pattern Five: Same meaning, different pronunciation (Norse won).
- Pattern Six: Meaning migration from Norse influence.

2. The famous pattern shows French meat names (*pork, beef, mutton*) versus English animal names (*pig, cow, sheep*). Find this same class distinction in 3 other semantic fields. For example:

- Building materials (English: _____ vs. French: _____).
- Cooking methods (English: _____ vs. French: _____).
- Social relationships (English: _____ vs. French: _____).

3. Suffixes like *-ment, -able, -ance* became productive in English. Find 5 “hybrid” words where French suffixes attach to native English roots (like “*fulfillment*” = English “*fulfill*” + French “*-ment*”). Why did speakers start creating these combinations rather than just borrowing complete French words?

4. The distinctive Latin suffixes are like fingerprints of Renaissance borrowing. Create word families:

- 5 verbs ending in *-ate* (beyond those listed);
- 5 verbs ending in *-ute*;
- 5 adjectives ending in *-ant/-ent*;
- 5 adjectives ending in *-ior/-al*.

5. Examine the Early Modern English borrowing chart (Pic. 110). Choose 3 source languages from different continents. For each:

- List 5 borrowed words.

- Explain what British imperial activity brought them into contact with this language.
 - Identify whether words relate to trade goods, colonization, or cultural contact.
6. The pace provides examples of Cockney rhyming slang for food. Create your own rhyming slang “menu” with:
- 3 appetizers;
 - 3 main courses;
 - 3 desserts;
 - 3 beverages.
7. Geordie preserves Old Norse words like “*bairn*” (child), “*gan*” (go), “*yem*” (home). Research: Find 10 more Norse-origin words that survive in Northern dialects (Yorkshire, Geordie) but disappeared from Standard English. Why did the North preserve these while the South lost them?

THE TOPICS FOR SELF-STUDY AND REPORTS:

1. Latin influence on English syntax and grammar. From classical borrowings to prescriptive norms.
2. Brittonic vs. Goidelic Celtic contributions to English.
3. Norse/Viking linguistic legacy in Northern English dialects.
4. Regional phonological variations in contemporary British English.
5. The social stratification of London English.
6. BBC English and the creation of Received Pronunciation.
7. Occupational dialects and semantic fields: mining, maritime, agricultural, and industrial vocabularies in British English
8. The decline of traditional rural dialects in Modern Britain.
9. Gender and regional accent perception in Britain.

ENGLISH AS A COMMON TONGUE: HISTORICAL COMPETITORS
AND CONTEMPORARY DIVERSITIES

1. *Tongues of empires within the historical timeframe.*
2. *Globish as a product of history and a digital tool.*
3. *The DNA of dominion: linguistic varieties as scars of colonial policy.*
4. *The Inner and the Outer Circles of English.*

The linguistic stenciling across history reflects the contours of the dominant imperial influence. As in literature, where each literary trend defines the epoch, the supreme empires determine linguistic and geographical dominance. Before English rose to its current status, other languages held sway as the *lingua franca* in universities, scientific circles, religious institutions, and diplomatic arenas.

Across the ancient world, Greek served as a universal tongue, though its purpose and reach transformed dramatically from one era to the next.

Pic. 146 – *Greek Language: Transformation Across Historical Eras.*

GREEK LANGUAGE PERIODS		
	LABEL OF THE AGE	COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTION
1	ARCHAIC/HOMERIC PERIOD	During the foundational Archaic period of the 8th century BCE, Greek was the dominant language for epic poetry, oral storytelling, and mythology. Iliad and Odyssey by Homer, composed in Greek, stood as a language of literature and as the cultural chromosomes encoding pan-Hellenic unity. Greek civilization was still taking shape, planting seeds that would yield centuries of Mediterranean literary influence and beyond.
2	CLASSICAL PERIOD	In the height of Classical Greece (Vth-IVth centuries BCE), Greek served as the primary linguistic channel for the exchanges within the philosophical discourse, mathematical reasoning, and early science, with figures like Plato, Aristotle, and Euclid producing foundational works in Greek.
3	HELLENISTIC PERIOD	Following Alexander the Great's military campaigns in the IVth century BCE, Koine Greek was established as the common language throughout the extensive regions of the Hellenistic empire, spanning from Greece to Egypt and India. Koine Greek enabled dialogue and commerce among varied civilizations and served as the medium in the academic sphere in general and the philosophic dimension in particular. The milestone compositions by Archimedes and Ptolemy were composed in Greek.
4	ROMAN EMPIRE	Within the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire (330-1453 CE), Greek retained its role as the dominant language in the government, scholarly instruction, and scientific endeavors. Greek manuscripts, especially those on medical knowledge, astronomical studies, and mathematical principles, were subsequently translated into Latin and Arabic, shaping intellectual development across Europe and Islamic territories.
5	RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE	Greek served as the linguistic medium for the New Testament and the foundational texts of Christian theological thought, thereby reinforcing its significance in both cultural and academic spheres.

The table demonstrates the defining stages of the Greek language as a foundational code of the European civilization. It excludes the Minoan era (approximately 3000-1450 BCE), which, despite its artistic sophistication and the development of Cretan hieroglyphs and Linear A, is not directly linked to the Greek language. The subsequent Mycenaean society (approximately 1600-1100 BCE), reflecting the earliest Greek-speaking palace-based culture²⁵, preserved *Linear B*²⁶ inscriptions that documented primitive Greek forms before its collapse around 1100 BCE. The Greek Dark Ages (approximately 1100-800 BCE) saw the destruction of Mycenaean palaces, the abandonment of writing systems (including Linear B), and demographic decline; however, this period maintained a bright oral storytelling tradition. Nevertheless, these preceding eras show no indication of linguistic influence extending past regional limits.

Latin functioned as a scholarly and scientific lingua franca for more than a thousand years, from classical antiquity to the early modern era. This linguistic supremacy stemmed from its stable association with the power of the Roman Empire, the influence of the Catholic Church, and the structure of European educational institutions.

Pic. 147 – *The Phases in the Historical Dominance of Latin.*

THE PERIOD'S TITLE		LANGUAGE ROLE
1	ANCIENT ROME	During ancient times (753 BCE-476 AD), Latin established itself as the official language of government, law, and literature throughout the Roman Empire. While Greek was initially dominant in science and philosophy, Latin emerged as the language of practical knowledge, engineering, and medicine in the Western Roman Empire.
2	MEDIEVAL EUROPE	In the aftermath of Rome's decline, Latin endured as the universal medium for scholarly, ecclesiastical, and academic endeavors across Europe. Through Monastic schools, religious scholars undertook the crucial task of preserving and transcribing Latin manuscripts, thereby ensuring the continuity of classical knowledge across centuries. Significant medieval scholarship, encompassing astronomical observations, botanical investigations, and medical treatises, was systematically documented in Latin.
3	RENAISSANCE AND EARLY MODERN PERIOD	Throughout the Renaissance period, Latin served as the vehicle for revolutionary scientific discourse. Seminal contributions from scholars such as Copernicus (<i>De Revolutionibus</i>) and Newton (<i>Principia Mathematica</i>) were disseminated in Latin to reach the widest possible academic readership across national boundaries. Academic institutions throughout Europe employed Latin as their primary language of instruction and scholarly investigation, establishing it as the universal medium for intellectual dialogue and knowledge transmission.
4	DECLINE	By the late XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, Latin's dominance faded as vernacular languages like English, French, and German became more prominent in science and scholarship.

²⁵ *Palatial culture* describes Bronze Age societies structured around extensive palace facilities functioning as unified administrative, economic, and spiritual hubs. These palace complexes governed adjacent regions through organized bureaucracies and contained hierarchical communities led by aristocratic classes. Notable instances include Minoan palaces like Knossos and Mycenaean strongholds such as Pylos.

²⁶ *Linear B* was a syllabic script used by Mycenaean civilization (approximately 1450-1200 BCE) for documenting an early Greek dialect. Michael Ventris achieved its decipherment in 1952, establishing it as the earliest decoded Greek writing system. This script predominantly appears on administrative clay records unearthed at principal Mycenaean palace sites, including Pylos, Knossos, and Thebes.

During the Islamic Golden Age, extending from the eighth through the thirteenth centuries, the Arabic linguistic system framed Islamic civilization, steering scientific dialogue, medical inquiry, and philosophical investigation.

During the period of European expansion from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, Spain and Portugal established colonial footholds across the Americas, Africa, and Asia through deliberate programmes of overseas conquest and settlement.

Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, French occupied an unrivalled position as the shared language of European diplomacy, refined culture, and the arts, reaching its peak during the reign of Louis XIV and the period of French imperial expansion. In diplomatic circles, it functioned as the standard medium for international negotiations and the drafting of treaties, a status still reflected in the *Treaty of Versailles* in 1919. Culturally, French literature, fashion, and artistic production were held up across Europe as the benchmark of civilised taste, while colonial expansion carried the language into parts of Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Caribbean. France's dominance began to erode in the aftermath of the *Napoleonic Wars* between 1803 and 1815, which weakened its political and economic position both on the continent and further afield, allowing Austria and Prussia to emerge as leading diplomatic powers in its place. *The Congress of Vienna* of 1814 to 1815 then fundamentally redrew the map of European power, generating the *Concert of Europe*, an arrangement through which Britain, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and France agreed to manage international stability through shared and cooperative diplomacy.

German served as the working language of science and scholarship during the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly in Central Europe. Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Einstein, and Planck all wrote in German, and researchers in chemistry, physics, and medicine routinely published their findings in it. German-speaking universities drew students and scholars from around the world. This changed with World War I, when hostility toward Germany led American and British scientists to abandon the language. The Nazi dictatorship, the Holocaust, and World War II shattered what remained of Germany's scholarly standing. Jewish scholars fleeing Nazi Germany relocated to the United States and Britain, bringing figures like Einstein and Hans Bethe with them.

This migration shifted scientific activity toward English-speaking countries. Major journals such as *Nature and Science* began publishing primarily in English, which became the standard language for scholarly work. English replaced German and Latin as the main language of science and research. While this shift took hold during the 20th century, it grew from earlier developments.

Thus, the linguistic dominance of English, which originally stemmed from the systematic colonial expansion of the British Empire, made English the bridging language of governance and education across extensive regions of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. It is also reinforced by the USA's post-WWII status. American technological innovation, especially concentrated in Silicon Valley, established English as the core language of the digital age. Technology giants such as *Microsoft*, *Google*, and *Apple* institutionalized English as the standard language of computing and online interaction, driving a self-perpetuating expansion of English-language digital content that persists across modern platforms, including *Netflix*, *YouTube*, and *Spotify*. Global corporations and international bodies, such as the *United Nations*, the *World Trade Organization*, and the *International Monetary Fund*, have established English as a principal working language. Concurrently, Hollywood's entertainment industry and international media outlets cultivated global patterns of English-language cultural consumption.

The role of education in the global reach of English is considerable. Institutions such as Harvard, Oxford, and MIT draw students from across the world through their English-medium programmes, while language teaching initiatives have made English the most widely studied second language on the planet. Proficiency tests like TOEFL and IELTS have reinforced the widespread perception that a command of English is essential for international mobility and professional advancement. The language itself continues to shift in response to the digital age, absorbing the vocabulary of the internet and adapting to the communicative demands of multimedia environments, a flexibility that has kept it current and expansive. Collectively, these forces have allowed English to move well beyond its historical origins, establishing itself as the primary medium

through which people across cultures, disciplines, and borders engage with one another in an increasingly interconnected world.

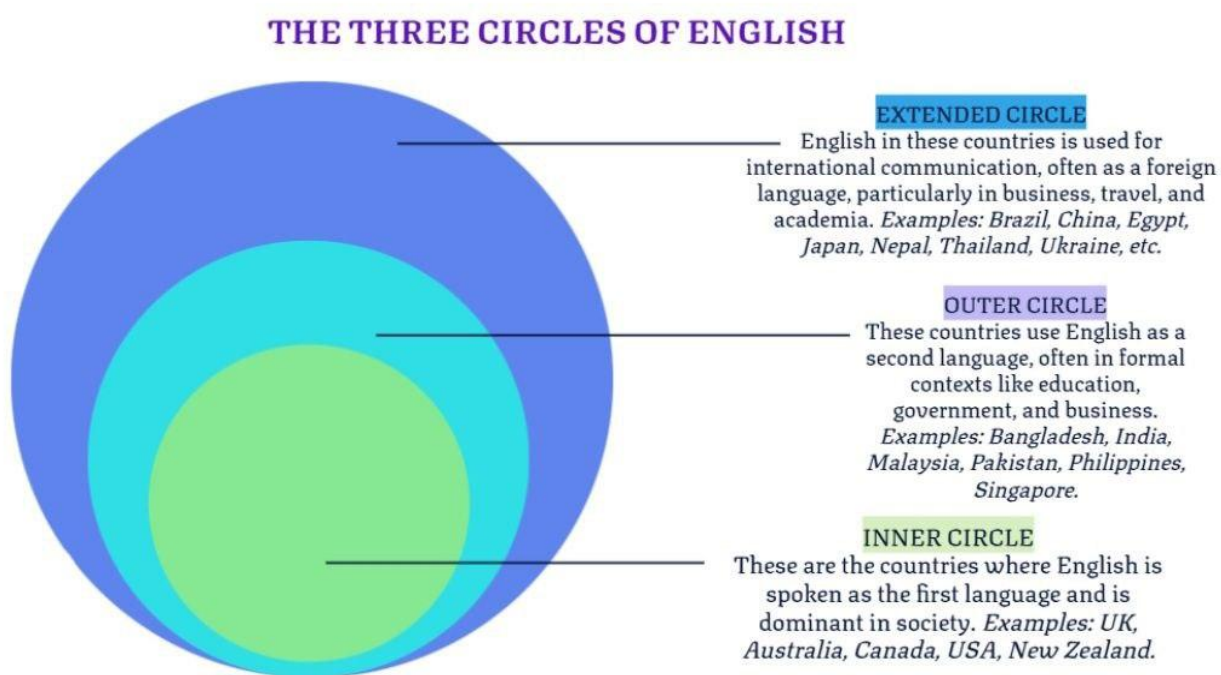
Pic. 148 – *The Foundations and Dimensions of English as a Global Lingua Franca.*



English has spread across the globe with a reach no other language has matched, gathering billions of speakers, both native and adopted alike, into a single vast but far from uniform communicative web. Wherever English has taken root, it has grown differently. Linguists today use the word “*variety*” to describe any distinct, recognisable form the language takes, distinguishing one community’s English from another’s along lines of class, geography, history, or some combination of all three.

Linguist Braj Kachru developed the framework of **outer and inner circles** within his *World Englishes model*. The **Inner Circle** covers nations where English is the native language (L1) or plays a central role in everyday communication and cultural life. In these territories, English is the principal medium of interaction for the majority of the population. These countries are conventionally considered “*norm-providing*” nations, as their English variants are generally perceived as the benchmark or standard for grammatical structures, phonological patterns, and lexical usage. The **Outer Circle** includes countries where English serves as a second language in official or institutional roles, like India, Nigeria, and the Philippines, where it develops its own varieties. The **Expanding Circle** includes nations where English is taught as a foreign language, such as China, Japan, and most of Europe, and *relies on Inner Circle norms*.

Pic. 149 – *The Circles of English*.



The key differences between the inner and outer circles of the English language are defined by a set of parameters.

Pic. 150 – *Parameters of English in the Circles of Circulation.*

ASPECT	INNER CIRCLE	OUTER CIRCLE
FUNCTION	English is used as a first language and forms part of the cultural identity.	English serves as a second language and acts as a unifying medium in multilingual societies.
NORMS	Sets the traditional norms of English usage.	Adapts English to local needs, creating unique and localized varieties.
HISTORICAL CONTEXT	English evolved naturally as a native language.	English spread through colonization and remains a legacy of historical and political developments.

Therefore, this overview of principal varieties within the **INNER CIRCLE** encompasses several key forms of English currently in use.

BRITISH ENGLISH denotes the varieties of English used in spoken and written communication throughout the United Kingdom, or more broadly, across the British Isles. Some subtle regional variations exist in standard written English within the UK. UK English derives from the West Germanic language family and evolved from Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Britain by Germanic settlers from regions that now constitute northwestern Germany and the northern Netherlands. The native population at this time predominantly spoke Common Brittonic, an insular variant of continental Celtic influenced by Roman occupation. These Celtic languages (including Welsh, Cornish, and Cumbric) persisted alongside English far into the modern era, but their structural divergence from Germanic languages ensured their influence on English remained relatively minimal.

AMERICAN ENGLISH, also known as United States English or U.S. English, embraces the array of English language varieties that sprouted in the United States and achieved broad adoption in Canada. Across the United States, English prevails as the dominant language and serves as the federal government's communication medium, functioning as the de facto national language through its pervasive use. Thirty-two state governments have granted English official status.

Modern vocabulary distinctions between British and American English have diminished substantially, with American expressions increasingly infiltrating British usage, creating a trend that appears to be expanding rather than diminishing. These contributions include terms that settlers borrowed from Native American languages to describe indigenous features: *moose*, *raccoon*, *skunk*, *opossum*, *chipmunk*, *porgy*, and *terrapin*. Further vocabulary developed through conventional English word-formation mechanisms: *mud hen*, *garter snake*, *bullfrog*, *potato bug*, *groundhog*, *reed bird*.

Colonial contacts introduced novel botanical vocabulary, such as *hickory*, *live oak*, and *locust*, as well as agricultural terminology, including *sweet potato*, *eggplant*, *squash*, *persimmon*, and *pecan*. Cultural contacts with Native American societies produced vocabulary reflecting their way of life: *wigwam*, *tomahawk*, *canoe*, *toboggan*, *mackinaw*, *moccasin*, *wampum*, *squaw*, *papoose*. Concurrently, English speakers generated their own expressions from these intercultural encounters: *war path*, *paleface*, *medicine man*, *pipe of peace*, *big chief*, *war paint*, plus the verb *to scalp*. Culinary adoptions include *hominy*, *tapioca*, *succotash*, and *pone*, with the last enduring in Southern dialects as a designation for *cornbread*, corresponding to Native American bread-making practices.

The U.S. political system called for specific lexical terms: *congressional*, *presidential*, *gubernatorial*, *congressman*, *caucus*, *mass meeting*, *selectman*, *statehouse*, and *land office*. Frontier existence produced supplementary vocabulary: *back country*, *backwoodsman*, *squatter*, *prairie*, *log cabin*, *clapboard*, *corncrib*, *popcorn*, *hoe cake*, *cold snap*, *snow plow*, *bobsled*, *sleigh*. Terms like *lynch*, *blizzard*, *jazz*, *joyride*, and *bucket shop* unmistakably reveal their American origins, yet numerous other American linguistic innovations have either shed their historical markers or achieved such thorough British integration that dictionaries no longer acknowledge their provenance.

Even with this convergence, British and American English retain distinct words for the same concepts:

Pic. 151 – *American English vs. British English*.

AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
a bag of sugar, flour	a pack of sugar, flour
across the street from	opposite
apartment	flat
blonde (hair)	fair (hair)
booked up	fully booked
café	coffee shop
cell phone	mobile phone
check (✓)	tick (✓)
check (at restaurant)	bill
closet	wardrobe
clothing store	clothes shop
do the dishes	do the washing up
dormitory	halls of residence
downtown	city centre
elevator	lift
expressway	motorway
fall	autumn
first floor (also ground floor)	ground floor
French fries (also fries)	chips
gas station	petrol station
go to the movies	go to the cinema

The linguistic system of American English as a whole exhibits significant differences from its British cognate across several dimensions.

Pic. 152 – *American vs. British English: A Detailed Comparison.*

a) *Vocabulary Equivalents.*

CATEGORY	CONCEPT	AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
Transportation and Automotive	Vehicle types	truck	lorry
		semi-truck / eighteen-wheeler	articulated lorry
		pickup truck	pickup
		station wagon	estate car
		SUV	4x4 / off-roader
	Car parts	hood	bonnet
		trunk	boot
		fender	wing
		windshield	windscreen
		turn signal	indicator
		parking brake	handbrake
		gas pedal	accelerator
	Roads and traffic	highway / freeway	motorway
		intersection	junction
		crosswalk	zebra crossing
		yield	give way
		traffic circle	roundabout
		median strip	central reservation
	Public transport	subway	underground / tube
		bus	bus / coach
		streetcar / trolley	tram

CATEGORY	CONCEPT	AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
Housing and Architecture	Building types	apartment	flat
		condominium / condo	flat (owned)
		duplex	semi-detached house
		ranch house	bungalow
	Rooms and spaces	bathroom	toilet / loo / WC
		closet	wardrobe / cupboard
		den / family room	sitting room / lounge
		mudroom	utility room
		basement	cellar
		attic	loft
	Building features	elevator	lift
		first floor	ground floor
		second floor	first floor
		fire escape	fire exit
		screen door	fly screen
		storm door	outer door

CATEGORY	CONCEPT	AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
Food and Dining	Meals and timing	dinner (evening meal)	dinner / tea / supper
		lunch	lunch / dinner (midday)
	Beverages	soda / soft drink	fizzy drink / soft drink
		coffee with cream	coffee with milk
		iced tea	cold tea
	Food items	cookie	biscuit
		biscuit (bread-like)	scone
		french fries	chips
		potato chips	crisps
		candy	sweets
		jelly	jam
		jello	jelly
		ground beef	mince / minced beef
		zucchini	courgette
		eggplant	aubergine
		arugula	rocket
		cilantro	coriander
	Dining	check (restaurant bill)	bill
		to go / takeout	takeaway
		doggy bag	takeaway box

CATEGORY	CONCEPT	AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
Clothing and Personal Items	Clothing	pants	trousers
		underwear	pants / knickers
		undershirt	vest
		vest	waistcoat
		sweater	jumper / pullover
		sneakers	trainers
		purse	handbag
		fanny pack	bum bag
		suspenders	braces
		garters	suspenders
	Personal care	band-aid	plaster
		cotton swab	cotton bud
		diaper	nappy
		pacifier	dummy

CATEGORY	CONCEPT	AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
Education and Work	Education levels	elementary school	primary school
		middle school	secondary school
		high school	sixth form college
		college / university	university
		graduate school	postgraduate study
	School terms	semester	term
		recess	break
		study hall	study period
		homeroom	form room
	Academic	GPA	degree classification
		transcript	academic record
		valedictorian	head boy / girl
	Workplace	resume	CV
		raise	pay rise
		vacation	holidays

b) Spelling Differences.

CATEGORY	AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
-OUR VS -OR ENDINGS	color	colour
	favor	favour
	honor	honour
	humor	humour
	labor	labour
	neighbor	neighbour
-ER VS -RE ENDINGS	center	centre
	theater	theatre
	meter	metre
	fiber	fibre
	liter	litre
-IZE VS -ISE ENDINGS	realize	realise
	organize	organise
	recognize	recognise
	analyze	analyse
	paralyze	paralyse
DOUBLE CONSONANTS	traveling	travelling
	modeling	modelling
	canceled	cancelled
	jewelry	jewellery
MISCELLANEOUS SPELLING	gray	grey
	tire	tyre
	curb	kerb
	check	cheque
	defense	defence

c) Grammar and Usage Differences.

FEATURE	AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
PAST PARTICIPLES		
	gotten	got
	proven	proved
COLLECTIVE NOUNS		
	The team is winning	The team are winning
PRESENT PERFECT		
	I just ate	I've just eaten
PREPOSITIONS		
	on the weekend	at the weekend
	different from/than	different from/to
ARTICLES		
	go to the hospital	go to hospital
	play in the band	play in a band

d) Other Discrepancies.

