



# THE EVOLUTION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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# LATE MODERN ENGLISH

English is a very common and widely spoken language nowadays.

Countries where English is the official language: 67

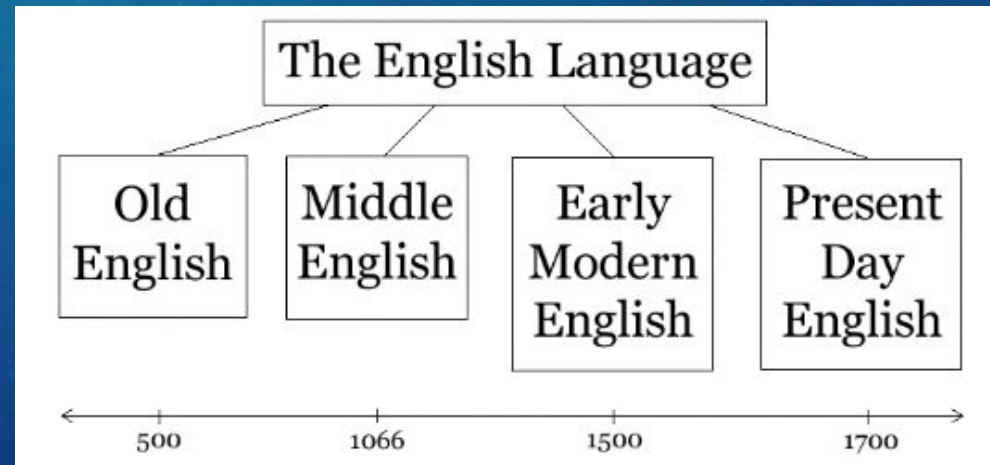


# ENGLISH:

- is the third most common native language in the world, after Mandarin and Spanish.
- is widely learned as a second language.
- native speakers: 360-400 million (according to a 2006 research)
- second language speakers: 400 million
- foreign speakers: 600-700 million
- has developed over the course of more than 1,400 years.

# STAGES

- Old English: 5th century (formed by Anglo-Saxon settlers at the Great Britain)
- Middle English: late 11th century ( with the Norman conquest of England)
- Early Modern English: late 15th century (with the introduction of the printing press), through the worldwide influence of the British Empire.
- Modern English: modern English spread around the world from the 17th century to now. Through newspapers, books, the telegraph, the telephone, phonograph records, radio, satellite television, and the Internet, as well as the emergence of the United States, English has become a global superpower.



# IMPORTANT DATES-PERIODS:

## Key dates: periods of English

450-1150	Old English
1150-1500	Middle English
1500-1700	Early Modern English
1700-1900	Modern English
1900-present	Late Modern English

# OLD ENGLISH

- Old English (*Ænglisc, Anglisc, Englisc*) or Anglo-Saxon is the earliest historical form of the English language, mostly spoken in England and southern and eastern Scotland during the early Middle Ages.
- It was brought by Anglo-Saxon settlers probably in the mid-5th century, and the first Old English literature is dating to the mid-7th century. After the Norman conquest of England in 1066, Old English developed into the next historical form of English, known as Middle English.

# HISTORY

- Prehistoric Old English : (450 to 650); for this period, Old English is mostly a reconstructed language as no literary witnesses survived. This language was spoken by the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, and pre-dating documented Old English or Anglo-Saxon, has also been called Primitive Old English.
- Early Old English: (650 to 900), the period of the oldest manuscript traditions, with authors such as Cædmon, Bede, Cynewulf and Aldhelm.
- Late Old English: (900 to 1066), the final stage of the language leading up to the Norman conquest of England and the transition to Early Middle English.