CATEGORY	CONCEPT	AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
TIME AND DATES	Date format	MM/DD/YYYY	DD/MM/YYYY
		March 15, 2024	15 March 2024
	Time	2:30	14:30 or half past two
	Days	through Friday	through to Friday
	Periods	fall	autumn
MONEY AND MEASUREMENTS	Currency slang	buck (dollar)	quid (pound)
		quarter (25 cents)	25p
	Measurements	predominantly imperial	mixed metric/imperial
		miles per gallon	miles per gallon
		Fahrenheit	Celsius
EVERYDAY EXPRESSIONS AND SLANG	—	awesome / cool	brilliant / ace
		totally	absolutely / completely
		you bet	rather / definitely
		no problem	no worries
		You're welcome	—
		I guess	I suppose
		I think	—
		anyways	anyway / in any case
		real good	really good
		I'm good	I'm fine / I'm okay

CATEGORY	CONCEPT	AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
SPORTS AND RECREATION	Sports	soccer	football
		(American) football	American football
		field hockey	hockey
		ice hockey	ice hockey
		track and field	athletics
	Equipment	cleats	boots
		jersey	shirt / kit
		bleachers	stands
TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION	Communication	cell phone	mobile / mobile phone
		landline	landline / house phone
		area code	dialing code
		collect call	reverse charge call
	Computing	zip file	zip file
		program	programme

CANADIAN ENGLISH covers the forms of English used across Canada. Millions speak it from birth, while the rest grow up speaking French or other mother tongues. These speakers outside the English-French binary are termed allophones. Canadian English developed over roughly two centuries through five waves of immigration, with the most significant influence coming from Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution. These settlers, primarily from Mid-Atlantic colonies such as New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, introduced the first substantial English-speaking communities. As a result, some linguists consider Canadian English an offshoot of northern American English, reflecting the linguistic imprint of these early settlers.

Pic. 153 – *Vocabulary Differences Across Canadian, American, and British English.*

a) *Common Vocabulary Differences.*

CONCEPT	CANADIAN ENGLISH	AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
TRANSPORTATION			
large vehicle	truck / transport truck	truck	lorry
public transport	transit	subway / bus	underground / tube
elevator	elevator	elevator	lift
HOUSING			
apartment	apartment / condo	apartment	flat
bathroom	washroom / bathroom	bathroom / restroom	toilet / loo
garbage disposal	garburator	garbage disposal	waste disposal unit
FOOD & DRINK			
soft drink	pop	soda / pop	soft drink / fizzy drink
napkin	serviette	napkin	serviette / napkin
baby diaper	diaper	diaper	nappy
SHOPPING			
shopping cart	shopping cart	shopping cart	trolley
SEASONS			
autumn	autumn / fall	fall	autumn

b) Canadian-Specific Terms.

CANADIAN TERM	MEANING	AMERICAN/BRITISH EQUIVALENT
toque	winter knit hat	beanie / winter hat
loonie	one-dollar coin	dollar coin
toonie	two-dollar coin	two-dollar coin
double-double	coffee with two cream, two sugar	coffee with cream and sugar
timbits	donut holes (Tim Hortons brand)	donut holes / munchkins
poutine	fries with gravy and cheese curds	(no equivalent)
eh	question tag / confirmation	right? / isn't it?
klicks	kilometers	miles / kilometers
hydro	electricity / electric bill	electricity / power
parkade	parking garage	parking garage / car park
chesterfield	sofa	couch / sofa
runners	sneakers / athletic shoes	sneakers / trainers
pencil crayon	colored pencil	colored pencil / crayon

c) Orthographic Patterns.

WORD TYPE	CANADIAN	AMERICAN	BRITISH
-our / -or words			
colour / color	colour	color	colour
favour / favor	favour	favor	favour
honour / honor	honour	honor	honour
-ise / -ize words			
realize / realise	realize	realize	realise
organize / organise	organize	organize	organise
-re / -er words			
centre / center	centre	center	centre
theatre / theater	theatre	theater	theatre

AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH stands apart as a regional variant with its own structural quirks. A hallmark of this language variety is its word-crafting approach, i.e., condensing longer items then adding “-ie” or “-o” endings. This applies to a range of lexical items, including everyday nouns (“*breakfast*” becomes “*brekkie*”), time words (“*afternoon*” becomes “*arvo*”), phrases (“*service station*” becomes “*servo*”), and place names (“*Melbourne*” becomes “*Melbs*”). The word-shortening habit extends across various areas, transforming “*politicians*” into “*pollies*,” “*journalists*” into “*journos*,” and “*documentary*” into “*doco*.” These patterns generally casual, informal style of communication. Lexical semantics frequently diverges from other English-speaking areas, with familiar terms acquiring new senses: “*thong*” refers to *flip-flops* rather than *underwear*, while “*rubber*” means an *eraser* rather than *the material*. Some verbs have special usage rules; for instance, “*barrack*” is used for cheering sports teams rather than “*root*,” which has inappropriate connotations. Speech patterns include notable vowel changes. The [ei] sound in words like “*mate*” shifts toward [ai], and vowel sounds stretch longer in words like “*today*.” Australians frequently use rising intonation at the end of statements, making them sound like questions.

Pic. 154 – *A Comparative Overview of British and Australian English.*

a) Vocabulary Variation.

CATEGORY	AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH	NOTES
FOOTWEAR	thongs	flip-flops	In AusE, "thongs" = sandals; in BrE, "thongs" = underwear.
WRITING IMPLEMENTS	rubber	rubber	Same word, same meaning (eraser).
SPORTS SUPPORT	barrack for	support / cheer for	"Root for" avoided in AusE due to different meaning.
AFTERNOON	arvo	afternoon	AusE uses a truncated form.
BREAKFAST	brekkie	breakfast	AusE uses a diminutive form.
SERVICE STATION	servo	petrol station	Different terms entirely.
SWEETS	lollies	sweets	AusE uses a diminutive form.
SOFT DRINKS	soft drink	fizzy drink	Regional vocabulary preference.
SWIMWEAR	bathers / togs / cossies	swimming costume	Multiple variants in AusE.

b) Australianisms.

AUSTRALIAN EXPRESSION	BRITISH EQUIVALENT	MEANING
fair dinkum	genuine / honest	authentic, real
she'll be right	it'll be fine	everything will work out
no worries	no problem	you're welcome / it's fine
heaps	lots	many / much
reckon	think	believe / suppose

c) Morphological Characteristics.

FEATURE	AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
DIMINUTIVES	Extensive use of -ie / -o suffixes (journos, pollies, doco)	Limited use of diminutives
WORD SHORTENING	Systematic truncation (arvo, servo, brekkie)	Less systematic shortening
PROPER NOUN REDUCTION	Melbs, Tassie, Brissy	Generally retain full forms

Australian English, therefore, functions as a distinct regional branch of the language, characterized by systematic morphological processes and phonetic shifts, specialized lexicon, and characteristic prosodic features that distinguish it from English elsewhere in the world.

NEW ZEALAND ENGLISH developed from multiple English sources over roughly 150 years, with Australian English serving as its chief substrate, positioning it among the world's most recently formed English varieties. Australian English itself stems primarily from southeastern English dialects, supplemented by substantial Scottish and Irish elements, along with lesser contributions from standard British and American English. Phonetic features provide the clearest point of differentiation. Characteristic vowel shifts include the fronting of the [ɪ] vowel in words such as *fish* toward [e]. Post-vocalic [r] is generally absent except before vowels, though rolled [r] sounds may occur in southern regions due to historical settlement patterns. The [h] sound is often dropped in unstressed pronouns, and vowel combinations diverge from standard realizations, resulting in perceptible phonetic differences for speakers of other English varieties.

Lexical individuality surfaces in region-specific terms such as *jandals* (flip-flops), *chilly bin* (cooler), and *bach* (holiday home). Informal usage includes expressions like *bro* (greeting), *chur* (acknowledgment), *ta* (thanks), *snags* (sausages), *she'll be right* (reassurance), and *dairy* (corner shop), reflecting both casual speech and locally evolved meanings.

In terms of syntax, New Zealand English generally aligns with British patterns, though usage rates and preferred constructions vary. For example, *shall* is used less often than *will*, and variation in auxiliary verbs and temporal expressions reflects consistent but flexible patterns rather than rigid rules.

Interaction with *Māori* has brought borrowed terms like *whānau* into the lexicon and shaped intonation and sound systems, adding elements not found in other English varieties. Geographic differences remain, especially in how southerners pronounce [r], reflecting the area's settlement history.

Pic. 155 – *New Zealand and British English: Lexical, Phonetic, and Stylistic Differences.*

a) Vocabulary Variation.

CATEGORY	NEW ZEALAND ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH	NOTES
FOOTWEAR	jandals	flip-flops	NZE uses a term from a Japanese brand name.
COOLER BOX	chilly bin	cool box	NZE uses a locally coined compound.
HOLIDAY HOME	bach	holiday cottage	NZE term originates from "bachelor pad."
CORNER SHOP	dairy	corner shop / newsagent	NZE term influenced by American usage.
SAUSAGES	snags	sausages / bangers	NZE shares this with Australian English.
GRATITUDE	ta	thanks / cheers	Both use "ta," but it's more frequent in NZE.
FRIEND	bro	mate	NZE term influenced by American slang.
VERSATILE GREETING	chur	cheers / thanks	Uniquely NZE expression.
REASSURANCE	she'll be right	it'll be fine	NZE shares this pattern with Australian English.
SOFT DRINKS	fizzy drink	fizzy drink	Same term in both varieties.

b) New Zealandisms.

NEW ZEALAND EXPRESSION	BRITISH EQUIVALENT	CONTEXT / USAGE
good as gold	fine / excellent	Intensifier
sweet as	great / good	Positive evaluation
yeah, nah	well, no	Hesitant disagreement
nah, yeah	well, yes	Reluctant agreement
hard out	absolutely	Strong agreement
choice	excellent	Positive evaluation
munted	broken / damaged	Informal description
kux	cool / attractive	Youth slang

c) Phonological Patterns.

FEATURE	NEW ZEALAND ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH (RP)
Short front vowels /ɪ/	Shifted to [e] (e.g., "fish" pronounced "fesh")	Standard [ɪ] realization
KIT vowel ^[1]	Raised and centralized	Standard position
DRESS vowel	Raised toward [ɪ]	Standard [e]
TRAP vowel	Raised and fronted	Standard [æ]
Rhoticity	Non-rhotic	Non-rhotic
/r/ realization	Occasionally trilled (especially South Island)	Standard approximant
/h/ dropping	Occurs in unstressed pronouns	Less systematic
Diphthongs	Shifted realizations	Standard RP diphthongs

[1] The KIT vowel: The KIT vowel, represented phonetically as [ɪ], is the short "i" sound found in words like "kit," "sit," and "bit." In Received Pronunciation (RP), it is a near-close, near-front unrounded vowel [ɪ], while in New Zealand English, it undergoes raising and centralization, being pronounced slightly higher in the mouth and more toward the center, sometimes resembling a schwa-like [ə] or even approaching [ʉ], which contributes to the distinctive sound of the Kiwi accent.

d) Grammatical Structures.

FEATURE	NEW ZEALAND ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
Modal "shall"	Infrequent use	More frequent use
Modal "will"	Preferred future marker	Competes with "shall"
Past participle "got"	Standard usage	Standard usage
Present perfect	Similar to British English	Standard usage
Auxiliary selection	Slight frequency differences	Standard patterns

New Zealand English departs from British English across several dimensions, formed by its specialized historical arc, robust Māori cultural input, and particular linguistic signature. While British English carries scant traces of Indigenous languages, New Zealand English has adopted extensive Māori terminology, such as *whānau* (family network), *marae* (communal gathering space), and *hui* (meeting), as well as Māori place names and pronunciation features. While British English often retains more conventional expressions like *mate*, New Zealand English favors informal everyday phrases such as *bro*. Spelling largely follows British conventions (e.g., *colour*, *centre*), but New Zealand English uniquely uses macrons to mark Māori vowel length (*[ā, ē, ī, ō, ū]*). Domestically, New Zealand English displays far less geographic variability than British English, showing only minor contrasts between the North and South Islands or between cities and the countryside, along with weaker social-class markers in speech, though age-related changes do appear. Collectively, these traits demonstrate how New Zealand English has forged its own character while retaining links to its British heritage.

The **OUTER CIRCLE** comprises territories once colonized where English became woven into indigenous culture as colonial residue. In India, English was introduced into state-run education by the East India Company in the 1830s across one of Earth's most linguistically diverse landscapes. English gained official administrative status within the Company in 1835, supplanting Persian. Lord Macaulay proved central in championing English alongside Western educational frameworks, backing English-delivered education, founding preparation schemes for bilingual Indian teachers, and positioning English as the chief language of the state bureaucracy.

English includes a significant number of terms derived from Indian languages.

Pic. 156 – *English Words Borrowed from Indian Languages.*

ENGLISH WORD	INDIAN ORIGIN	MEANING / DESCRIPTION	PERIOD
Avatar	Sanskrit avatara ("coming down")	A god's physical embodiment on earth, especially Vishnu's forms; also online user identities	1700s
Bangle	Hindi bangri ("glass circle")	A hard, circular ornament worn around arms or legs	1700s
Bungalow	Hindi bangla	A ground-floor residence, originally houses in Bengal for European residents	1600s
Cheetah	Hindi cita ("marked with spots")	Earth's fastest land mammal	1700s
Chutney	Hindi chatni	A spiced preserve made from fruit, acid, seasonings, and sugar	1800s
Cot	Hindi khat ("sleeping frame")	A transportable sleeping surface or children's bed	1600s
Guru	Hindi/Sanskrit guru ("respected")	Originally a Hindu or Sikh religious instructor; now any esteemed teacher or guide	1600s
Juggernaut	Jagannath (representing Vishnu)	An overwhelming force; in Britain, also a massive truck	1800s
Jungle	Hindi jangal	Thick forest vegetation, or symbolically, any dangerous environment	1700s
Loot	Hindi lut ("robbery")	To rob, or stolen property	Early 1800s
Pyjamas/Pajamas	Hindi payjamah ("leg coverings")	Relaxed sleeping garments	1800s
Shampoo	Hindi champo	Originally massage, now liquid for washing hair	1700s
Thug	Hindi thag ("swindler" or "bandit")	A vicious offender	Early 1800s
Veranda/Verandah	Possibly Portuguese varanda, though Hindi has comparable varanda	A roofed outdoor space or walkway	Early 1700s
Yoga	Sanskrit ("binding" or "unity")	Spiritual practices involving contemplation, breath regulation, and bodily positions; also exercise methods	1800s

Hinglish, as a code-mixed speech of Hindi and English, has a set of peculiar features within its structure.

Pic. 157 – *A Detailed Comparison of Indian and British English.*

a) *Indianisms.*

INDIAN ENGLISH TERM	MEANING	BRITISH ENGLISH EQUIVALENT
prepone	to reschedule to an earlier time	bring forward / advance
updation	the process of updating	update / updating
out of station	away from one's home city	out of town / away
good name	what is your name? (polite form)	what's your name?
do the needful	do what is necessary	do what's required / take action
cousin brother / sister	male / female cousin	cousin
co-brother	brother-in-law (husband's brother)	brother-in-law
eve teasing	sexual harassment of women	sexual harassment
timepass	leisure activity / killing time	pastime
specs	eyeglasses	glasses / spectacles
revert back	to reply	reply / respond
foreign returned	someone who has returned from abroad	returned from overseas
hotel	any eating establishment	restaurant
matrimonial	marriage advertisement	marriage ad
convent educated	educated at a Christian school	privately educated

b) Grammar and Usage Variations.

FEATURE	INDIAN ENGLISH EXAMPLE	BRITISH ENGLISH EXAMPLE
PRESENT PERFECT USAGE	I am working here since 2025.	I have been working here since 2025.
PROGRESSIVE WITH STATIVE VERBS	I am having a car.	I have a car.
QUESTION FORMATION	What is your good name?	What's your name?
REDUNDANT PREPOSITIONS	discuss about	discuss
WORD ORDER	Only I went there.	I only went there.
TAG QUESTIONS	You are coming, isn't it?	You are coming, aren't you?

c) Typical Phrases and Expressions.

CONTEXT	INDIAN ENGLISH EXAMPLE	BRITISH ENGLISH EXAMPLE
MAKING REQUESTS	Kindly do the needful.	Please take the necessary action.
PHONE CONVERSATIONS	Hold the line.	Hold on.
SCHEDULING	Let's postpone the meeting.	Let's bring the meeting forward.
FAMILY RELATIONS	My cousin sister is coming.	My cousin is coming.
TRAVEL	I am out of station.	I'm out of town.
UPDATES	Please send me the updation.	Please send me the update.
POLITENESS	What is your good name?	What's your name?

d) Pronunciation Variation.

FEATURE	INDIAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
R-SOUND	Pronounced in all positions	Silent at the end of words
RHYTHM	Syllable-timed	Stress-timed
VOWEL SOUNDS	Influenced by native languages	Received Pronunciation
WORD STRESS	Often on different syllables	Standard British patterns

NOTE: Spelling in Indian English generally follows British standards.

e) Professional and Academic Applications.

CONTEXT	INDIAN ENGLISH EXAMPLE	BRITISH ENGLISH EXAMPLE
BUSINESS	Please do the needful and revert.	Please take action and respond.
EDUCATION	I have appeared for the exam.	I have taken the exam.
EMPLOYMENT	I am having 5 years experience.	I have 5 years of experience.
MEETINGS	Let's prepone to 2 PM.	Let's move it forward to 2 PM.

f) Cultural and Social Usage.

SITUATION	INDIAN ENGLISH EXAMPLE	BRITISH ENGLISH EXAMPLE
INTRODUCTIONS	What is your good name?	What's your name?
FAMILY	My co-brother is coming.	My brother-in-law is coming.
SOCIALIZING	We did timepass at the mall.	We hung around at the mall.
TRAVEL	I am going out of station.	I'm going out of town.

g) Administrative and Technical Vocabulary.

DOMAIN	INDIAN ENGLISH EXAMPLE	BRITISH ENGLISH EXAMPLE
IT/UPDATES	System updation completed.	System update completed.
SCHEDULING	Meeting preponed to 10 AM.	Meeting moved forward to 10 AM.
COMMUNICATION	Kindly revert back ASAP.	Please respond as soon as possible.
DOCUMENTATION	Submit xerox copies.	Submit photocopies.

j) Levels of Formality.

REGISTER	INDIAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
FORMAL WRITING	More ornate, elaborate	More concise, direct
BUSINESS COMMUNICATION	"Do the needful."	"Take appropriate action."
POLITENESS	Extensive use of "kindly"	"Please" or direct request
TONE	Often more formal	Can be more casual

UGANDAN ENGLISH, commonly referred to as *Uglish* (pronounced “you-glish”), is the distinctive variety of English spoken throughout Uganda. Like other regional English varieties, it has developed unique features and a local character. The grammar and phonological patterns of Uganda’s indigenous languages strongly influence English usage in the country. Given Uganda’s high linguistic diversity, listeners familiar with the region can often identify a speaker’s native language based on their accent and lexical choices. Speakers of Ugandan English also frequently adapt borrowed terms to make them sound more natural or contextually appropriate.

Pic. 158 – Notable Ugandan English (*Uglish*) Vocabulary.

UGLISH TERM	MEANING
Avail	To provide or make accessible
Beep	To place a brief call and disconnect before the recipient answers
Benching	Casually visiting someone you find romantically appealing
Bounce	To reach a location and discover someone present, or to be refused entry to an occasion
Buffalo	An individual who employs improper or unclear English expression
Bullet	An examination paper obtained illicitly in advance
Cowardise	To act fearfully or display cowardly behavior
Dirten	To soil or contaminate something
Detooother	A dental practitioner
Live sex	Engaging in sexual activity without contraceptive protection
Mazongoto	A large sleeping bed
Side dish	Someone's extramarital partner
Special	A private taxi service (considered special since shared fourteen-seat taxis represent the standard transportation method)
Vacist	A student during vacation period
Waragi	A locally produced strong gin with high alcohol content; also used mockingly to describe an intoxicated person
Wolokosso	Meaningless chatter or gossip

Linguistic characteristics of Ugandan English are defined by a set of parameters.

Pic. 159 – Key Linguistic Traits of Ugandan English.

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE(S)
PRONUNCIATION INFLUENCE	Local language phonology affects English	<i>Identifiable by native language background</i>
EUPHONIC ADAPTATION	Foreign words modified for pleasing sound	<i>Various word adaptations</i>
CREATIVE COMPOUNDING	New meanings for familiar terms	<i>"live sex," "side dish"</i>
SEMANTIC EXTENSION	Standard words given new meanings	<i>"bounce," "bullet," "special"</i>
LOCAL CULTURAL TERMS	Words reflecting Ugandan culture	<i>"waragi," "mazongoto"</i>
PROFESSIONAL ADAPTATIONS	Job titles adapted to local speech patterns	<i>"detoother" for dentist</i>

Modern linguistic analysis acknowledges NIGERIAN, PHILIPPINE, AND CREOLE ENGLISH as recognized forms of global English. Yet standard geographic taxonomies frequently mask considerable internal heterogeneity. Even in comparatively compact or territorially limited communities, English demonstrates marked variation across speaker populations and discourse modes.

Pic. 160 – Nigerian, Philippine, and Creole English vs Received Pronunciation (RP).

a) Pronunciation Patterns.

FEATURE	NIGERIAN ENGLISH	PHILIPPINE ENGLISH	CREOLE ENGLISH	RP (BRITISH ENGLISH)
Consonant Systems				
[f] and [v] sounds	Often replaced by [p] and [b]	Lack of fricative [f], [v]	Variable	Standard [f], [v]
[θ] and [ð] (th sounds)	Replaced by [t] and [d]	Substituted with [t] and [d]	Often [t] and [d]	Standard [θ], [ð]
[z] sound	[s] sounds become voiceless, e.g. "boys" = [bois]	Often replaced by [s]	Variable	Standard [z]
[ʒ] sound	Not present in most varieties	Often absent	Often simplified	Standard [ʒ]
Final consonants	Fewer final consonants	Simplified clusters	Often dropped	Full consonant clusters
Vowel Systems				
Vowel inventory	Fewer vowels than English	Different vowel set, e.g., "chip" = "cheap"	Simplified system	Full RP vowel system
Schwa [ə]	Limited use	General absence, replaced by full vowels	Often absent	Frequent use
Syllabic consonants	Present	Cannot take vowel function	Variable	Present

b) Grammar Variations.

FEATURE	NIGERIAN ENGLISH	PHILIPPINE ENGLISH	RP EQUIVALENT
PRONOUN REPETITION	"The man he is happy."	Not typically used	Not typically used
ZERO ARTICLE	"Ø Majority of Ø students were late."	Generally follows standard article use.	"The majority of the students were late."
POSSESSIVE THIS	"This our country, is great."	Rare or absent	"Our country is great."
SUBJECT PRONOUN ORDER	"Me and my friend were asked."	Usually follows standard order.	"My friend and I were asked."
TRANSITIVE/INTRANSITIVE	Different verb transitivity patterns	Mostly standard transitivity	Standard transitivity
AMERICAN INFLUENCE	N/A	Shares vocabulary with American English	N/A
BRITISH VOCABULARY PREFERENCES	N/A	Prefers British vocabulary	Standard British patterns
SPANISH INFLUENCE	N/A	Spanish-derived terms, false friends	N/A
NO SPANISH INFLUENCE	N/A	Limited/no Spanish influence in some regions	Some historical adoptions
LOCAL ADAPTATIONS	N/A	Distinctive features from native languages	Standard British patterns

c) Vocabulary Variation.

VARIETY	TERM	RP/STANDARD ENGLISH	USAGE / CONTEXT	ORIGIN / REGION
NIGERIAN ENGLISH	Motor park	Bus station	Transportation	—
NIGERIAN ENGLISH	Go-slow	Traffic jam	Traffic	—
NIGERIAN ENGLISH	Off your light	Turn off/switch off light	Instructions	—
NIGERIAN ENGLISH	Flash me	Give me a missed call	Communication	—
NIGERIAN ENGLISH	Senior brother	Older brother	Family relations	—
NIGERIAN ENGLISH	Okada	Motorcycle taxi	Transportation	—
NIGERIAN ENGLISH	Danfo	Minibus	Public transport	—
NIGERIAN ENGLISH	Pepper	Chili / hot pepper	Food	—
PHILIPPINE ENGLISH	Comfort room (CR)	Toilet / bathroom	Public facilities	—
PHILIPPINE ENGLISH	Ref	Refrigerator	Household	—
PHILIPPINE ENGLISH	Aircon	Air conditioning	Climate control	—
PHILIPPINE ENGLISH	Jeepney	Public utility vehicle	Transportation	—
PHILIPPINE ENGLISH	Barangay	Village / district	Administrative	—
PHILIPPINE ENGLISH	Salvage	Summary execution	False friend from Spanish	—
PHILIPPINE ENGLISH	Viand	Food dish/meal	Spanish-derived	—
CREOLE ENGLISH	Nyam	Eat	—	Caribbean
CREOLE ENGLISH	Irie	Good/fine	—	Jamaican
CREOLE ENGLISH	Lime	Hang out socially	—	Caribbean
CREOLE ENGLISH	Vex	Angry	—	Caribbean
CREOLE ENGLISH	Small small	Gradually / little by little	—	West African
CREOLE ENGLISH	Palaver	Trouble/argument	—	West African

English has thus become a worldwide language with numerous recognized branches, “world Englishes”, including British, American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Indian, Nigerian, Philippine, and Ugandan English, as well as various Creole forms. Each carries distinctive imprints from colonial history, contact with local languages, and cultural practices. The varieties develop through parallel mechanisms: pronunciation shifts via simplified phonetics and altered rhythm; vocabulary growth through indigenous borrowings and semantic extensions of existing words; and grammatical modification shaped by substrate-language patterns. Despite their differences, world Englishes remain mutually comprehensible, enabling cross-border communication without erasing regional character. These varieties are increasingly setting their own standards rather than copying British or American norms. World Englishes show the capacity to adapt and innovate.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Task 1: Create a digital timeline showing the historical succession of *lingua francas* from Ancient Greek to Modern English. Include: a) key dates and periods; b) major empires/powers; c) reasons for linguistic dominance; d) events that caused the decline; e) visual elements (maps, flags, cultural symbols).

Task 2: Listen to audio recordings of different English varieties (British, American, Australian, New Zealand, Indian, Nigerian, Philippine, Ugandan) and: a) identify the variety; b) list 3 distinctive features (pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar); c) match phrases to their correct variety.

Task 3: Analyze social media posts, emails, or text messages from different English-speaking regions: a) identify variety-specific features; b) note the influence of digital communication; c) discuss how technology affects language evolution; d) create a presentation on findings.

Task 4: Research and present on Caribbean Creole expressions: *nyam, irie, lime, vex, small small, palaver*. Create skits using these terms. Explain historical origins. Compare with standard English.

Task 5: How will digital communication affect English varieties? Potential new varieties are emerging. Role of AI and translation technology. Whether varieties will converge or diverge?

THE TOPICS FOR SELF-STUDY AND REPORTS:

1. Languages that have historically served as shared means of communication across different peoples and cultures.
2. The distinction between communities where English is a native tongue and those where it functions as an official or widely used second language.
3. The rise and reach of English as the world’s dominant shared language.

4. Regional speech varieties across the United States, including General American, the dialects of the North Central and South-Central regions, Eastern New England, New York City, the Middle Atlantic states, and others.
5. The distinctive regional and social varieties of English spoken across Australia.
6. The particular forms of English that have developed within local communities throughout New Zealand.

SKILL-BUILDING SESSIONS



TUTORIAL 1. PROTO-GERMANIC AND OLD ENGLISH PHONOLOGY.

ASSIGNMENT 1:

Explain the consonant correspondences between the words from Germanic and other Indo-European languages. Base your explanation on Grimm's and Verner's laws.

- Ukr приятель – E friend
- Lat gena – OE cin (E chin)
- Sanscr bhedami – OE bītan (E bite)
- Ukr піна – OE fām (E foam)
- Greek gune – OE cwēn (woman)
- Ukr лютий – OE lyper (vile)
- Ukr колода – OE holt (wood)
- Greek plotos (swimming) – OE flōd (stream, river)
- Lat status – OE stæp (shore)
- Sanscr. dhavati (текти) – E. dew
- Lat rectus – OE riht (E right)
- Lat ventus – OE wind
- Lat edere – OE etan (E eat)
- Lat frater – OE brōþor
- Lat satis – OE sæd (full, satisfied)

ASSIGNMENT 2:

Sort out the following words into those of Germanic and non-Germanic origin:

Tooth, dental; canine, hound; foot, pedal, pedestrian; hearty, cordial; decade, decimals, ten; agnostic, know; twin, double.

GERMANIC	NON-GERMANIC

ASSIGNMENT 3:

Explain the difference between root vowels in Gothic and OE words:

Gt. langiza – OE lenȝ(i)ra (NE longer);

Gt sandian – OE send(i)an (NE send);

Gt laibian – OE læfan (NE leave);

Gt. fullian – OE fyll(i)an (NE fill).

ASSIGNMENT 4:

*Read the following Old English words, paying attention to what sounds the letters **f**, **þ** (**ð**), **s**, and **ȝ** denote:*

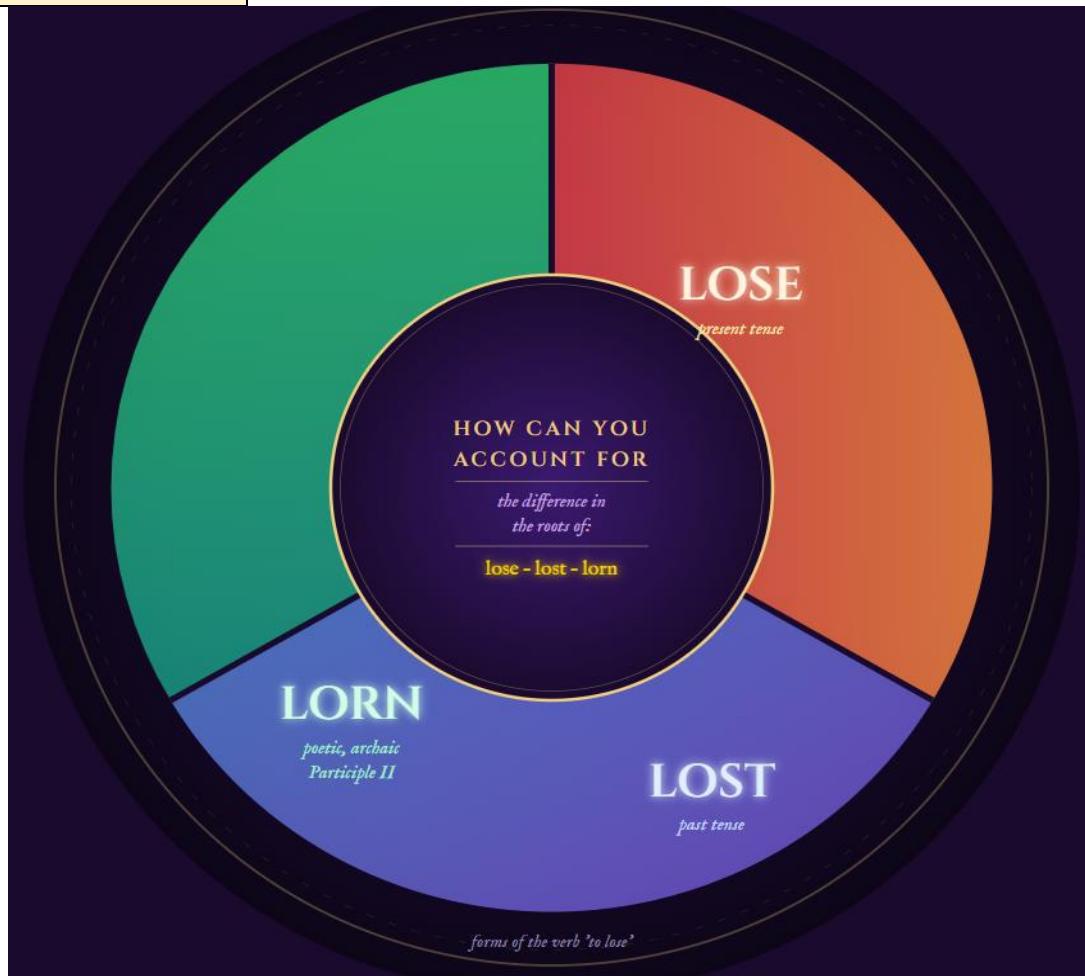
hæfde, faran, zefaran, Norð, oðer, ðanne, sǣ, cēosan, wisse, secȝan, ȝod, ȝēre, lanȝ, lauȝ, ȝretan, ȝif.

ASSIGNMENT 5:

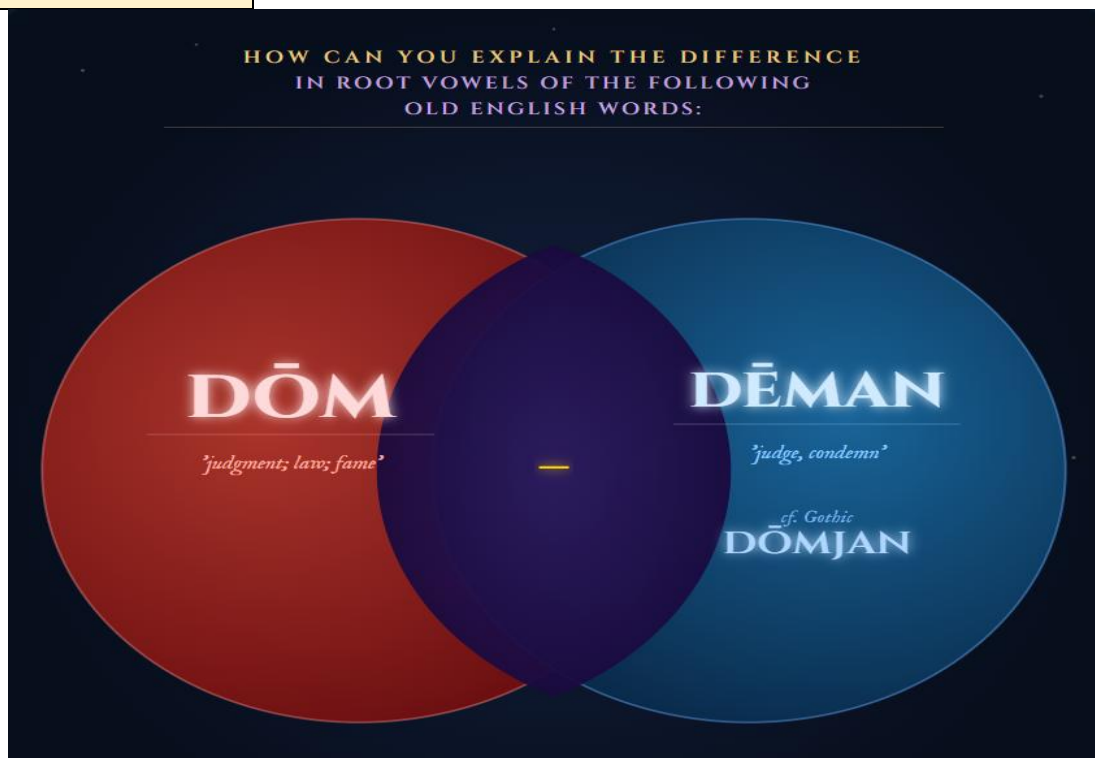
Explain phonetic changes in the following pairs of words:

- Gt maiza – OE mara (E more)
- Gt kunþian – OE cyþan (“in form”)
- Gt dauþs – OE dēad (E dead)
- Gt saljan – OE sellan (E sell)
- OHG isarn – OE īren (E iron)
- Gt hausjan – OE hīeren (E hear)
- O Scand skaft – OE sceaft (E shaft)
- Goth ains – OE ān (E one)
- Goth munþs – OE mūþ (E mouth)
- Goth haldan – OE healdan (E hold)
- Goth wōpjan – OE wēpan (E weep)
- Goth haims – OE hām (E home)

ASSIGNMENT 6:



ASSIGNMENT 7:



ASSIGNMENT 8:

Give Modern English equivalents of the following Old English words.

dæg, fisc, mæzden, miht, ecz, zōd, cyninz, hearm, maniz, sculan, zeard, zardenian, cnāwan, mōdor, ofer.

OE	ModE

TUTORIAL 2. MIDDLE ENGLISH CHANGES OF SOUNDS AND SPELLING.

ASSIGNMENT 1:

Read the following Middle English words:

ME deep, mouse, comen, child, night, brought, snow, cow, hous, blood, delite, see, pound, monk, lawe, what, thief.

ASSIGNMENT 2:

Explain the changes in spelling and pronunciation of the following words:

- OE hlāf > ME loof (E loaf)
- OE ȝōd > ME good
- OE rād > ME rood (E road)
- OE hrēad > ME rede (E. reed)
- OE fȳr > ME fir, fer, fuir
- OE clāne > ME clene (E clean)
- OE heofon > ME heaven
- enOE hyll > ME hill, hell, hull
- OE lufian > ME loven
- OE secan > ME seken (E seek)

ASSIGNMENT 3:

Show the possible changes in spelling and pronunciation of the following Old English words in Middle English:

dæȝ, hrōf, cniht, tæcan, nutu, healf, ȝrindan, nēodian, dēoplic, nū, bōc, cild, cēpan, tōþ, þancian, ȝlæd, scēap, hrinz, baþian, hūs.

OE	ME

ASSIGNMENT 4:

Find the length of the stressed vowels in the following words in the Middle English period:

climben, children, tale, baken, nose, finden, theft, hope, wisdom, behind.

ASSIGNMENT 5:

*How can you account for differences in spelling and in pronunciation of the words **merry**, **busy**, **evil**, that all developed from OE words with the same letter **y**, and **sleeve** and **mice** that both developed from the OE words with the letter **ȳ**?*

ASSIGNMENT 6:

Supply some examples of words whose pronunciation does not correspond to their spelling as a consequence of dialect differences in ME.

TUTORIAL 3. NEW ENGLISH CHANGES OF SOUNDS AND SPELLING.

ASSIGNMENT 1:

*Explain the differences in spelling and pronunciation in the following words:
done, some, go, love, home, son.*

ASSIGNMENT 2:

*Why is the letter 'a' read [æ] in **back, cat**; [eɪ] in **name, make**; [ɑ:] in **farm, cast, half**; [ɛə] in **mare**?*

ASSIGNMENT 3:

*Why is 'ou' read as [ʌv] in **house, mouse**; [a] in **enough**; [u:] in **soup, group**?*

ASSIGNMENT 4:

*Why is 'ow' read [ʌv] in **brown, town, now** and [əv] in **blow, show, snow**?*

ASSIGNMENT 5:

*Why do we read digraph 'oa' as [əv] in **boat, coat, road**, and as [ɔ:] in **oar, board, hoarse**?*

ASSIGNMENT 6:

*What are the reasons for the spelling differences of the following homophones:
son – sun; see – sea; vein – vain; main – mane; flour – flower; law – lore; root
– rout; rode – road? Were these words homophones in Middle English?*

ASSIGNMENT 7:

*Explain the sounds the letters **x, c, g, s, th, f** denote in the following words:*

oxen – axes – example; exercise – examine – exact – exist; mercy – copper – special; good – again – general – change – regime; son – busy – wisdom – mouse – east; thou sand – the; of – fair.

ASSIGNMENT 8:

Explain why there are silent letters in the following words:

late, wrong, bomb, course, honour, whole, pneumonia, thumb (OE puma), delight (ME delite), limb (OE lim).

ASSIGNMENT 9:

Explain the difference in spelling and pronunciation of the following words which had the same root in OE:

- 1) English good from OE. *Ʒōd* >
- 2) English gospel from OE. *Ʒōdspele* >
- 3) English dear from OE. *dēor* >
- 4) English darling from OE. *dēorlinƷ* >

ASSIGNMENT 10:

*When and why do we read **c**, **sc**, **s**, **ss** as [ʃ], **s** as [ʒ] and **x** as [kʃ]?*

ASSIGNMENT 11:

*Why is **th** read as [θ] in most words but [ð] in some, and [t] in a few like Thames and Thomas?*

TUTORIAL 4. OVERVIEW OF CHANGES OF SOUNDS AND SPELLING.

ASSIGNMENT 1:

Explain in what way short monophthongs developed into diphthongs in the words:

OE talu, hopa, stolen > E tale, hope, stolen.

ASSIGNMENT 2:

*Explain why the letter e is pronounced differently in the words **bed, he, here,** and **there.***

ASSIGNMENT 3:

Is it possible to prove that the following words developed from the same root:

deep – depth; husband – house; sheep – shepherd; thief – theft?

ASSIGNMENT 4:

When and why don't we read the letter e at the end of an English word?

ASSIGNMENT 5:

*Why is **h** mute in **hour, honest, shepherd, forehead, rhyme, rheumatism, Rhine, Rhone?***

ASSIGNMENT 6:

*Why is **ch** read [tʃ] (as in **chair, chalk**), [k] (as in **character**), [ʃ] (as in **machine**) and [dʒ] (in **sandwich**)?*

ASSIGNMENT 7:

How the words below developed in ME and NE (spelling and pronunciation)?

OE cyninȝ > _____

OE man > _____

OE dēor > _____

OE scēap > _____

OE swȳn > _____

OE twentiȝ > _____

OE hē > _____

OE þæt > _____

OE wæs > _____

OE fyrst > _____

OE lȳtle > _____

OE hlāford > _____

OE sǣde > _____

OE sǣ > _____

OE smæl > _____

OE dūst > _____

OE metan > _____

OE hund > _____

OE cēap > _____

OE hwæt > _____

TUTORIAL 5. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOME PARTS OF SPEECH. *THE NOUN, ADJECTIVE, ADVERB, NUMERAL, PRONOUN.*

ASSIGNMENT 1:

Did Old English belong to analytical or synthetic languages? Supply examples to prove your answer.

ASSIGNMENT 2:

Trace the development of the noun case and number categories throughout history.

ASSIGNMENT 3:

Enumerate the sources of Modern English noun plural forms.

ASSIGNMENT 4:

*If **fisc** and **hund** 'dog' are in the same class as **stan**, i.e., get the same endings, how would you say 'of the (one) fish', 'to the (one) fish', 'the dogs' (subject), and 'for the dogs' in Old English? How would you say 'the sheep' (plural subject)?*

ASSIGNMENT 5:

*Read the following phrases and sentences in Old English. Can you define the number and cases in which the word **cyninȝ** is used?*

- Se cyninȝ ȝeaf þāem eorl þone māþm (The king gave the count the treasure).
- Se eorl ȝesurmode þone cyninȝ (The count obeyed the king.).
- Se cyninȝes māþm (The king's treasure).
- Hīe ȝefuhton wiþ þāem cyninȝe (They fought with the king).
- Hīe hæfdon twēȝen cyninȝas (They had two kings).

- Se eorl 3iersummode cynin3as twē3en (People obeyed two kings).
- Ɓis hūs is se cynin3a tūn (This house is the estate of the kings).
- Hīe 3efuhton wip twæm cynin3um (They fought with two kings).

ASSIGNMENT 6:

How much further do you think this process of inflectional simplification will go? Can we get rid of irregular plurals (e.g. feet, children) or non-native plurals (e.g. criteria, indices)? Can we get rid of the apostrophe-s? Are there varieties of English where this happens already? If English is simplified, what will be the advantages and for whom?

ASSIGNMENT 7:

Enumerate the differences between Old English and modern English personal pronouns. Which one seems simpler and why?

ASSIGNMENT 8:

Find the pronouns in the following Middle English sentences and explain their grammatical categories. What changes did they undergo compared to Old English pronouns?

- For I defye the seurete and the bond
Which that thou seist that I have maad to thee
- And in this wise thise lordes, alle and some,
Been on the Sonday to the citee come

ASSIGNMENT 9:

*How can you account for the fact that the form **I** is used 3,763 times in G. Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, while the form **ich** is used only 3 times?*

ASSIGNMENT 10:

*Look through any play by Shakespeare and explain why the forms **thou** and **you** co-existed within the same context.*

ASSIGNMENT 11:

What is the correlation between the development of articles, the history of pronouns, and the decline of adjectival declensions?

TUTORIAL 6. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOME PARTS OF SPEECH. *THE VERB. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH SYNTAX.*

ASSIGNMENT 1:

*Which part of speech has lost the greatest number of grammatical categories?
Which part of speech has acquired new categories?*

ASSIGNMENT 2:

Could we name the Old English verb system simpler or more difficult than it is today? Prove your point of view.

ASSIGNMENT 3:

Why cannot modern regular and irregular verbs be referred to as strong and weak?

ASSIGNMENT 4:

Name the traces of Old English preterit-present verbs in Modern English modal verbs.

ASSIGNMENT 5:

Prove that Old English non-finite forms of the verb had more nominal characteristics than in Modern English.

ASSIGNMENT 6:

*Old forms of participles have survived in some contexts. Where might you hear:
drunken as opposed to **drunk**, **molten** as opposed to **melted**, **stricken** as opposed to **struck**, **shrunk** as opposed to **shrunk**?*

ASSIGNMENT 7:

A common way to form a negative statement in the past is to use more than one negative word. In what varieties of today's English are you more likely to meet double or multiple negatives? What are the social implications of using double or multiple negatives? Is there any linguistic reason why they are a problem (consider whether communication is impaired or made more effective)?

ASSIGNMENT 8:

Comment on the features of Old English syntax as seen in the following examples:

- Norþan snȳwde (snȳwian – to snow).
- īc nāht sinzan ne cūðe (cūðe – could).
- þā hē þær tō zefaran wæs, þā ēodon hīe tō hīora scipum (faran – travel, ēodon – went).
- þā Finnas, him þuhte, and þā Beormas spræcon neah ān zepēode (Beormas – the Permians, zepēod – language).

ASSIGNMENT 9:

What developments in English syntax can be illustrated by the following quotations from Middle English and Early New English texts:

- “Madam, my interpreter, what says she? Where do you look?”
- “Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck. And yet, methinks, I have astronomy...”
- “How likes you this play, my lord?”

ASSIGNMENT 10:

Speak on the correlation of phonetic, morphological, and syntactic changes throughout the history of English.

TUTORIAL 7. OLD ENGLISH SYNTAX. ANALYSIS OF OLD ENGLISH TEXTS.

ASSIGNMENT 1:

Study the words below and translate the given text from Old English into Modern English:

THE VOYAGES OF OHTHERE

1. Ōhthēre sǣde his hlāforde, Ælfrēde cyninze, þæt hē ealra Norðmanna norþmest būde.

2. Hē cwæð þæt hē būde on þæm lande norþweardum wiþ þā Westsǣ.

3. Hē sǣde þēah þæt þæt land sīe swīþe lanȝ norþ þonan; ac hit is eal wēste, būton on fēawum stōwum stycce-mǣlum wīciað Finnas, on huntoðe on wintra and on sumera on fīscape be þære sǣ.

4. þa for hē norþryhte be þæm lande.

5. Hē sǣde þæt Norðmanna land wære swīþe lanȝ and swīþe smæl.

6. Eal þæt his man aþer oððe ettan oððe erian mæz, þæt lið wið ða sǣ; and þæt is þēah on sumum stōwum swīþe clūdiȝ; and liczað wilda mōras wið eastan and wið uppon emnlanȝe þǣm bynum lande.

7. On þǣm mōrum eardiað Finnas.

8. And þæt byne land is ēastweard bradost, and symle swā norðor swā smælre.

9. Eastweard hit mæz bion syxtiȝ mīla brad, oððe hwene bradre, and middeweard þritiȝ oððe bradre; and norðeweard hē cwæð, þær hit smalost wære, þæt hit mihte beon þreora mīla brad to þǣm more; and se mōr syþþan, on sumum stowum, swā brad swā man mæz in twam wucum oferferan; and on sumum stowum swā brad swā man mæz on syx dazum oferferan.

10. Hē wæs mid þǣm fyrstum mannum on þǣm lande. Næfde hē þēah mā ðonne twentiȝ hrȳðera and twentiȝ scēapa and twentiȝ swȳna; and þæt lȳtle þæt hē erede, hē erede mid horsan.

11. Hē hæfde þā ȝȳt, ðā hē þone cyninge sōhte, tamra dēora unbebohtra syx hund. þā dēor hī hātað hrānas; þāra wæron syx; ðā bēoð swȳðe dȳre mid Finnum, forðæm hȳ fōð þā wildan hrānas mid.

WORD STOCK:

1. ac – E. ‘but’.
2. aþer... oððe... – E. ‘either... or...’.
3. be – E. ‘by’.
4. byne, bynum – *adj.* E. ‘cultivated’.
5. brad, bradre, bradost – *adj.* from “brad” (E. ‘broad, wide’).
6. būde – *v.*, from ‘būan’, *anomal.* (E. ‘to live’).
7. cyninge – *n., m., a* – stem ‘cyning’.
8. clūdiȝ – *adj.* rocky, hilly (from ‘clūd’, E. ‘rock, hill’).
9. cwæð – *v.* from ‘cweðan’, *strong* (E. ‘to say’).
10. ealra – from ‘eal’.
11. eardiað – *v.*, from ‘eardian’ (E. ‘dwell, inhibit’).
12. emnlanȝe = efenlanȝe – *prep.* ‘along’.
13. erian – E. ‘to plough’.
14. ettan – E. ‘to graze’.
15. fiscepe – *v.* from ‘fiscian’.
16. for – *v.*, *preterite sing.* from ‘faran’ (E. set for, travel, go).
17. hlāforde – *n., m., a* – stem ‘hlāford’ (E. ‘lord, master’).
18. hrānas *n., m., a*-stem ‘hrān’ (reindeer)
19. hryðer – *n. n.* (E. cow, cattle)
20. huntode – *v.* from “huntian”.
21. hwene – *adv* ‘somewhat, a little’ (*instr.* of ‘hwon’).
22. lið, licȝað – from ‘licȝean’ (E. ‘to lie, to rest’).
23. middeward – from ‘midd’ (E. ‘middle, placed between’).
24. mīla – *n.* from ‘mīl’.
25. mōras, mōre – *n.* from ‘mōr’ (E. ‘moor, waste land’).
26. norþwardum – *adj. n.* of ‘norþward’ (E. ‘northern’).
27. oððe – *conj.*, E. ‘or’.
28. oferferan – E. ‘to pass, cross, go over; go through; come across’.
29. sǣ – *n., fem., i* – stem.
30. sǣde – *v.*, from ‘secȝan’ [‘seuan’].
31. sīe – *Pres. Subj.* of ‘bēon’.
32. symle = simbles – E. ‘ever, always’.
33. syppan – E. ‘afterwards, since, after’.
34. smæl, smæle, smalost – *adj.* (E. ‘small, little, not great; narrow, not broad’).
35. sōhte – from ‘sēcan’ (E. seek)

36. stycce-mælum [ˈstyˈɛ] – E. ‘here and there’.
37. stōwum – from ‘stōw’ *fem.* (-e/-a) (E. ‘a place, spot, locality, site’).
38. sumera – *n., m., u* – stem, from ‘sumor’.
39. swā – *adv., rel. pron.* ‘so, as, while’; swā...swā... – *conj.* (E. ‘so...as...’).
40. swīpe – E. ‘very’.
41. sumum – from ‘sum’.
42. þā – *fem.*, of *sē, sēo, þæt*.
43. þēah – E. ‘though’.
44. þære – *fem., gen. or dat. sing.* of ‘sē, sēo, þæt’.
45. þonan – E. ‘from there’.
46. unbebohra – E. ‘unsold’.
47. wēste – E. ‘uninhabited’.
48. wīciað – from ‘wīcian’ [ˈwīˈias], *verb weak* (E. ‘to live’).
49. wintra – *n., m., u* – stem, from ‘winter’.
50. wucum – *n.* from ‘wucu’ (E. ‘week’).

ASSIGNMENT 2:

*Comment on the sound value of the OE fricatives **þ, ð, s, f** in the initial, medial, and final positions. Find examples in the text.*

ASSIGNMENT 3:

Find all the verbs in the text and comment on their principal forms. Which of them were strong and which ones were weak?

ASSIGNMENT 4:

Speak on the Moods used in the text. Which uses differ from today’s ones?

ASSIGNMENT 5:

Comment on the morphological structure of the following words:

hlāford, Norðmanna, norþweardum, Westsæ, ēastweard, middweard.

ASSIGNMENT 6:

Comment on the forms of the adjectives:

bradra(e), smælre, wildan, tamra, smalost.

Define the function of these adjectives in the sentences.

ASSIGNMENT 7:

Analyse all the numerals and nouns that denote animals. What kind of changes have they undergone?

ASSIGNMENT 8:

Which types of word connections are used in the text? In what way are the relations between the words of the sentence expressed? Comment on word order in the sentences of the text.

TUTORIAL 8. MIDDLE ENGLISH SYNTAX. ANALYSIS OF TEXTS IN MIDDLE ENGLISH.

ASSIGNMENT 1:

*Listen to the text of the Prologue from **The Canterbury Tales** by Geoffrey Chaucer and try to understand the gist of it. In small groups discuss what changes can be expected in the text below, knowing that it belongs to the ME period.*

	ME TEXT	TRANSLATION
1	Whan that aprill with his shoures soote	When April with its sweet showers
2	The droghte of march hath perced to the roote,	has pierced the drought of March to the root,
3	And bathed every veyne in swich licour	and bathed every vein in such liquor
4	Of which vertu engendred is the flour;	from whose power the flower is engendered;
5	Whan zephirus eek with his sweete breeth	when Zephyr [the west wind] also, with his sweet breath
6	Inspired hath in every holt and heeth	has blown [into life] in every wood and heath
7	Tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne	the tender crops, and the young sun
8	Hath in the ram his halve cours yronne,	has run his half-course in the sign of the Ram [Aries],
9	And smale foweles maken melodye,	and small fowls make melody,
10	That slepen al the nyght with open ye	who sleep all night with open eye
11	(so priketh hem nature in hir corages);	(so Nature stimulates them in their hearts)
12	Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,	Then people long to go on pilgrimages,

13	And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,	and palmers [pilgrims carrying palm leaves] to seek strange coastlines,
14	To ferne halwes, knowthe in sondry londes.	to distant saints [holy places], known in various lands.

ASSIGNMENT 2:

*Read the following ME text from **The Canterbury Tales** by Geoffrey Chaucer, think about the way some words were pronounced and try to explain **why**. Translate the text into Modern English.*

	ME TEXT	TRANSLATION
1	A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also,	
2	That unto logyk hadde longe ygo.	
3	As leene was his hors as is a rake,	
4	And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,	
5	But looked holwe and therto sobrelly.	
6	Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy,	
7	For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,	
8	Ne was so worldly for to have office,	
9	For hym was levere have at his beddes heed	
10	Twenty books, clad in blak or reed,	
11	Of Aristotle and his philosophie,	
12	Than robes riche, or fithle, or gay sautrie.	

13	But al be that he was a pholosophre,	
14	Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;	
15	But al that he myghte of his freendes hente,	
16	On books and his lernynge he it spente,	
17	And bisily gan for the soules preye	
18	Of hem that yaf hym wherewith to scoleye.	
19	Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede,	
20	Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,	
21	And that was seyde in forme and reverence,	
22	And short and quyke, and ful of hy sentence.	
23	Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche,	
24	And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.	

NOTES:

al be that – NE ‘albeit’;

benefice – ecclesiastic living;

clerk – university student, scholar;

courtepy – short coat, jacket;

gan ... preye – ‘prayed’;

holwe – emaciated;

hym was levere – ‘he would rather’, ‘it was more pleasant for him’;

office – secular employment, function;

psaltry – a harp-like instrument;

quyk – alive, lively, vivid; reverence – dignity, respect;

scoleye – study, attend the schools of the university;

sentence – meaning, saying; decision, command;

sobrelly – seriously, gravely;

undertake – affirm, declare;

unto logyk hadde longe ygo – ‘had long since proceeded to the study of logic’;

yaf – v. past, ‘gave’.

ASSIGNMENT 3:

Analyze the text, focusing on the spelling differences.

ASSIGNMENT 4:

Give examples of borrowings from French and Scandinavian.

ASSIGNMENT 5:

Point out instances of the use of the indefinite article in the text.

ASSIGNMENT 6:

Explain the use of the word combination “at his beddes heed”.

ASSIGNMENT 7:

Find the infinitives and explain their structure and function.

ASSIGNMENT 8:

Comment on the analytical forms of the verb that are used in both extracts.

ASSIGNMENT 9:

Find the cases of inversion and explain their use.

ASSIGNMENT 10:

Prove that impersonal sentences were still used in Middle English.

TUTORIAL 9. DIALECTS ON THE TERRITORY OF BRITAIN. NATIONAL VARIANTS OF ENGLISH.

ASSIGNMENT 1:

*Dunhill and Bredon Hill are placenames, and both **dun** and **bre** mean ‘hill’ in Celtic. What might have happened?*

ASSIGNMENT 2:

Toponymic analysis and cross-linguistic comparison.

The Welsh place name

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch

translates into English as: “*St Mary’s Church in the hollow of the white hazel near a rapid whirlpool and the church of St Tysilio by the red cave.*”

1. COMPOUNDING AND DESCRIPTIVE NAMING: The Welsh name is a single compound word encoding a detailed geographical and religious description. Identify at least two semantic fields present in the name and explain what they tell us about the principles behind early place-name formation.

2. TOPONYMIC STRUCTURE: Break the English translation into its constituent descriptive elements (geographical, religious, colour terms, etc.) and comment on how each contributes to the overall locative meaning of the name.

3. CROSS-LINGUISTIC COMPARISON: English place names frequently preserve elements from Celtic, Old English, Old Norse, and Latin. Using the translation as a guide, identify which components of the meaning could correspond to elements found in English toponymy (e.g., *-church*, *-hollow*, *-pool*) and give one real English place-name parallel for each.

4. LANGUAGE CONTACT AND BORROWING: The name contains the element *Llan-*, a Welsh word meaning “church enclosure,” which is common in Welsh toponymy but absent from English place names. What does this absence suggest about

the nature of Celtic influence on English place-name formation? Relate your answer to what you know about the Celtic substrate in English.

5. REFLECTION QUESTION: The name was partly extended in the 19th century for publicity purposes. What does this tell us about the social and non-linguistic functions that place names can serve? Can you think of a parallel phenomenon in the history of English?



ASSIGNMENT 3:

*Where in Britain has the pronunciation of the vowel [u:] in words such as **house** not undergone the changes connected with the Great Vowel Shift?*

ASSIGNMENT 4:

*When studying the historical development of pronouns, we examined the use of second-person pronouns, particularly you and thou, in Early New English. It is not the case, however, that **thou** forms have completely died out. Where in Britain can you still hear them?*

ASSIGNMENT 5:

*Where in Britain can you still hear **r** pronounced after a vowel in words like **car** and **farm** (this feature of people's speech is sometimes referred to as a '**burr**')? In what national variants is it common?*

ASSIGNMENT 6:

*Over the last few centuries, a new vowel sound [ʌ] in words such as **much**, **sun**, and **money** has developed, particularly in the accent of speakers in the London region. Where in Britain is this vowel not used? What vowel is used to replace it in words such as those above?*

ASSIGNMENT 7:

*Over the last few centuries, the vowel sound [æ] in words such as **bath**, **grass**, and **dance** has changed to [ɑ:], particularly in the accent of speakers in the London region. Where in Britain has this change not taken place? Which national variant/s does/do not follow the change?*

ASSIGNMENT 8:

The statements below were made by a Scot. What do they mean in British English?

- Ann had a bonny wee lassie last night.
- The McKingslys live next to the kirk.
- “Are you joining us for a glass of wine, Ned? – “Aye.”
- They have a wonderful view of the loch from their window.

ASSIGNMENT 9:

Make changes to the sentences so that they become more typical of Canadian English.

- Have you ever seen a Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer in the streets of this city?

- Let's meet at the Art Center.
- Most of the residents in this area have French as their first language.
- You need to have a one-dollar coin to use this vending machine.

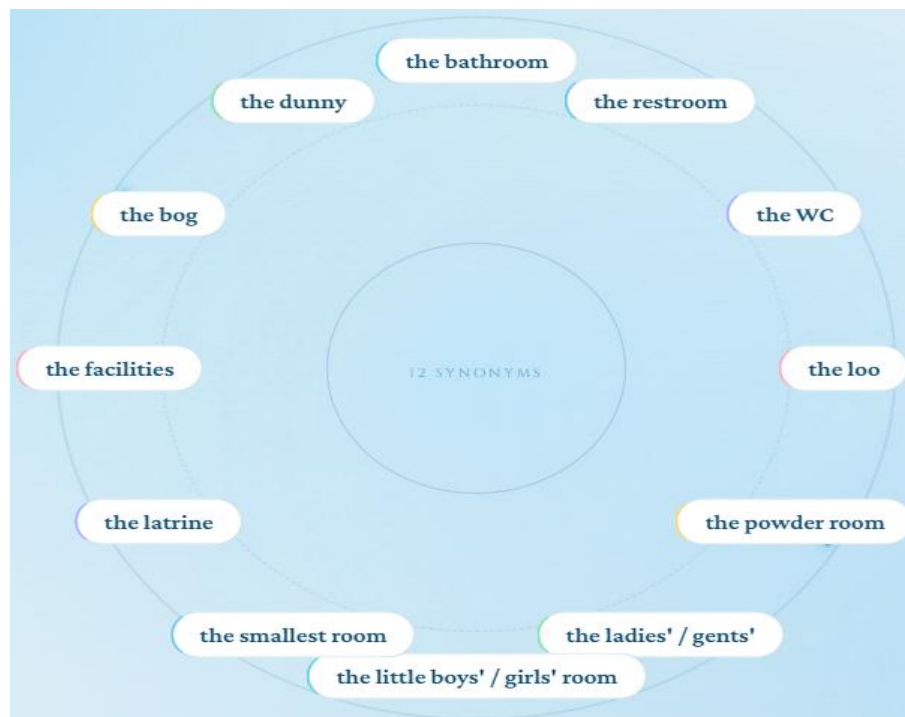
ASSIGNMENT 10:

What do you think these examples of Australian colloquialisms mean? They are all formed by abbreviating an English word that you know.

- Her ambition is to become a journo when she leaves uni.
- Tom was planning to do a bit of farming bizzo while he was in the States.
- What are you plans for this arvo?
- As our oldies had gone away for the weekend, we decided to invite our mates and have a barbie party.
- What places are you going to visit when you are in Oz?

ASSIGNMENT 11:

There are many different synonyms for toilet in English. Read the list and answer the questions.



1. Which items are specifically British?

2. *Which are American?*
3. *Which is Australian?*
4. *Which are old-fashioned and not used much anymore?*
5. *Which would you use when you're camping*

ASSIGNMENT 12:

Which variety of English might each of these statements or questions represent?

Explain your choice.

- Would you like a wee dram?
- People had to stand in long queues to see this film in the cinema.
- We got terribly bitten by mozzies at yesterday's barbie.
- That's a nice vintage chesterfield.
- As a favor to Alice, he bought her a one-way ticket and took care of her luggage.
- The police finally nabbed the miscreant.
- He wants to major in Chinese at college when he leaves high school.
- Every farmer in this country owns a ute.

APPENDIX 1

On a clear day, the island of Great Britain is plainly visible from the French shore at *Calais*, just across the strait; the *White Cliffs of Dover* stand out against the horizon, an enduring symbol of England. Britain was not always an island. Twenty thousand years ago, sea levels were roughly 100 metres lower than they are today. The North Sea did not exist; in its place lay open land.

Pic. 161. *Before the Channel: Northwestern Europe in the Ice Age.*



Both the Thames and the Rhine once flowed together into a vast river that coursed through what is now the English Channel.

Pic. 162. *Ancient River Networks of Northwest Europe, c. 20,000 BC.*



The land that once lay between England and the continent is known as *Doggerland*. It was part of Europe, a vast plain, roughly the size of Great Britain itself. Over time, it was home to tundra, then forests, rivers, marshes, and lakes. Had Doggerland survived to the present day, it would perhaps have been possible to walk from Copenhagen all the way to London.

Pic. 163. *The Landscapes of Doggerland, c. 20,000 BC.*



Today, all of it lies beneath the waves. One trace remains, however, which is a shallow sandbank still known as the *Dogger Bank*. It is from its bed that fishermen have hauled up the tusks of woolly mammoths.

Pic. 164. *The Dogger Bank Today.*



Why did all this land flood? The answer is simple – warming. Around 10,000 years ago, glaciers were melting rapidly, and sea levels were steadily rising. Then, off the coast of Norway, a massive underwater landslide triggered a tsunami estimated at around 20 metres high. *Doggerland* was finally swallowed by the sea, along with its last inhabitants. Some scholars have linked this catastrophe to the roots of the *Atlantis legend*. Britain had at last become an island, cut off from the continent. The people who had roamed that land found themselves in isolation, the first true Britons, islanders, shaped by the sea on all sides, driving on the left. One of them is known to us as *Cheddar Man*. He is approximately 9,000 years old and lived in the southwest of Britain in the very place where, thousands of years later, people would invent Cheddar cheese.

Pic. 165. *Cheddar Gorge and the First Britons.*



He lived at the very moment Britain was making its final separation from the continent. According to the latest genetic evidence, *Cheddar Man* had dark skin and strikingly bright blue eyes. He and his kinspeople were, in essence, the last humans to reach Britain on foot. They were hunter-gatherers and fishermen, and what remains of them includes remarkable ceremonial masks fashioned from red deer skulls.

Pic. 166. *Ceremonial Red Deer Mask.*



Around 4,000 BC, a new kind of people began arriving in Britain by sea, not hunters, but farmers and herders. It was a radical turning point in the island's history. For the first time, cattle farming and pottery were introduced. These were people with the skills to build great monuments.

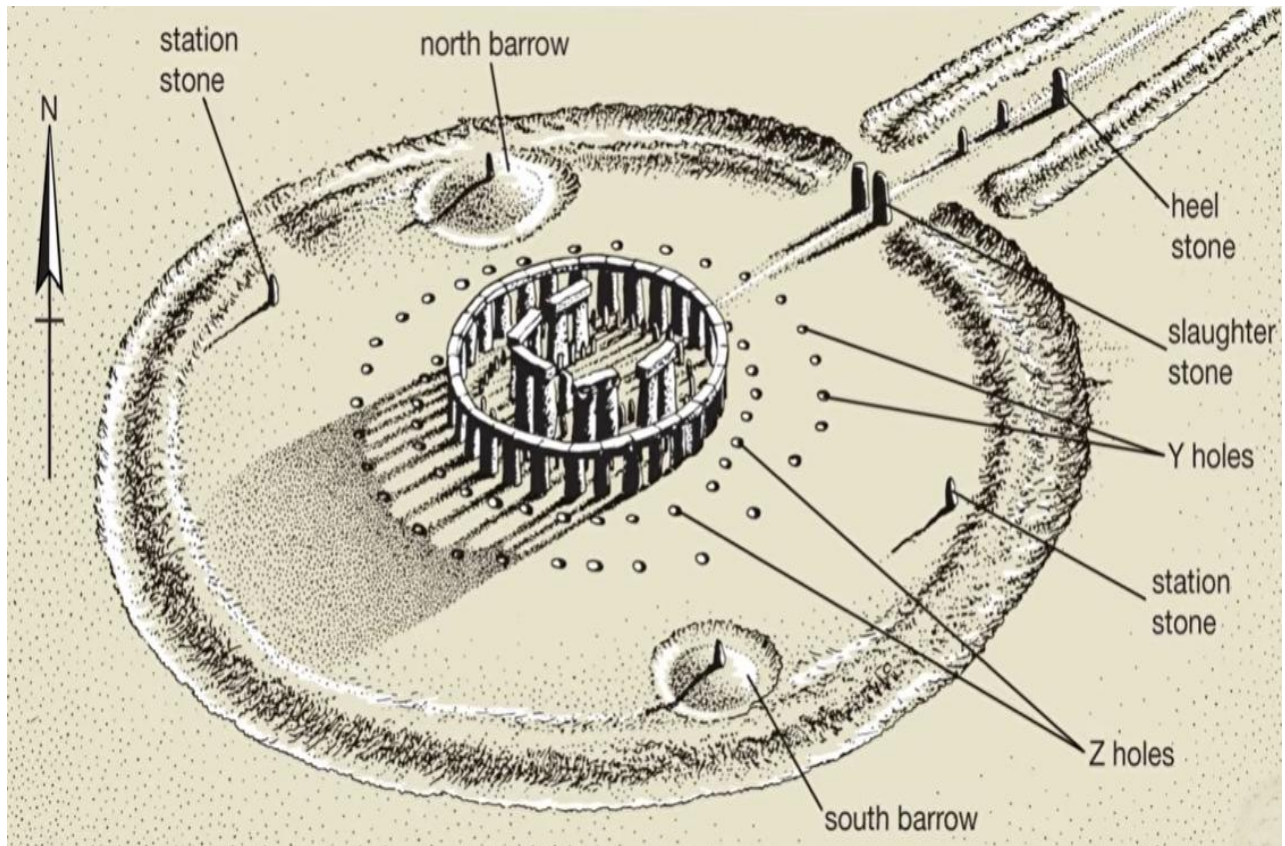
Stonehenge, a ritual centre, a solar calendar, a burial ground, was built. And it was raised at precisely the same moment that the first Egyptian pyramids were going up.

Pic. 167. *Stonehenge.*



Its stones align to mark the summer solstice on 21 June, and the winter solstice on 21 December at sunset.

Pic. 168. *Stonehenge Architecture.*



In the Middle Ages, these stones were called *Sarsen stones*, a name that implied they had been raised by some mysterious pagan foreigners. Yet genetic evidence tells a remarkable story, proving the distant ancestors and culture of these ancient builders indeed originated in the lands of present-day Turkey, and theirs was a truly pan-European culture.

These great standing stones were erected across Europe in that era (in Ireland, Malta, and throughout the continent). These Neolithic farmers arrived by sea to find one vast forest. Britain was then entirely covered in woodland. Once they settled, they set about clearing it (felling, burning, ploughing fields). And so the British landscape we know from pictures began to take shape. Today, forests cover only around 15% of Britain, and even those are mostly newly planted as no ancient woodland survives. Of this first farming population, almost nothing has come down to us. Not even river names, which ordinarily outlast everything else.

Then, around 800 BC, by which point Stonehenge had already been standing for several hundred years, uninvited newcomers began arriving in Britain, with every intention of making themselves the masters. The Celts were a formidable and ferocious people, skilled ironworkers, worshippers of rivers, marshes, and lakes, and deeply reverent of the natural world. Druids, inevitably, were among them. So was the habit of separating heads from bodies. They were among the most powerful and expansive cultures Europe had ever seen.

Picture the world in 300 BC. Alexander the Great had just died, and the dust had barely settled. Rome was not yet a superpower. And yet Celtic tribes were already running roughshod over the greater part of Europe, and had made their way to Britain.

Pic. 169. *Celtic Presence across the Continent.*



At their peak, the Celts had reached almost everywhere, from present-day Spain to present-day Turkey, from Britain to northern Italy.

Pic. 170. *Celtic Footprint across the European Continent and Further.*



They plundered Rome, ravaged the Balkans, fought in Greece, and roamed the Alps. The Greeks knew them both as Celts and as *Galatians*. The Romans called them *Gauls*. And the traces of that naming are still visible on the map today – *Gaul* in France, *Galicia* in Spain, the *Epistle to the Galatians* in the New Testament. These names have travelled a long road and are not always etymologically linked, yet they sound alike, and they all, in one way or another, lead back to the Celts.

Pic. 171. *Celtic Presence in Britain.*



The Germanic peoples called the Celts **walhaz*, meaning “foreigner” or “outsider.” It is from this root that we get *Wallonia* in Belgium, *Wales* = home of the Welsh, and *Cornwall*, which essentially means “Western Wales.” The Slavic word *Vlachs* (*volokhi*) traces the same path.

Pic. 172. *Celtic across Europe.*



Pic. 173. *Celtic across Britain (a).*



Pic. 174. *Celtic across Britain (b).*



Britain itself became one of the great heartlands of the Celtic world. How did this come about? In the first millennium BC, the western Celts reached the sea and, like the ancient peoples before them, began crossing the Channel in wooden boats.

Pic. 175. *Celtic Distribution in Europe and the Vector of Movement.*



The crossing took them anywhere from five to ten hours. Those Celts who reached the island and put down roots came to be known as *Britons*. Their Celtic neighbours called them **Pritanī*, a word most commonly interpreted as “the painted ones”, “the decorated ones”, or “the tattooed ones.”

Pic. 176. *The Etymology of the Word “Britain”.*



The language of the Britons may have sounded something like this:

Pic. 177. *Celtic Text. Transcription.*



What became of the farmers who had lived there before the Britons arrived? Most likely, they were absorbed, Celticised, and assimilated into the new culture.

The Celts wasted no time in bringing iron to Britain. This meant affordable agricultural tools and affordable weapons, and warfare on the island rose to a new level, complete with chariots. Yet the absence of any written records means that what actually

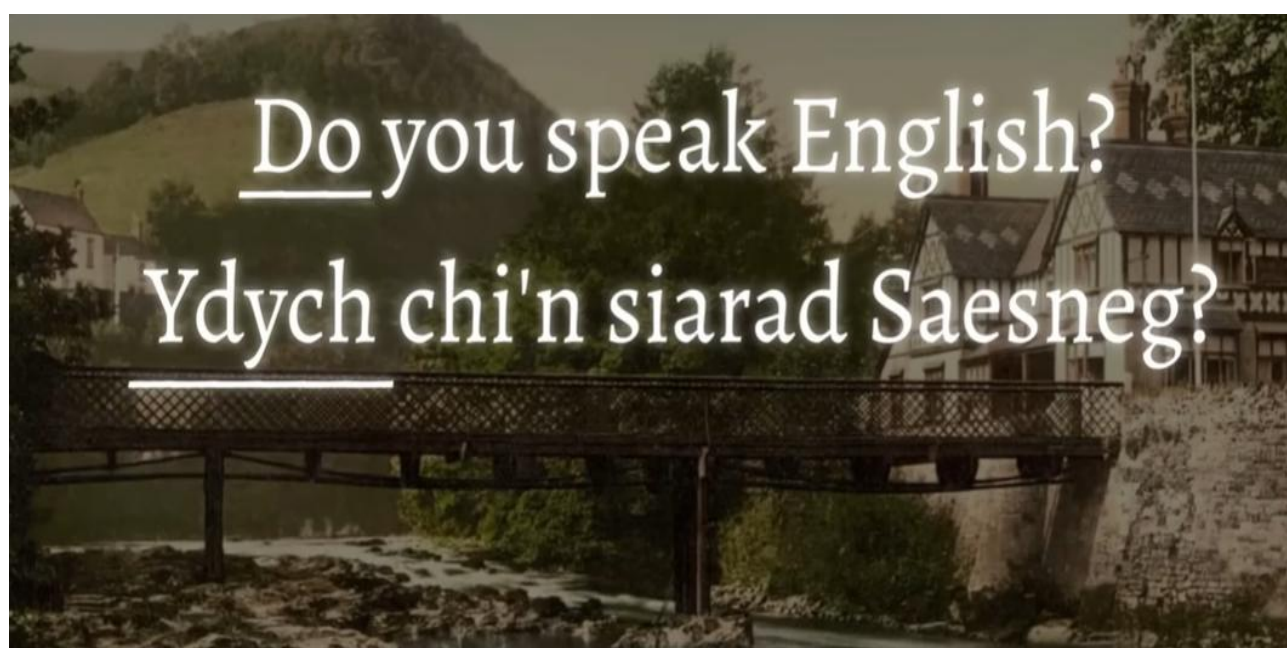
happened on the island during this period remains only dimly known to us. Few accounts have survived. They fought, they traded, and they did not build Stonehenge; they simply inherited it. When they encountered it, it is far from certain they understood its original purpose, though they clearly recognised it as a sacred place.

The Britons were the first wave of newcomers to leave lasting traces in the English language, above all in place names. *Avon* comes from the Brittonic *abona*, meaning “river.” *Thames* derives from *Tameis*, meaning “dark.” *Dover* from *Dubras*, meaning “water.” Over the centuries, Celtic words continued to filter into English by more indirect routes: *clock*, for instance, came via the Latin *clocca*, itself from the Proto-Celtic *klokkos*, meaning “bell.” Others that made the journey include *car*, *basket*, *vassal*, and *budget*.

From Scottish and Irish Gaelic came words of a more universal kind, like *trousers*, from *trubus*; *slogan*, from *slougus* and *garsman*, as well as words rooted specifically in Celtic culture: *clan*, *plaid*, *shamrock*, *whiskey*.

One of the surviving descendants of the old Brittonic language is *Welsh*. And there is a compelling theory that the English *Present Simple*, the construction that forms questions with *do*, as in *Do you speak English?*, itself entered the language under the influence of Welsh.

Pic. 178. *English Do-Pattern and the Celtic Translated Word-by-Word as Analogue* “Do you [to] speak?”



Most scholars, however, believe this construction arose independently, all the more so given that German has something loosely similar to the English usage.

Pic. 179. *Similar German Structure.*



Even the Slavic word for “cow” (*korova*) is thought to be of Celtic origin, arriving by the following chain. The original Slavic word for cattle was **govędo*, from which the modern *govyadina* (“beef”) directly descends.

Pic. 180. *The Etymological Chain of the Word “Cow”.*

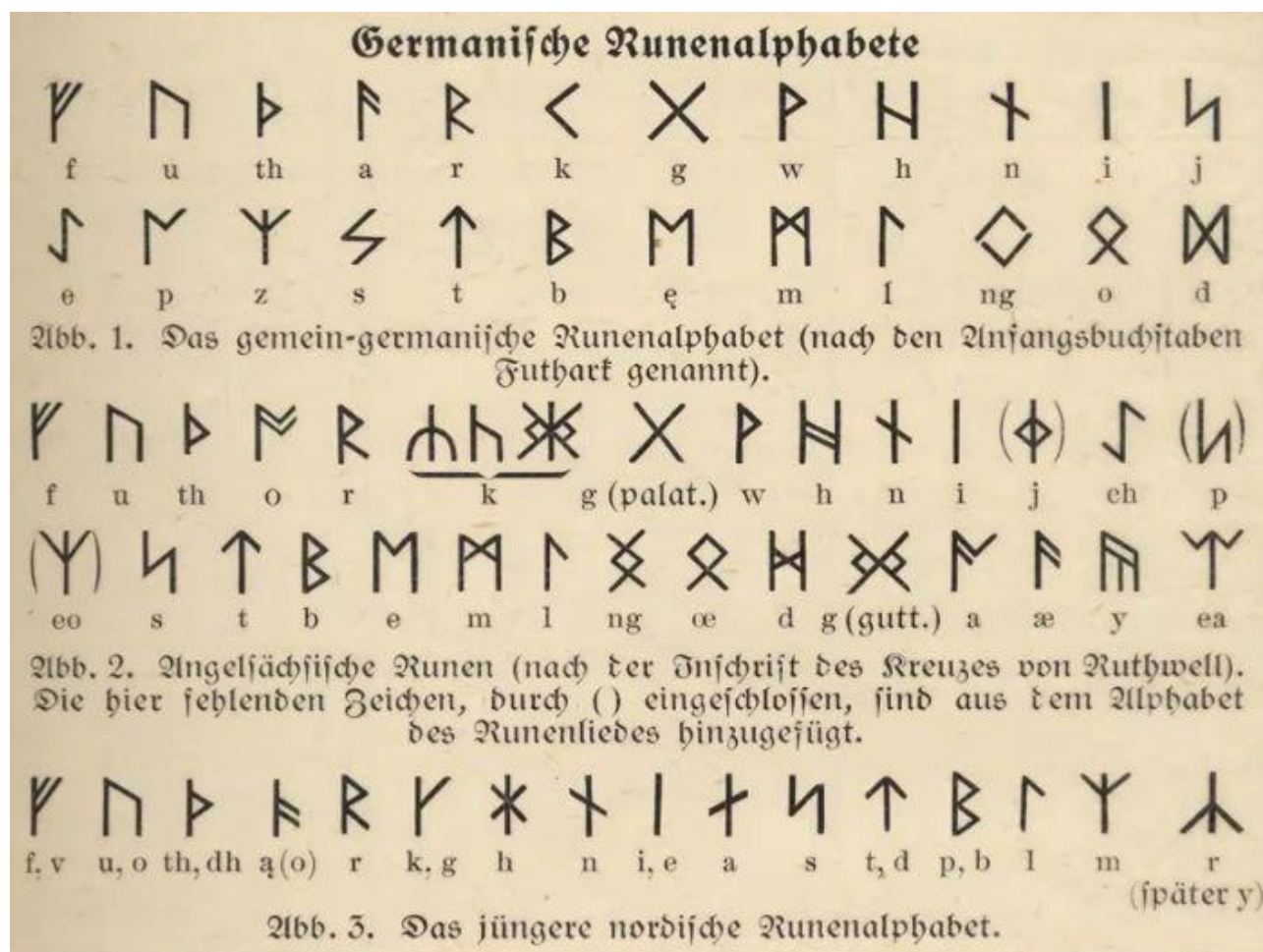


There is also a theory that London itself is a Celtic name, derived from *Londonjon* or *Londinjon*, meaning “the marshy place.”

APPENDIX 2

Runes are commonly associated with the Vikings, but they actually represent the shared writing system of all Germanic peoples, not just those from Scandinavia.

Pic. 181. *Germanic Runic Script.*



A rune is simply a letter, which means runes could be used to write ordinary words and phrases. So where did they come from? The Germanic peoples borrowed them indirectly from the Etruscans, the civilization that preceded the Roman one. The borrowing wasn't direct; it occurred through intermediate Alpine tribes living in the region, which had developed their own scripts derived from Etruscan. The Latin alphabet shares this same Etruscan root, which makes runes and Latin distant cousins. Over twelve centuries passed between the birth of the runic writing system and its eventual displacement by Latin, a long span during which runes shifted and evolved

considerably. Still, if you look closely at the shapes of individual runes, many will feel surprisingly familiar:

𐒃 (Fehu) → F

𐒅 (Tiwaz) → T

𐒇 (Raidō) → R

𐒊 (Othala) → O

𐒌 (Isa) → I

The order in the futhark is not a, b, c, but: 𐒃 – Fehu (F), 𐒆 – Uruz (U), 𐒇 – Thurisaz (Th), 𐒈 – Ansuz (A), 𐒇 – Raidō (R), 𐒋 – Kaunan (Kenaz) (K), and each rune had its own name. Some people see a word “𐒃𐒆𐒇” (*the full form “𐒃𐒆𐒇𐒌𐒃” = “fuþiz” = “vulva” (female genitalia)*) in the order of the first letters of the futhark, which is probably connected with the idea of continuation of the lineage. The original runic alphabet contained exactly 24 characters. Reading and writing runes were not a skill open to everyone. Their angular, straight-lined shapes were no accident, as runes were designed from the start to be carved rather than written with a pen, which is why they have survived to us on stone, metal, bone, and wood, engraved into rings, caskets, drinking horns, and similar objects. Parchment and paper were simply not their natural medium, though one remarkable 14th-century book written in runes has come down to us, likely created as a nostalgic tribute to the old script rather than for any practical purpose. The great Norse mythological texts, like *the Elder* and *Younger Eddas*, were composed orally and only committed to writing in the Latin alphabet. Runes were never meant for long, complex narratives. All of Scandinavian mythology reached us not through runic inscription, but through Latin letters written down centuries later. What runes were actually used for was far more modest: the names of objects, marks of ownership, brief cryptic charms, the alphabet itself, memorial tributes to the dead, and the timeless human impulse to leave one’s mark, the medieval equivalent of “*I was here.*” A vivid example survives in an unlikely place in Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, where Varangian mercenaries from the north carved runic graffiti into the marble balustrades

of the gallery. One inscription, stripped of all pretension, simply reads: “*I, Halfdan, carved these runes.*”

Pic. 182. *Runic Signs in Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.*



Despite their air of ancient mystery, runes actually appeared on the historical stage later than the Latin alphabet familiar to all of us. They may even be younger than Christianity itself, making the runic alphabet a relatively recent and, in its way, sophisticated development. Alphabetic writing, after all, is a more efficient system than either cuneiform or hieroglyphs. But an interesting fact is that, like the Old Church Slavonic alphabet, runes ultimately trace their ancestry all the way back to Egyptian hieroglyphs, arriving at the Germanic peoples through a long chain of transmission via the Phoenicians:

Pic. 183. *Evolution of Writing Systems: From Egyptian Hieroglyphs to the Latin Alphabet & Norse Runes.*



Pic. 184. *Scripts descending from Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs.*

The ABCD Family Tree

True Alphabets

Abjads

Featural Alphabets

Abugidas

Logograms

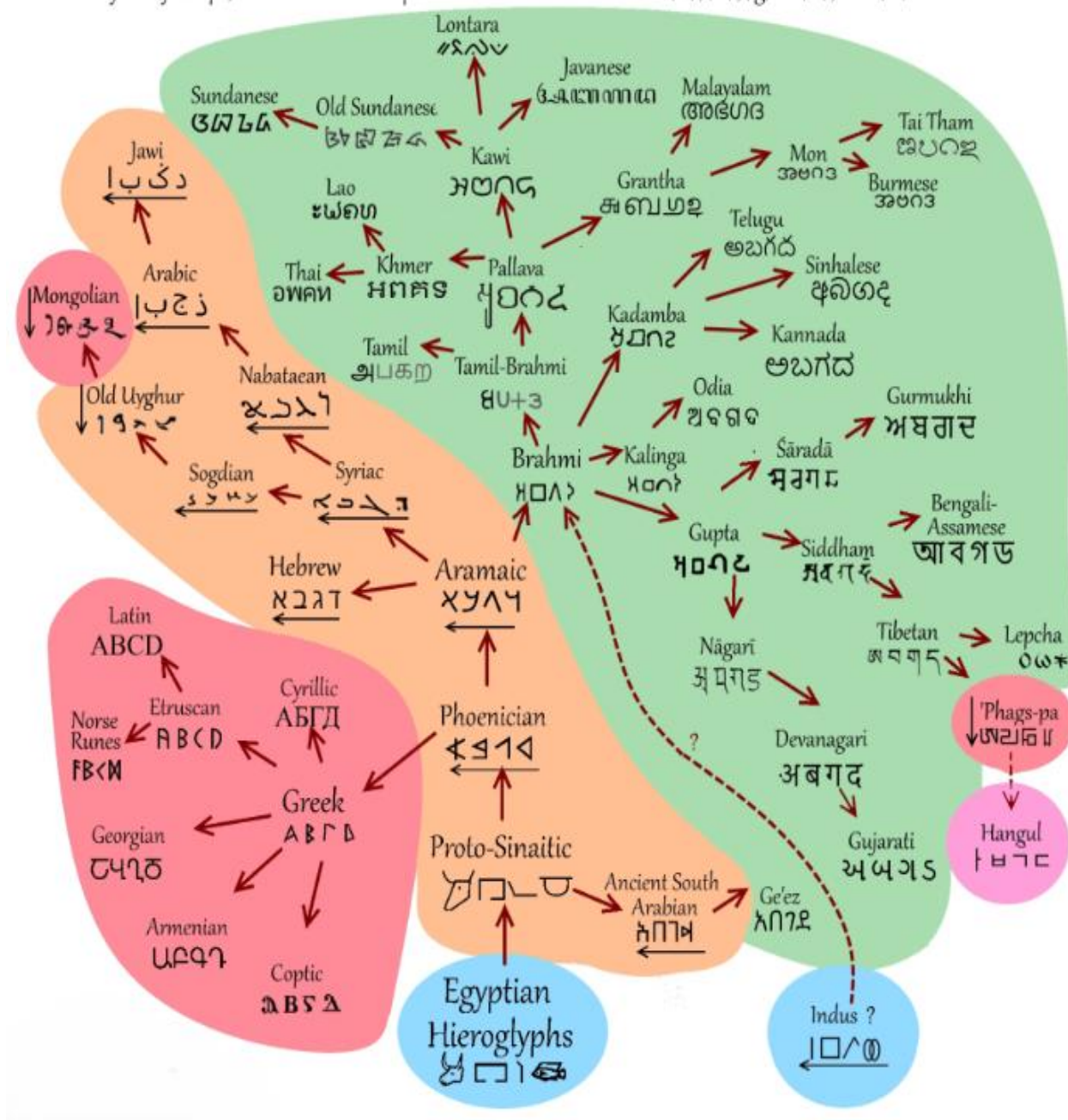
This infographic shows how 57 different scripts are descended from ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs.

The colours show the type of script, and the red arrows show how the scripts are related.

For scripts which are not read from left to right, the black arrows show the direction of writing.

Where possible, letters corresponding to the A, B, C, and D symbols in the Latin alphabet are shown.

In nearly every script, these letters correspond to sounds similar to the /a/, /b/, /g/ or /k/, and /d/ sounds.



Runic inscriptions are found primarily in Scandinavia and northern Germany. So at first glance, what could ancient Egypt possibly have to do with the forests and fjords

of northern Europe? And yet the connection is real. A few hundred generations, trade routes, and wars are enough to carry mystical signs to the ends of the earth.

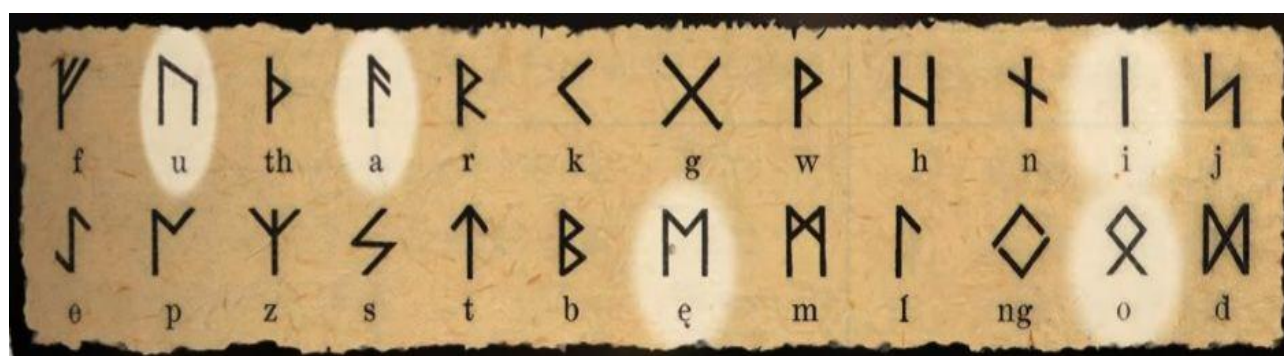
Runes were not a fixed system; they shifted and changed over time, and scholars have traditionally divided their history into distinct periods. The *Elder Futhark*, the oldest and most complete form of the runic alphabet, was in use from roughly the 2nd to the 7th century. To place that on a familiar timeline, it spans from the age of Emperor Trajan to the rise of the Caliphate, and perhaps a little beyond. Below is that original, classic set of 24 runes.

Pic. 185. *The Older Futhark*.



24 runes in total, and notably, every vowel has its own dedicated symbol.

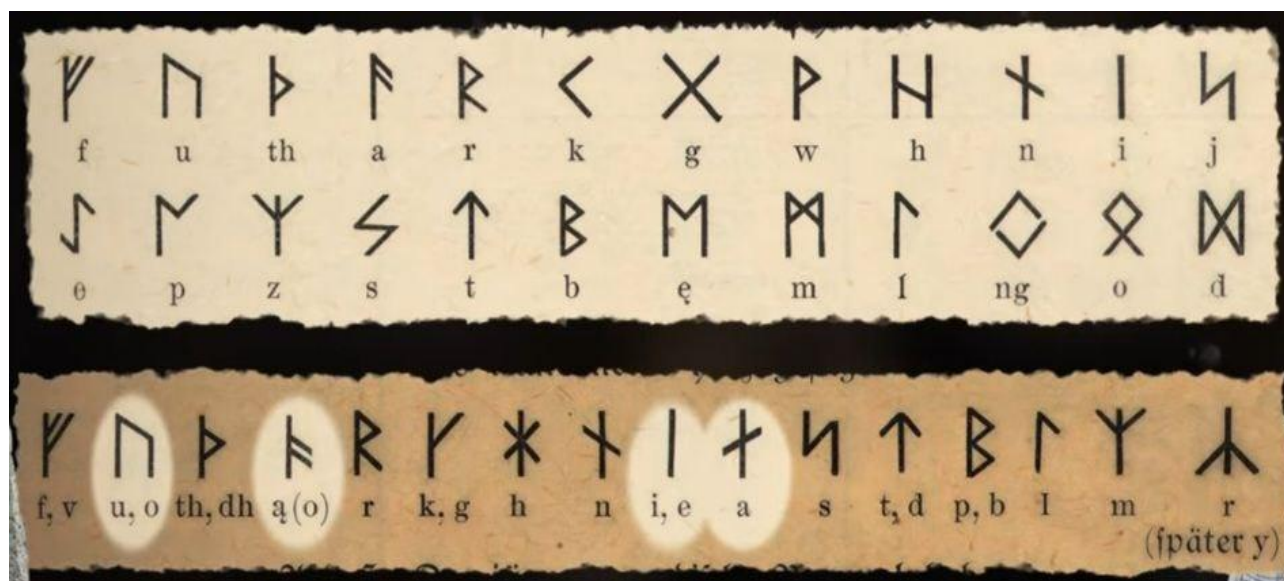
Pic. 186. *The Signs for Vowel Sound in the Old Runic Script*.



After a brief transitional period, the Scandinavian language had shifted enough to call for a new system. *The Younger Futhark* emerged in the 8th century and remained in use until roughly the 13th or 14th century. More precisely, it was not a single unified alphabet but a family of related variants, including Swedish and Danish forms. The most striking feature of the *Younger Futhark*, however, is that it actually had fewer

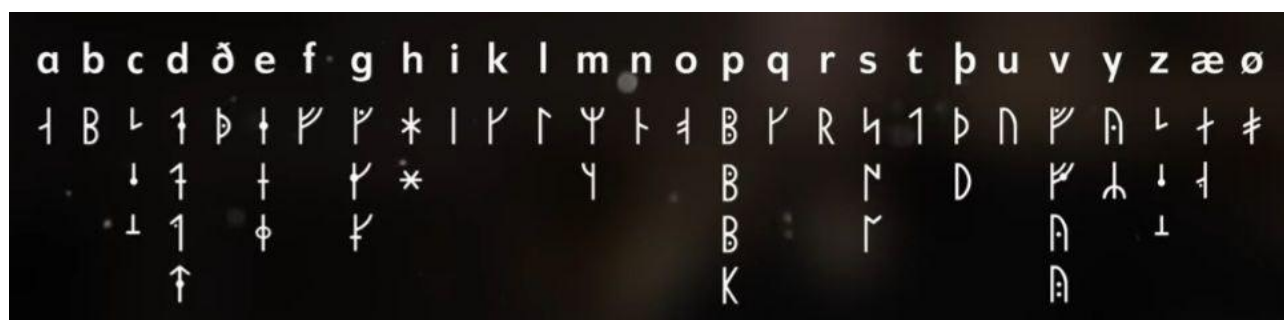
runes than its predecessor: just 16, down from 24. This meant the alphabet was, paradoxically, less precise than before; several distinct vowel sounds now had to share a single rune.

Pic. 187. *The Signs for Vowel Sound in the Younger Futhark.*



The shapes of the symbols themselves had also evolved considerably by that point. Later still, a medieval runic tradition developed, and in that phase, the number of runes grew once again.

Pic. 188. *Medieval Runes.*



When the Vikings actually put rune to stone, they were using the *Younger Futhark*, the reduced, 16-character version, whatever popular culture might suggest. The *Elder Futhark*, to a Viking, would have felt much the same as Old Church Slavonic feels to a modern reader: archaic, venerable, and not quite the living language of the day, complete with its obsolete letters like the *yuses* and *yat* that nobody actually used anymore.

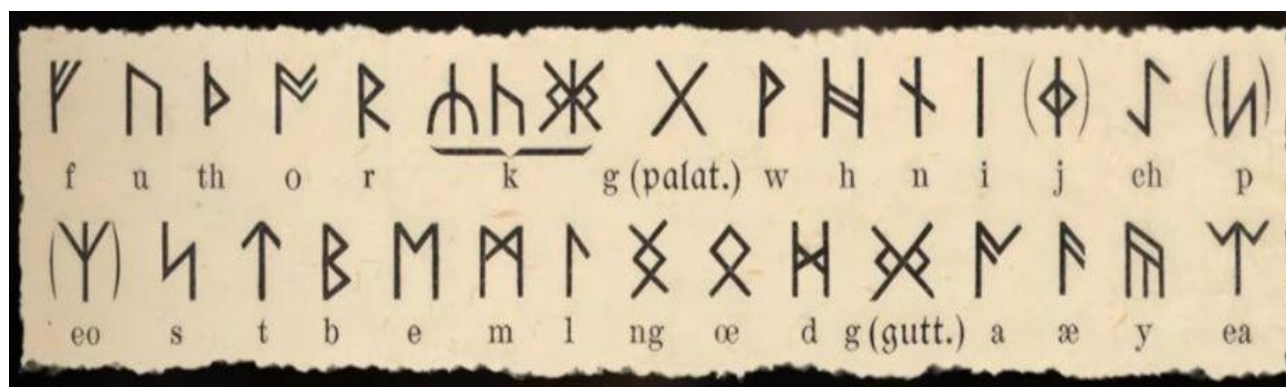
The quickest way to tell the two systems (*the Younger* and *the Elder Futharks*) apart at a glance is by this symbol with the ascending stroke:



This rune appears only in the *Younger Futhark*, where it is extremely common. It stood for the sounds [a], [æ], and [e]. Spot it in an inscription, and you are most likely looking at the work of Vikings or their descendants, something from the 8th or 9th century onward. The length of an inscription is another useful clue. A single word or two points toward the *Elder Futhark* and the pre-Viking era, when inscriptions were less about communication and more about magic, closer to a spell than a message, addressed not to human readers but to something else entirely. When the text runs long, when a serpent of runes winds across the face of a stone or flows in a continuous ribbon, that is *the Younger Futhark*, the Viking Age, roughly the 9th to 11th centuries. This was the great era of the runestone, and these inscriptions carry far less magical weight and far more of a desire to be read. The famous *Rök Stone* is the prime example: an entire poem pressed into stone, 762 runes in all. Occasionally, older *Elder Futhark* inscriptions were revisited and extended with *Younger Futhark* characters by later hands.

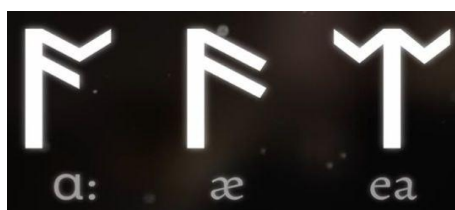
Runes were not exclusive to Scandinavia. The Goths used them; inscriptions survive in Old High German, but the richest and most extensive runic corpus of all comes from the Anglo-Saxon tradition – Old English runes.

Pic. 189. *Old English Runic Script.*



The Angles, Jutes, and Saxons were every bit as Germanic as their Scandinavian cousins. Runes were deeply embedded in their culture too. When they crossed to

Britain, they brought the *Elder Futhark's* 24 runes with them, but unlike the Scandinavians, they did not pare the alphabet down. They went in the opposite direction entirely, expanding it until it reached, at its peak, 33 characters. This Anglo-Saxon runic alphabet goes by the name *futhorc*, spelled with an “o,” not an “a.” The extra symbols were not added arbitrarily; by that point the Anglo-Saxon languages had diverged enough from their continental relatives that new runes were needed to capture vowel sounds that the original 24 simply could not express precisely enough (e.g., *eald*, *gear*, *neah*):

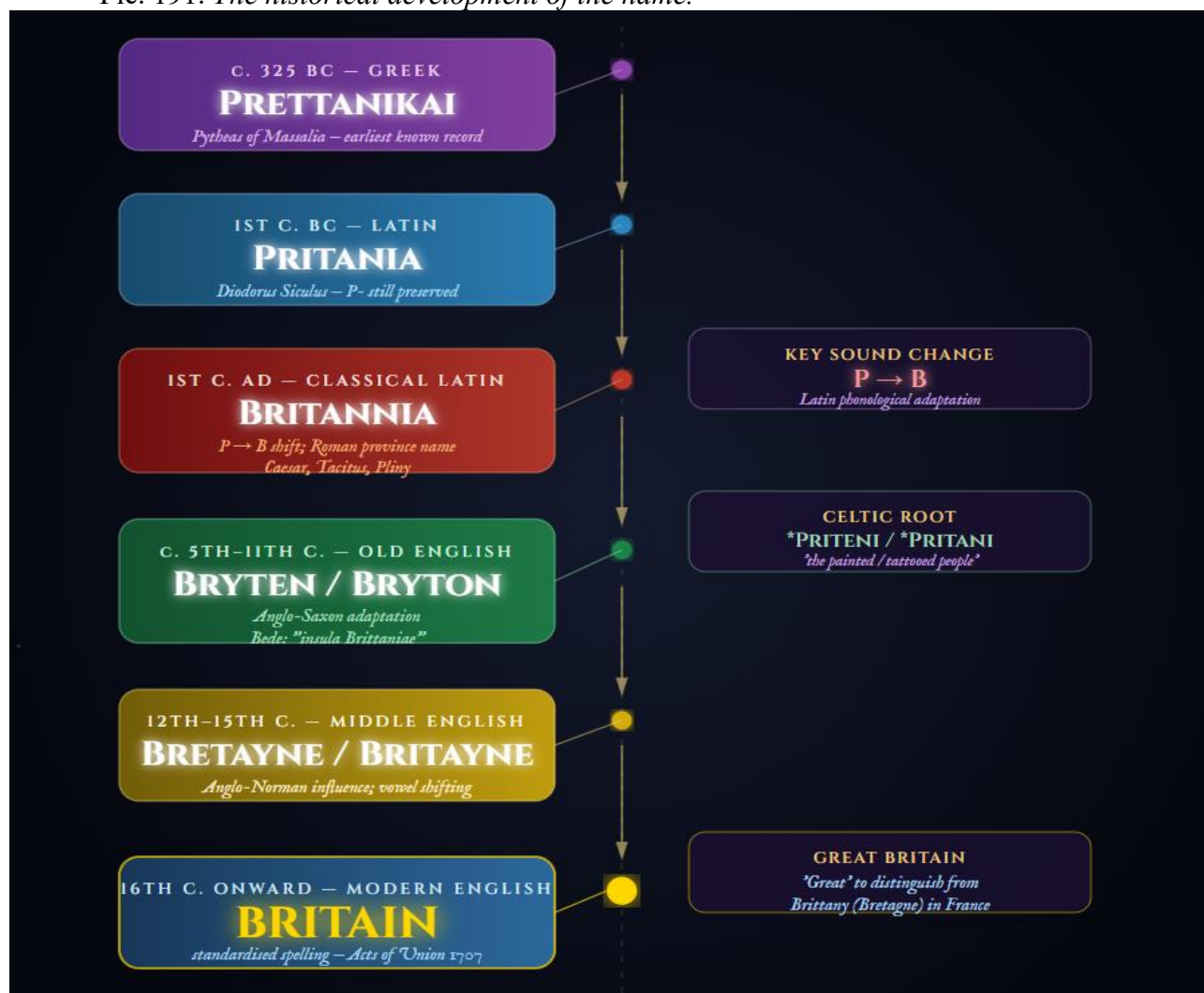


Anglo-Saxon runes are somewhat more precise than *the Younger Futhark* the Scandinavians were using, and as a result, they are generally easier to read. They are also easy to recognize by a distinctive visual feature: small crossbars that stick upward (T – *ear* (ea); F – *ac* (a); J – *cweorth* (uncertain sound, rare)), giving the characters a characteristic look. What has survived in Anglo-Saxon runes is a fascinating collection of objects. There are rings bearing inscriptions and charms, ornate caskets with, most famously, *the Franks Casket*, an intricately carved whalebone box, and swords. One particularly striking example is a sword dredged from the Thames, its blade inscribed with 28 runes that were current at the time it was made.

Pic. 190. *Anglo-Saxon Runes on the Rings. The third ring says: “I am called a ring.”*



FROM PRITAIN TO BRITAIN

Pic. 191. *The historical development of the name.*

The film *Braveheart* (1995) draws heavily on the visual iconography of Celtic warrior culture, most memorably the blue face paint worn by Mel Gibson's William Wallace and his followers. It is a striking and memorable image, and it does have genuine historical roots. The practice of body and face painting among the Celtic peoples of Britain is attested by classical sources: Julius Caesar, writing in the first century BC, noted that the Britons dyed themselves with woad, producing a blue colour that he suggested was intended to make them appear more frightening in battle. Pliny the Elder and other Roman writers corroborate this, and it is from

this tradition that the name *Picti* (the Picts, literally “the painted people”) is thought by some scholars to derive.

The anachronism in *Braveheart* is that Wallace lived and fought in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries AD, which is roughly 1,300 years after Caesar’s observations. By that period, the practice of ritual face and body painting had long since disappeared from the cultural life of the people inhabiting what is now Scotland. The Picts themselves had ceased to exist as a distinct political and cultural entity by around the ninth century, absorbed into the emerging kingdom of Alba. The Scotland of Wallace’s time was a feudal Christian kingdom, culturally closer in many respects to Norman England and continental Europe than to the Iron Age tribal societies Caesar had encountered.

Pic. 192. *The Wheel of the Year and Celtic Sacred Trees*

CELTIC (GALLIC)		ANGLO-SAXON	MODERN	OGHAM TREE
Samonios		HÁLIGMŌNAP <i>Holy Month</i>	September	Vine <i>Muin</i>
Ōumannios		WINTERFYLLĒD <i>Winter Full Moon</i>	October	Ivy <i>Gort</i>
Riuos		BLŌTMŌNAP <i>Sacrifice Month</i>	November	Reed <i>Ngetal</i>
Amasancios		ÆRRA GĒOLA <i>Before Yule</i>	December	Elder <i>Ruis</i>
Osgonios		ÆFTERRA GĒOLA <i>After Yule</i>	January	Birch <i>Beith</i>
Cutios		ŠOLMŌNAP <i>Mud / Cake Month</i>	February	Rowan <i>Luis</i>
Giamonios		HREPMŌNAP <i>Month of Hreþ</i>	March	Ash <i>Nion</i>
Simiuisomuos		ĒOSTREMŌNAP <i>Month of Ēostre</i>	April	Alder <i>Fearn</i>
Ēquos		ÞRIMILCEMŌNAP <i>Three-milkings Month</i>	May	Willow <i>Saille</i>
Ēlembiuos		ÆRRA IŪPA <i>Before Midsummer</i>	June	Dawthorn <i>Huath</i>
Æedruios		ÆFTERRA IŪPA <i>After Midsummer</i>	July	Oak <i>Duir</i>
Canctos		WĒODMŌNAP <i>Weed / Plant Month</i>	August	Holly <i>Tinne</i>
Ciallos <i>intercalary</i>		ÞRILIPI <i>Third Midsummer</i>	— leap month —	Yew <i>Ioho · the extra day</i>
 Celtic (Coligny tablet, c. 2nd century AD) — lunar calendar of 12–13 months · Anglo-Saxon — solar-aligned, described by Bede c. 725 AD Ogham trees — from the Celtic Tree Calendar as devised by Robert Graves in <i>The White Goddess</i> (1948), based on the medieval Irish Ogham alphabet · month alignments are approximate				

THE OGHAM TREES

The *Ogham* is an ancient Irish alphabet, dating from around the 4th century AD, in which each letter was named after a tree or plant. It was carved in stone, primarily in Ireland and Wales, reading from bottom to top along the edge of a stone. The medieval Irish text known as the *Beth Luis Nion* lists the trees in order, and it is from this sequence that the idea of a “tree calendar” grew. The system assigning a tree to each month was largely the creation of the poet Robert Graves, who set it out in his 1948 book *The White Goddess*. Graves argued that an ancient Celtic lunar calendar, structured around the Ogham trees, lay hidden beneath later layers of European culture, both Christian and classical. Scholars debate how much of this was genuine reconstruction and how much was Graves’s own poetic invention, but the system has been widely adopted in modern Celtic spirituality and Druidry. Each tree carried a deep web of meaning – practical, mythological, and spiritual. Here is an explanation of what each one signifies:



Vine (Muin) stands for joy, prophecy, and inner journeys. It is associated with the harvest and with the loosening of inhibition as the moment when the year’s labour gives way to celebration and vision.

Ivy (Gort) represents tenacity, growth, and the spiral of life. Being evergreen, Ivy symbolized immortality and the persistence of the soul through death and winter.

Reed (Ngetal) is the tree of healing, purification, and music. Reeds were used in medicine and for writing, and the month carries the sense of cutting away what is no longer needed, a clearing before the dark of winter.

Elder (Ruis) governs death, regeneration, and the threshold. The Elder tree was both feared and deeply revered. It stood as a doorway between the living world and the dead.

Birch (Beith) is the first letter of the Ogham alphabet and the tree of new beginnings, purification, and birth. Birch brooms were traditionally used to sweep out the old year at midwinter, and the tree's pale, clean bark made it a natural symbol of fresh starts.

Rowan (Luis) carries the meanings of protection, vision, and quickening. Rowan branches were hung above doorways and over cradles to ward off harm, and the tree was believed to sharpen the second sight, representing the ability to perceive what is hidden.

Ash (Nion) is the tree of cosmic connection, fate, and the world tree. In Norse mythology, the world tree Yggdrasil is an Ash that connects the nine worlds. In Celtic tradition, it similarly served as a bridge between realms and a tree under which important judgements were made.

Alder (Fearn) represents courage, strength, and the warrior spirit. Alder grows at the water's edge, making it a guardian of the boundary between land and stream, between the known and the unknown. Its wood, unlike most, does not rot in water, which gave it an almost magical reputation for endurance.

Willow (Saille) is the tree of intuition, grief, and the moon. It was sacred to lunar goddesses across many cultures. The Willow bends in any wind without breaking, and so it came to embody emotional resilience, embodying the ability to feel everything deeply and survive it.

Hawthorn (Huath) governs cleansing, fertility, and the faerie realm. Its blossom (May blossom) marks the festival of Beltane and the full arrival of spring. The Hawthorn was a deeply ambiguous tree: sacred, associated with the *Fair Folk*, and not

to be cut or brought indoors carelessly. A lone Hawthorn standing in a field was a threshold into the otherworld.

Oak (Duir) is perhaps the most sacred tree of all, the tree of strength, kingship, and the centre of the world. The Druids held their ceremonies in Oak groves, and it is widely believed that the very word *Druid* contains the Celtic root for Oak, *dru*, meaning both the tree and deep knowledge. The Oak was the king of trees, and its month falls at midsummer, at the height of the year's power.

Holly (Tinne) represents challenge, balance, and the dark twin of the Oak. In the mythological cycle of the Oak King and the Holly King, the two are locked in an eternal contest: Oak rules the light half of the year, while Holly rules the dark half. Its glossy evergreen leaves through winter carry the promise that the light will return.

Yew (Ioho) is assigned to the intercalary extra month, the leap period outside ordinary time. The Yew is the tree of death, eternity, and transformation. The oldest living organisms in Britain are Yew trees, some of them four or five thousand years old. They stand in churchyards not by accident, but because those sites were already sacred long before Christianity; the Yew had presided over burial and rebirth since before memory.

Taken together, the thirteen trees trace the full arc of the year: from the joyful harvest of Vine, through the cold darkness of Elder and Birch, through the awakening of Rowan, Ash, and Alder in spring, to the great solar peak of Oak at midsummer, and back down through Holly and the evergreens into the timeless stillness of the Yew. It is a calendar that reads not in dates but in the living qualities of the natural world.



Pic. 193. *THE GODS & GODDESSES revered by Celts:*

FEMALE GODS	MALE GODS
<i>Ēostre</i> – Anglo-Saxon goddess of dawn and spring; her name gives us <i>Easter</i> ; associated with hares, eggs, and fertility; recorded by Bede in 725 AD.	<i>Wōden (Odin)</i> – Chief Anglo-Saxon god; patron of wisdom, poetry, and the dead; Wednesday bears his name; said to lead the <i>Wild Hunt</i> during the Twelve Nights of Yule.
<i>Hrēþ</i> – Anglo-Saxon goddess of March (<i>Hrēþmōnaþ</i>); her name may mean “glory” or “victory”; thought to embody the fierce energy of late winter giving way to spring; recorded by Bede.	<i>Þunor (Thor)</i> – God of thunder and storms; protector of farmers; Thursday bears his name; his influence felt during the storm months of late autumn and winter.
	<i>Lugh</i> – Celtic sun god and master craftsman; honoured at <i>Lughnasadh</i> (1 August); his festival marks the first harvest.
	<i>The Dagda</i> – Great father god of Irish Celtic tradition; associated with the seasons, abundance, and the cauldron of plenty; his feast at <i>Samhain</i> opened the dark half of the year.
	<i>The Oak King & The Holly King</i> – Twin aspects of the year-God in Celtic tradition; Oak rules Midwinter to Midsummer, Holly rules Midsummer to Midwinter; their eternal contest mirrors the Ogham tree calendar.

APPENDIX 4

The history of English spelling unfolded in multiple layers over many centuries. The adoption of the Latin alphabet was far from the final stage in the development of the writing system. Several letters that were standard in Old English fell out of use during the Middle English period, while others survived but changed in their phonological range and associations.

Let's take letter 'W'. The shape we recognise today is a surprisingly recent invention.

Pic. 194. *The Introduction of W and its Predecessor.*



Why does the letter go by the name “double u” rather than “double v”? After all, we all know the stylistic trick where a “V” is written instead of a “U” on packaging.

Pic. 195. *The Example of Contemporary Spelling Game.*



It is a nod to Latin, or rather to its visual legacy. Swapping *U* for *V* gives a word that unmistakably antique, classical air.

Pic. 196. *The Example of Contemporary Substitution of “U” by “V” to Evoke an Archaic or Classical Aesthetic.*



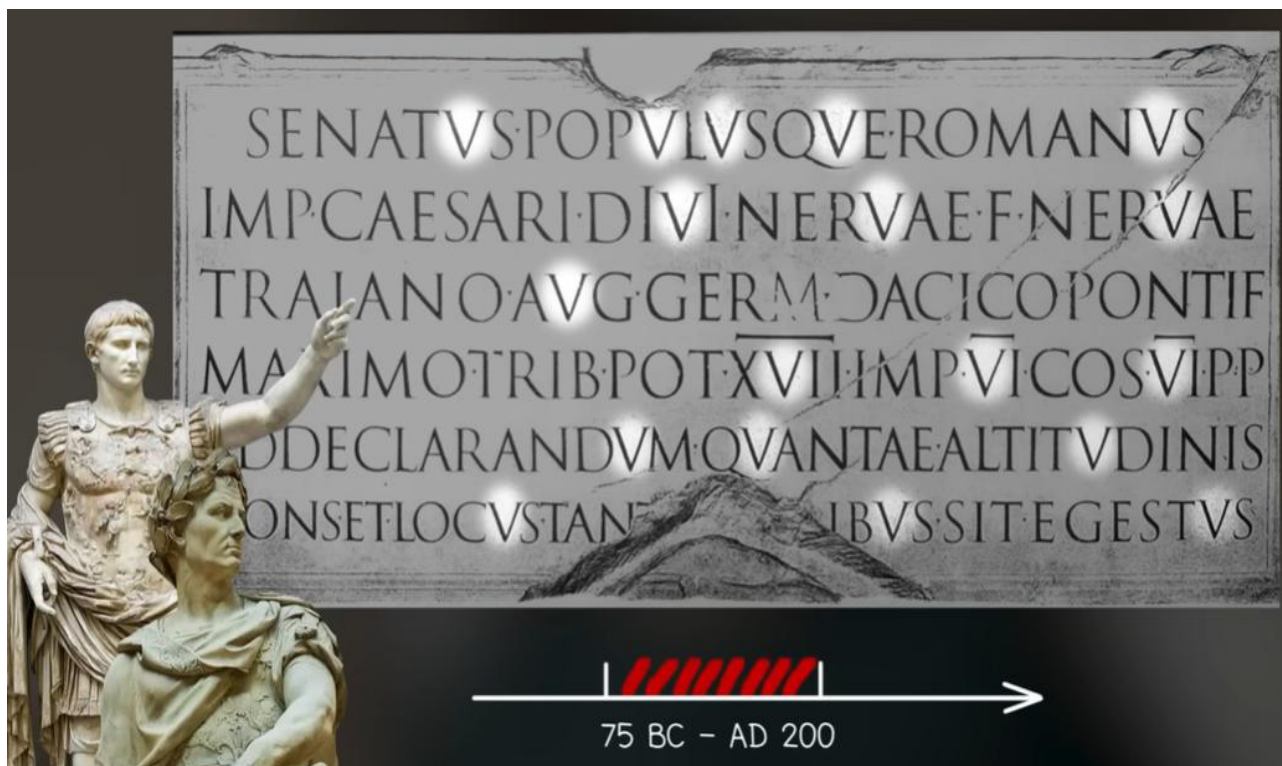
What lies behind it all. Three closely related sounds have overlapped and intersected across many languages throughout history, and this entanglement has left its mark on the letters used to represent them.

Pic. 197. *The Phonetic Split of Latin V.*



In Classical Latin, the rounded form ‘*U*’ did not exist originally. There was only the angular ‘*V*’.

Pic. 198. *The Initial Latin Spelling of “U”.*



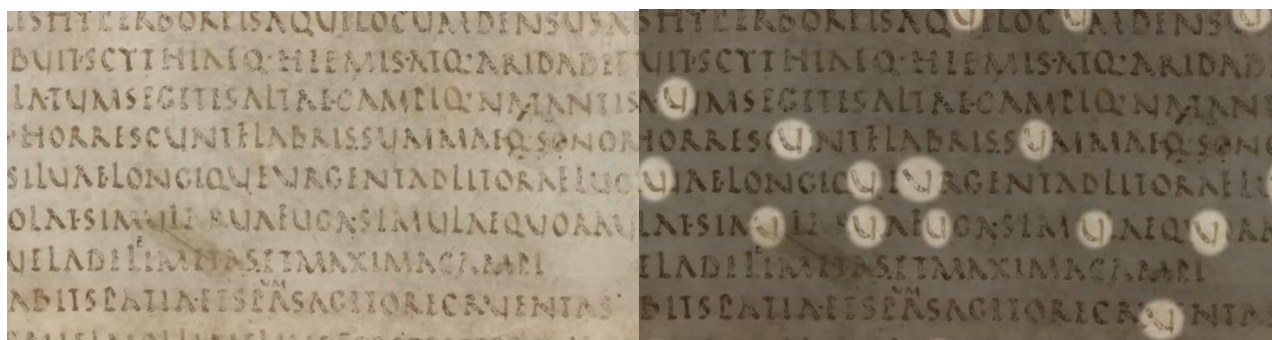
That single letter served to represent at least two sounds: [w] and [v], and in time [v] as well.

Pic. 199. *The Phonemic Value of Sign “V” in Latin.*



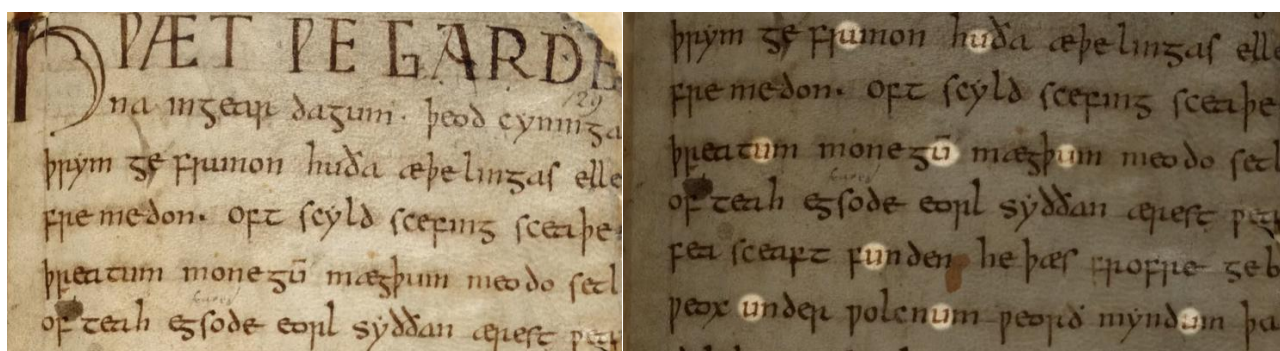
Over time, scribes writing with quills rather than carving into stone began to round the angular ‘V’ into a softer shape. The result was a rounder form, but it was still regarded as merely a variant of the same letter ‘V’, capable of representing either of the two sounds just as before.

Pic. 200. *The Transformation of “V” into “U”.*



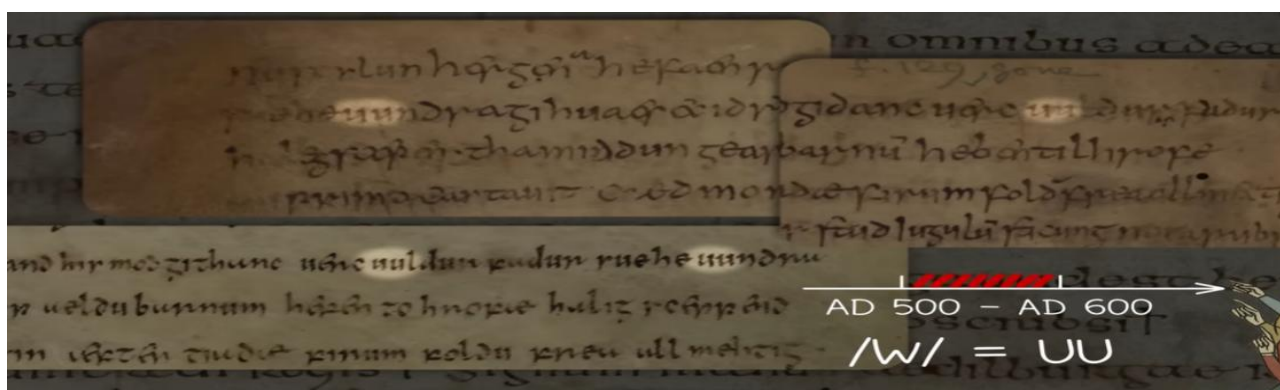
As it happened, English took up the Latin alphabet at a very early stage. Old English had no separate phoneme [v], only [u], with [v] emerging later as a positional variant. And since there was no longer any need to chisel letters into stone, manuscripts could simply rely on the rounded form throughout.

Pic. 201. *The Usage of the Letter “U” in OE Manuscripts.*



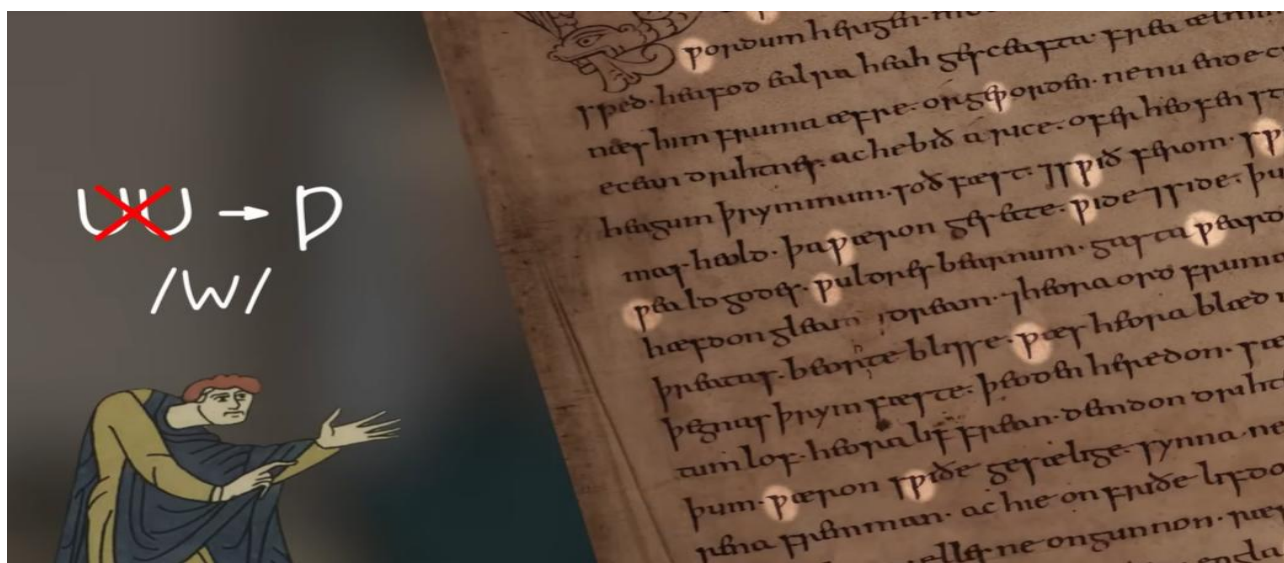
What was lacking was a way to write the sound [w], which already existed in English at the time, and [w] is quite distinct from [v]. So, in the sixth and seventh centuries, scribes arrived at a practical solution: they began representing the sound with two *u*'s written side by side as '*uu*'. This made visual sense. The rounded manuscript form of *V/U* resembled a small *u*, and doubling it captured the glide sound [w]. Over time, that two-letter combination fused into the single character we now call *W* – “double u.”

Pic. 202. *W in OE Texts.*



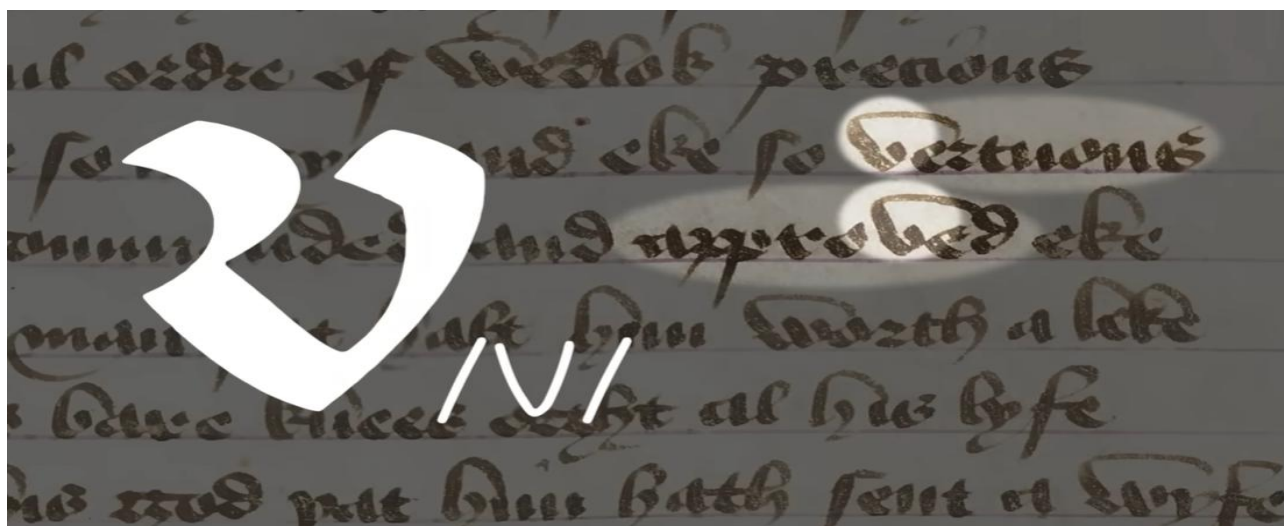
This did not last long, however. In certain regions, scribes drawing on Germanic roots turned to runic script instead. Runes coexisted alongside the Latin alphabet in the early Middle Ages and had not yet been entirely displaced. Within the Germanic tradition, the runic alphabet, the futhork, was well suited to capturing native sounds, including [w], which made it a convenient alternative to Latin script in certain contexts. Over time, however, the Latin alphabet prevailed as the standard, and runes retreated into a more specialist role: sacred inscriptions, decorative use, and epitaphs.

Pic. 2033. Runic Letter Wynn for “W”.



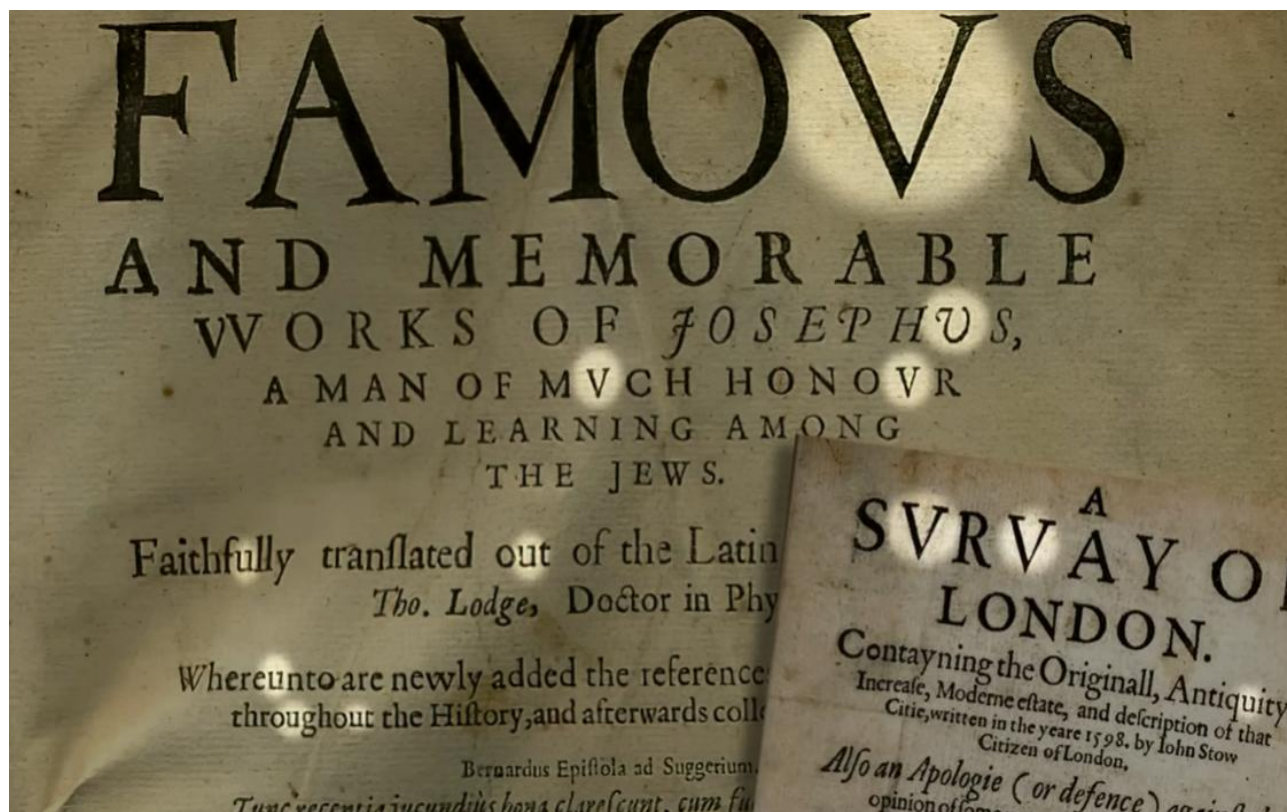
Only a few centuries passed before Middle English scribes came to their senses again, discarded the rune, and returned to writing *uu*. Then, under Norman influence, the phoneme [v] entered the language, and with it came the need to write it, which fell to the letter *v*.

Pic. 204. The Introduction of Letter ‘V’ in the ME Writing.



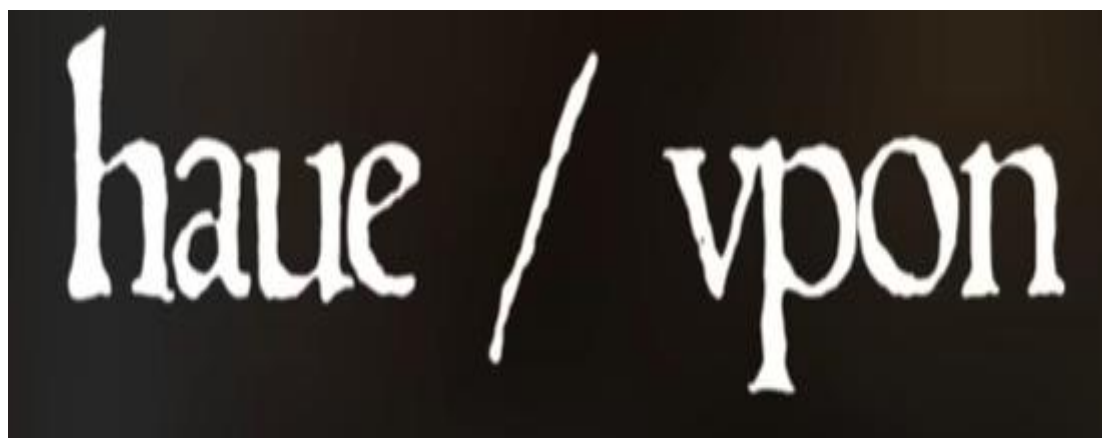
By the fifteenth century, however, things were moving fast. Gutenberg and Caxton arrived, the printing press was invented, and everything took off. Meanwhile, the situation with *v* and *u* individually was nothing short of chaotic. By this point, they were being printed more or less interchangeably, still treated as a single letter serving two different sounds, much as had been the case in Latin.

Pic. 205. *The Mixing of 'V' and 'U' in Writing.*



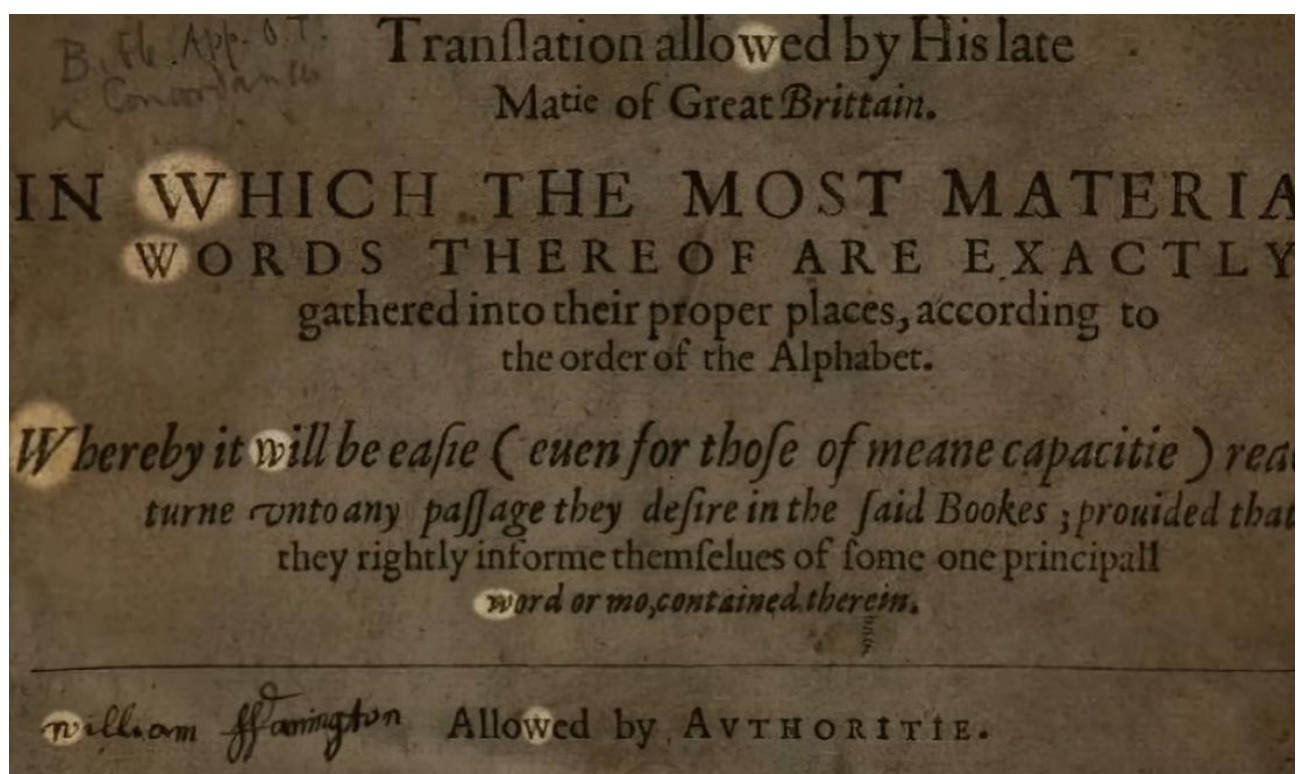
There were spelling conventions governing this: *v* at the beginning of a word, *u* elsewhere within it.

Pic. 206. *Spelling Rules Concerning 'U' and 'V' in ME.*



Later, the two *V*'s drew together and merged into *W*.

Pic. 207. Introduction of Ligature 'W'.



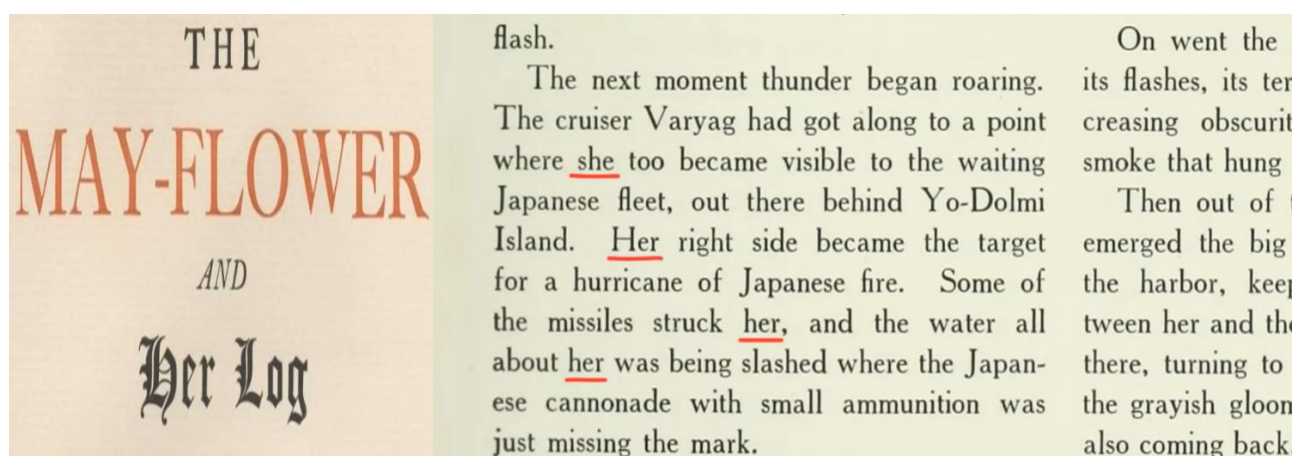
The remaining confusion between *v* and *u* was finally addressed by the *Académie Française* in 1762, when the distinction in their sounds was formally acknowledged. It reportedly caused quite a stir, something close to uproar right there in the chamber, but agreement was eventually reached, and the distinction between *v* and *u* came into being.

Pic. 208. The Phonemic Value of 'V' and 'U'.



In modern English, inanimate objects are treated as neuter; thus, anything that isn't a man or a woman is referred to as "*it*." Yet there is a curious exception: ships are traditionally referred to as feminine, as seen with vessels like the Mayflower, the Titanic, and the Flying Dutchman.

Pic. 209. *An Example of a Feminine Pronoun Used in Reference to a Ship.*



Ships sharing the same design are referred to as *sister ships*, with *the RMS Olympic*, *RMS Titanic*, and *HMHS Britannic* being well-known examples. A ship's first journey is known as its "*maiden voyage*".

When linguists speak of *grammatical gender*, they mean something more specific than biological sex, as they mean the way a word's form changes depending on its gender category. Ukrainian illustrates this clearly: the past tense verb shifts form between masculine and feminine speakers («я сказа**в**», «вона сказа**ла**»), adjectives take different endings («червон**ий**» vs. «червона»), and even the genitive case varies by noun class («нема стол**у**» vs. «нема стін**и**»). In each of these cases, gender is not merely a label but actively shapes how words are inflected. Not every language carries this level of grammatical complexity. Ukrainian, like Serbian, Polish, or Croatian, does have a fully developed gender system. Old English similarly distinguished between masculine, feminine, and neuter nouns, a feature that has since largely disappeared from modern English.

Pic. 210. *Old English Gender* ca. AD 800.

	<i>M — MASCULINE</i>	<i>F — FEMININE</i>	<i>N — NEUTER</i>
<i>NOM</i>	se stan	seo sunne	þæt cild
<i>ACC</i>	þone stan	þa sunnan	þæt cild
<i>GEN</i>	þæs stanes	þære sunnan	þæs cildes
<i>DAT</i>	þæm stane	þære sunnan	þæm cilde

ʃ · ɒ · ɒ · ʃ · ʀ · k · x · ʔ · ʰ · t

■ MASCULINE ■ FEMININE ■ NEUTER

In Old English, “wall” (*weall*) was masculine while “gift” (*giefu*) was feminine, and it was precisely this grammatical gender that determined which declension pattern each noun followed.

Pic. 211. *OE Declension System within Nouns of Different Gender.*

·	peall <i>(m)</i>		·	ziefu <i>(f)</i>	
	<i>weall</i>			<i>giefu</i>	
N	<i>weall</i>		N	<i>ziefu</i>	
A	<i>weall</i>		A	<i>ziefe</i>	
G	<i>wealles</i>		G	<i>ziefe</i>	
D	<i>wealle</i>		D	<i>ziefe</i>	

Old English also had cases where grammatical gender did not align with natural sex, as there were feminine nouns denoting women, but also masculine ones, the most striking example being the word for “woman” (*wīfmann*) itself, which was grammatically masculine.

Pic. 212. OE Feminine Gender.

FRŌwe <i>f</i>	wīfmann <i>m</i>
1. <u>woman</u> , <u>lady</u>	1. <u>woman</u> 2. <u>handmaid</u> , female <u>servant</u>
DECLENSION [edit]	DECLENSION [edit]
DECLENSION OF FROWE (WEAK) [hide ▲]	DECLENSION OF WIFMANN (STRONG CONSONANT STEM) [hide ▲]
CASE	CASE
SINGULAR	SINGULAR
PLURAL	PLURAL
NOMINATIVE	NOMINATIVE
ACCUSATIVE	ACCUSATIVE
GENITIVE	GENITIVE
DATIVE	DATIVE

By 2026, English has shed almost all of its declension and retain very little conjugation. The language runs on **semantic**, or natural gender rather than grammatical gender. The distinction essentially comes down to *she* for women and *he* for men, and even that can carry social nuance depending on context. Animals may receive ‘*he*’ or ‘*she*’ when the speaker wishes to personify them slightly, but everything else (*a table, a chair, a fork, a spoon*) is simply ‘*it*’.

English, however, preserves one interesting remnant known as **anaphoric gender**. This occurs when a noun is treated as feminine or masculine, not because grammar demands it, but because of a degree of metaphor or personification. A ship referred to as *she* is the classic example; one might equally say *she* of the gin in a cocktail when speaking in a figurative or poetic register. The gender here is not built into the word itself; it is projected.

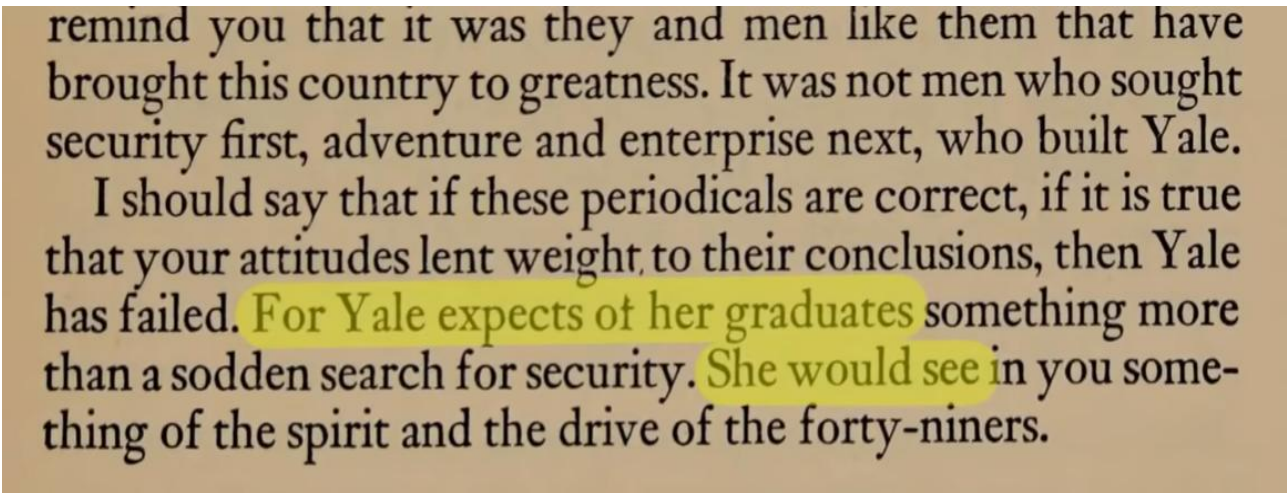
Pic. 213. Anaphoric Gender. Drinks.



This can happen even without any deliberate metaphor, particularly in casual speech: *an old stool*, for instance, might quite naturally be called *he* or *she* without a second thought.

What is especially striking is that English shows a default lean toward the feminine in these cases. When objects receive a gendered pronoun, '*she*' is the more common choice. A surprisingly wide range of things may be perceived as feminine: *a tractor, a train, an airplane, a country like Britain, a university* (one's *alma mater*), *a city* (e.g. "*Troy is mother to us all, fight for **her**!*"), *a hurricane* (*Hurricane Katrina* (2005), *Hurricane Sandy* (2012), *Hurricane Irma* (2017)), *a volcano, a church*, the list goes on. In this sense, English anaphoric gender has an almost universally feminine tilt.

Pic. 214. *Anaphoric Gender. Educational Establishments.*



remind you that it was they and men like them that have brought this country to greatness. It was not men who sought security first, adventure and enterprise next, who built Yale.

I should say that if these periodicals are correct, if it is true that your attitudes lent weight to their conclusions, then Yale has failed. For Yale expects of her graduates something more than a sodden search for security. She would see in you something of the spirit and the drive of the forty-niners.

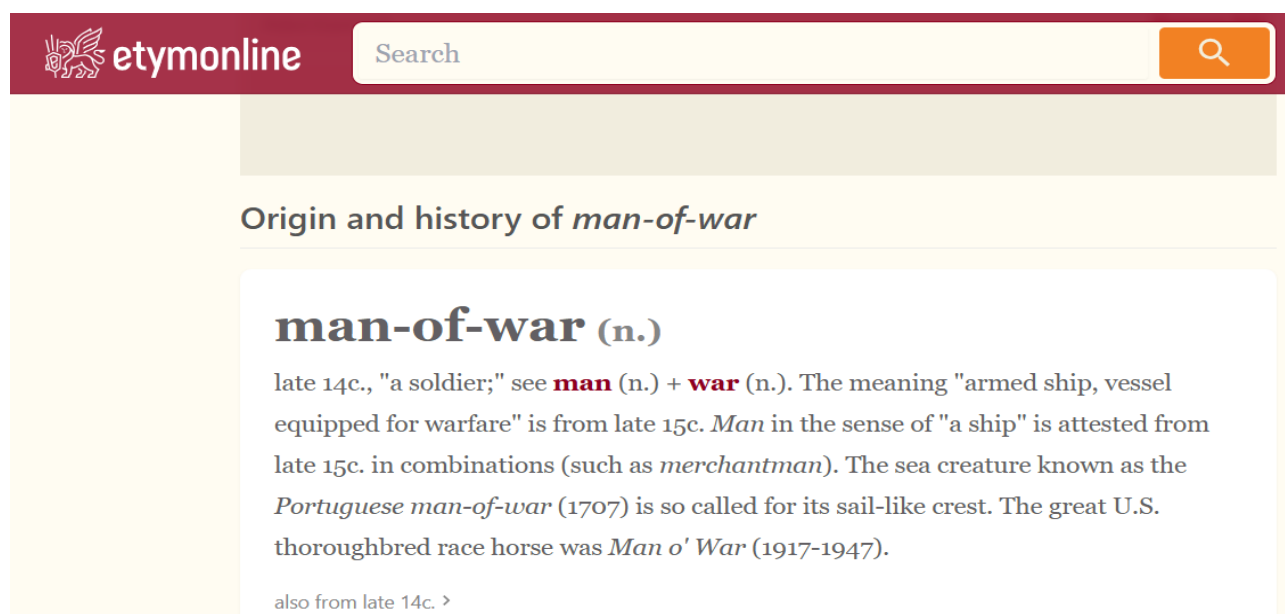
Anything that moves (*shuttles, airplanes, cars* (e.g., "*Run out of gas, fill her up!*")) tends to attract *she*, as do things that travel on water, including submarines. This is often explained by the English seafaring tradition: sailors, it is said, loved their ships as they loved women.

Natural phenomena and landmarks can be feminine in the same way: "*The volcano is a popular tourist attraction, and there were several hundred people on **her** slopes that day.*" In informal speech, almost anything held dear can be called *she*.

The masculine, however, has its own domain. *Death* is traditionally depicted in English as a male figure, embodied in the Grim Reaper. In everyday usage, *he* may also refer to a small mechanical component, a product, or even a river, such as *the Thames*,

which is traditionally personified as *Father Thames*. A sailing warship, typically armed, is called a *man-of-war*, and according to the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, *man* in this expression was once used in the sense of “ship” itself (Etimonline).

Pic. 215. *Online Etymological Dictionary*.



Masculine ships were not unheard of either, like a *merchantman* (sometimes written as two words), denoting a merchant vessel, being a clear example.

In the 1980s, the title *Mx* emerged alongside the established forms *Mr* and *Ms*. It serves as a gender-neutral honorific for those who prefer not to indicate their gender or who identify outside the male/female binary. Today, it is widely recognised in official and institutional settings across English-speaking countries.

Pic. 216. *Classical Forms of Address by Gender*.



In contemporary usage, *they* is increasingly favoured as the polite default when referring to someone in the third person: e.g., “*Here is a student; **they** will need help*” or “*The patient should be told how much **they** will need to pay.*” Non-binary individuals also frequently prefer *they* over *he* or *she*. On social media, it has become common practice to list one’s preferred pronouns directly in a profile so that others know how to refer to them. That said, *they* is far from the only available option for gender-neutral or personally preferred forms of address.

Pic. 217. *Contemporary Forms of Address by Gender.*

This list is not exhaustive but merely meant to provide examples

ae	e/ey	they	xe	ze/zie
aer	em	them	xem	hir
aer	eir	their	xyr	hir
aers	eirs	theirs	xyrs	hirs
aerself	eirself	themself	xemself	hirself
fae	per	ve	yo	
faer	per	ver	yo	
faer	pers	vis	yo's	
faers	pers	vis	yo's	
faerself	perself	verself	yo'self	

Here is a fairly comprehensive list, catering to a range of identities and preferences:

Pic. 218. *An Extended List of Contemporary Forms of Address by Gender.*

ae/fae	em	eir	eirs	eirself
he	him	his	his	himself
per	per	pers	pers	perself
she	her	her	hers	herself
they	them	their	theirs	themself
ve	ver	vis	vis	verself
xe	xem	xyr	xyrs	xemself
ze/zie	hir	hir	hirs	hirself

Note: the top line is meant to indicate two separate – but similarly spelled – sets of pronouns. They are ae/aer/aers and fae/faer/faers.

APPENDIX 6

Pic. 219. *Celtic & Old English Numbers from 1 to 10 across four traditions.*

#	WELSH	SCOTTISH GAELIC	IRISH	OLD ENGLISH
1	un	aon	aon	ān
2	dau / dwy	dà	dó	twā
3	tri / tair	trì	trí	þrīe
4	pedwar / pedair	ceithir	ceathair	fēower
5	pump	còig	cúig	fīf
6	chwech	sia	sé	siex
7	saith	seachd	seacht	seofon
8	wyth	ochd	ocht	eahta
9	naw	naoi	naoi	nigon
10	deg	deich	deich	tīen

♦ Welsh has masculine/feminine forms for some numbers – the second form given (e.g. *dwy*, *tair*, *pedair*) is the feminine variant.

APPENDIX 7

The Orthodox Church venerates St. Patrick of Ireland on his feast day, St. Olaf of Norway, and no fewer than two English saints named Edward, one a martyr, the other a confessor.

Pic. 220. *St. Patrick of Ireland and St. Olaf of Norway.*



Pic. 221. *St. Edward the Martyr and St. Edward the Confessor.*



The English word 'cross' comes from Old Norse *kross*, which itself derived from Latin *crux* (genitive *crucis*), meaning a stake or instrument of execution. It entered English via the Viking settlements in Ireland and northern Britain, gradually displacing the native Old English word. That native word was 'rood', coming from Old English *rōd*, meaning *pole*, *rod*, or *cross*. It survived well into the Middle English period and beyond. The great Anglo-Saxon poem *The Dream of the Rood* centres entirely on the cross as a speaking figure. In churches, the *rood screen*, or the carved partition separating the nave from the chancel, takes its name from this word, and many of these screens survive to this day. By Shakespeare's time *rood* had become a mild oath ("by the rood" = meaning "by the cross," used as a sworn exclamation). In *Hamlet*, Gertrude says "by the rood" when swearing sincerity to her son. It carried a slightly archaic, even rustic flavour by then, which Shakespeare used deliberately for register and colour.

As for *baptize*, the word comes from the Greek *baptizein* (βαπτίζειν), which meant quite literally *to dip*, *to plunge*, or *to immerse* in water. It had no specifically religious meaning in classical Greek; it was an ordinary verb for submerging something. The early Christians adopted it to describe the ritual immersion that marked entry into the faith, and through Latin *baptizare* it passed into the languages of Europe. The original physical, almost mundane meaning, simply *to dunk*, gives the Christian rite a strikingly concrete origin.

Pic. 222. -ING FORM in the English Language.

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH	
-ING <i>Participle I (act)</i>	-ING <i>(Gerund)²⁷</i>
READING e.g. <i>I am reading.</i>	READING e.g. <i>Reading corrupts the soul.</i>
WALKING e.g. <i>Walking dead;</i> <i>I am walking.</i>	WALKING e.g. <i>Walking is good for health; Tired of walking.</i>
OLD ENGLISH	
-ENDE	-UNG
RAEDENDE	RAEDUNG

Continuous form is a relatively fresh thing for the English language, although the needed elements for it had already existed: *ic + wæs + raedende*. However, it entered widespread usage after Shakespeare. In *the King James Bible*, it is almost impossible to excavate continuous forms.

There is also a mix between *Participle* and *Gerund*, represented by “*a-hunting we will go*”; “*Business is a-booming*”; “*Don’t come home a-drinking*”; “*If the camper is a-rocking, don’t come a-knocking*”; “*I was a-dancing*”. Element ‘a’ was used in the English language from its earliest forms. Initially, it was a noun with a preposition: “*a-hunting*” = *on/at hunting*; “*a-dancing*” = *at/on dancing*. It is a reduced form of a preposition. Today, this form can be encountered in dialects, bawdy poetry, and songs: “*is currently a-turning out corn whiskey without fear*”.

²⁷ A gerund is a verb form that functions as a noun.

Another **-ING** exists for names and titles, like in *Reading* (*Rēading* = a city in Britain, the name derived from the *Rēading tribe* = *Reada's people*, by the name of the leader). *Rēad* + *ING* = where *-ing* meant 'belonging to the tribe, family, clan, or territory'. This formula generated the following: *Merovings* (= descendants of Merovech), *Carolings* (= descendants of Charles), *Vikings* (= who came from bays (*vik*)). The same thing appeared in *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien: "*Forth Eorlingas!*" meaning "*Ahead Eorlingas*" = (descendants of Eorl). In contemporary English, traces of the *-ing* are visible in toponyms such as *Reading*, *Nottingham*, and *Birmingham*, as well as in last names such as *Browning*; *-ing* can also point to a peculiarity, as in *whiting*, or *penny-farthing* (= an old-fashioned bicycle with a very large front wheel and a much smaller back wheel. It was popular in the late 19th century. The name comes from two British coins: a) the penny (large coin); b) the farthing (small coin). The big front wheel looked like a penny, and the small back wheel looked like a farthing, which gave the name a *penny-farthing*).

APPENDIX 9

From a strict morphological standpoint, English (and most Germanic languages) lacks a *dedicated future tense inflection*. In other words, there is no verb ending or conjugation that exclusively marks future tense, unlike in Latin: *amabo* (“I will love”) with a distinct future form, or in Spanish/French *hablaré* / *parlerai* with clear future suffixes. English verbs only morphologically distinguish two tenses: past (*walked*) and non-past/present (*walk/walks*). However, English has ways to express future meaning, even without a dedicated tense morpheme:

Pic. 223. *The Means of Expressing the Future in English.*

CONSTRUCTION	EXAMPLE
will / shall	<i>She will arrive tomorrow.</i>
be going to	<i>It's going to rain.</i>
Present progressive	<i>I'm flying tomorrow.</i>
Simple present	<i>The train departs at 9.</i>
be about to	<i>He's about to speak.</i>

These are considered periphrastic (multi-word) future constructions, not a grammatical tense in the morphological sense. All that has led to the linguistic debate: a) some linguists (like those in the formalist/morphological tradition) say English has no future tense; b) others argue that “*will* + *infinitive*” functions so consistently as a future marker that it effectively *is* a future tense, just not an inflectional one.

“*Will*” is a kind of ghost of a sovereign verb. Every language carries within it the fossils of older worlds. Words that once blazed with meaning gradually dim, worn smooth by the fingers of centuries, until they become almost invisible, grammatical furniture, seemingly without soul. The English auxiliary *will* is one such fossil. And yet, if you know where to look, the original flame still glows inside it. The word begins with desire. Across the Germanic and Slavic worlds, the root speaks with one voice. German *wollen* = to want, to wish, to intend. Dutch *willen* = the same, barely altered across the North Sea. Pan-Scandinavian *vilja* = desire, will, the force of wanting. In Ukrainian, *вільний* means free and freedom, at its etymological heart, is simply the condition of being able *to will*: to act from one’s own desire rather than another’s

command. Russian goes even deeper: *воля* is both will and freedom, and *велеть* means to order, to command, the *will* of one turned into law for another.

Pic. 224. *The Indo-European Cognates of “WILL”.*



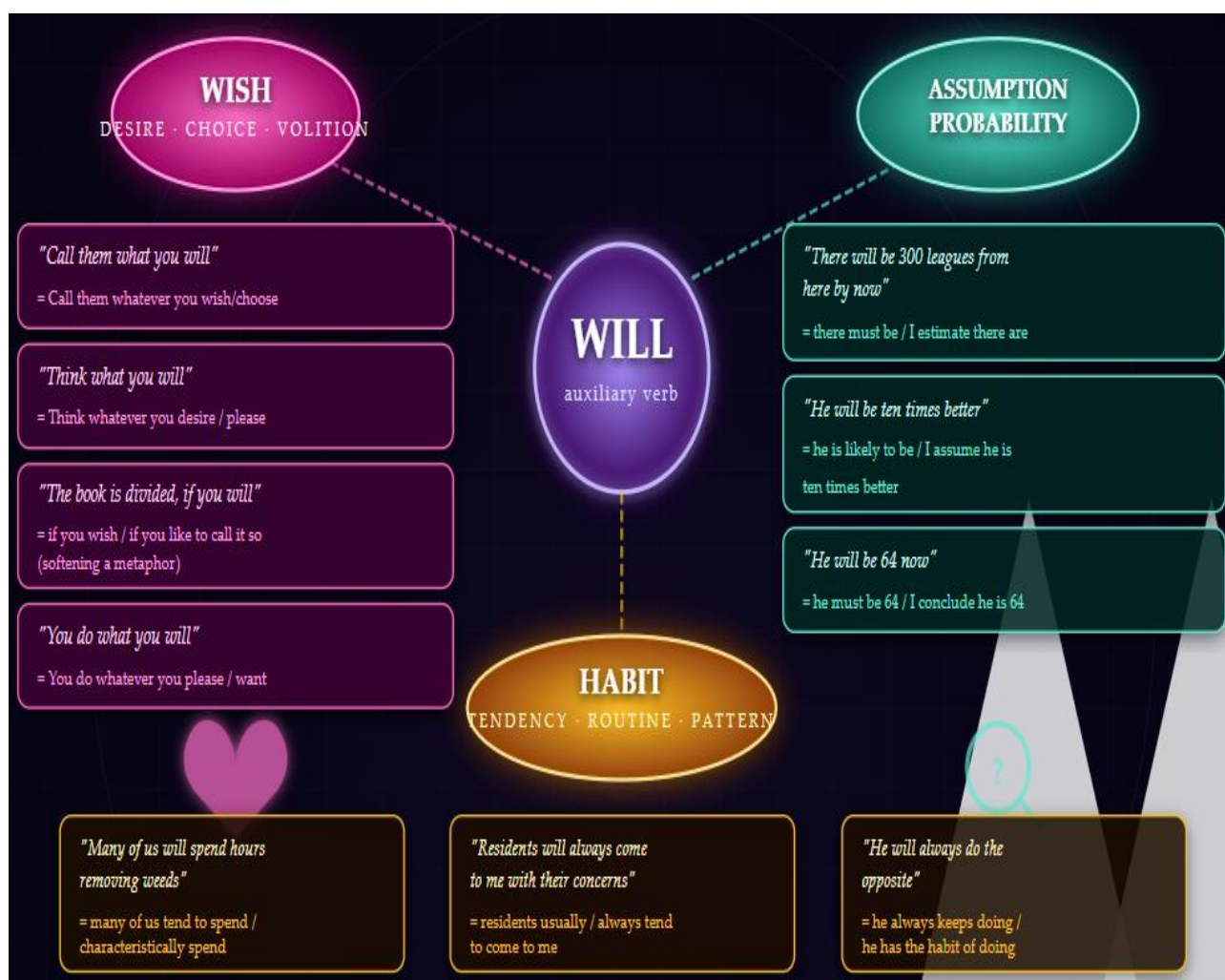
The word, in its oldest sense, is about a sovereign relationship to action: *will* ≠ буду. When an English speaker says ‘*I will*’, the original weight of that phrase was not a prediction about the future; it was a declaration of intent, almost of dignity. Я ‘изволю’ carries a regal, even archaic flavour. ‘Зволити’ implies that the one who acts does so from their own sovereign desire, not from obligation or compulsion. ‘*It will be done*’ was not a weather forecast. It was closer to ‘*It is my pleasure that this be done. I deign to make it so*’. This is the will of kings, of free people, of anyone who acts from the inside out.

Then centuries did what centuries always do. Meanings fade. The specific becomes the general. The intimate becomes the mechanical. Will, freighted with volition, desire, and sovereignty, gradually slid across the spectrum until it came to rest

in its modern role: *a marker of futurity*: ‘*It will rain tomorrow*’. ‘*She will arrive at noon*’. ‘*There will be consequences*’. The living intention hardened into a grammatical hinge, a sign pointing at events not yet arrived. And yet the old meaning is never entirely gone. It surfaces in the cracks: “*Call them what you will*” = do with the naming as you wish, you are free; “*Think what you will*” = your mind is your own sovereign territory; “*You do what you will*” = act from your desire; I will not stop you.

In the shift from *will* as sovereign desire to *will* as future tense, we see a whole philosophy compressed into grammar. The older world asked: “*Whose will drives this action?*” The modern grammar asks only: “*When will it happen?*” The old *will* insisted that the future was something you made, something you desired into being. Perhaps this is why, in moments of high ceremony, the old resonance returns. I *will* at a wedding altar is not a prediction. It is a declaration. For one bright moment, the word remembers what it always was: *not a forecast, but a vow*.

Pic. 225. *The Semantic Spectrum of “WILL”*.



**FRIENDLY FIRE: ENGLISH DOUBLE AGENTS THAT PREY ON
SLAVIC SPEAKERS**

BRAT, *SWAT*, *PRIVET*, *CARAWAY* – these are all perfectly real English words, neither invented nor borrowed from any Slavic language. Yet their meanings differ drastically from the homonyms familiar to Ukrainian speakers.

BRAT [Ukr: *брат* – brother] = a badly behaved, spoiled child; a rascal: “*I wouldn’t allow my kid to be a **brat**.*” It can also apply to particularly bold and feisty girls (“*brat girl*”), though here the connotation tilts toward something almost complimentary. Hence, the famous cultural term “***brat** summer*” implies unapologetic, carefree self-expression rather than anything well-mannered.

SWAT [Ukr: *сват* – matchmaker, in-law] = to slap or swat something, typically an insect: “*I **swatted** that thing.*” A fly *swatter* [Ukr: *мυχοбійка*] is the dedicated instrument of justice. The second *S.W.A.T.* is, of course, the abbreviation every action fan knows: *Special Weapons and Tactics*.

CARAWAY [Ukr: *кмин*] = the spice caraway, the very seeds scattered across a proper *Borodinsky dark rye loaf*.

PRIVET [Ukr: *привіт* – hello / Rus: *привет* – hello] = a common ornamental hedging shrub. It also conjures the legendary address *Privet Drive*, where Harry Potter lived and endured.

STOOL [Ukr: *мaбурем* – chair] = a stool; a seat without a back. English also lends the word a second, considerably less dignified meaning, which we shall diplomatically leave aside.

FART [Ukr: *фарт* – luck, good fortune] = in English, this is emphatically *not* wishing anyone good luck. Some words cross borders badly. There are awkward moments.

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*ВІД АНГЛІВ ДО АЛГОРИТМІВ***

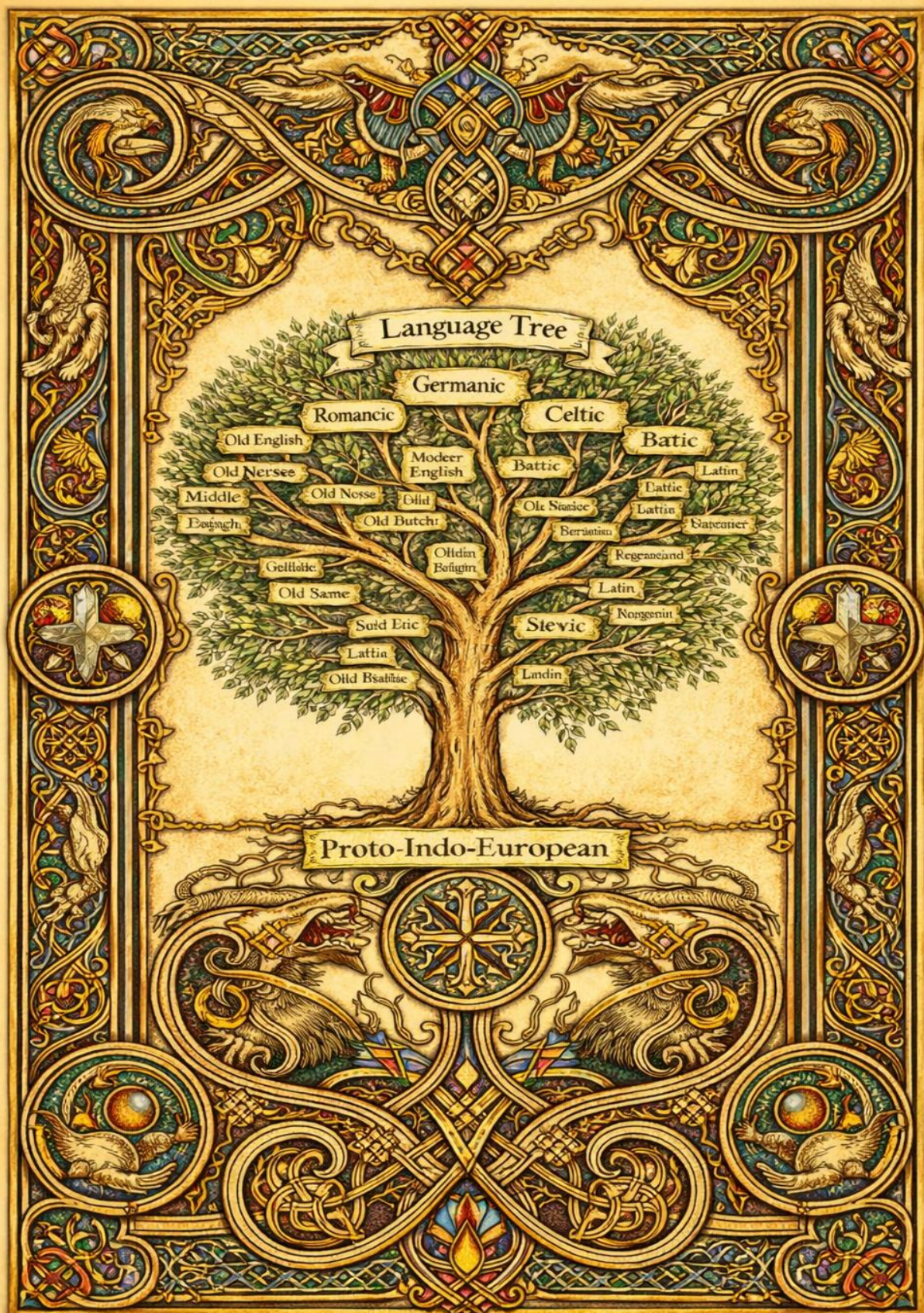
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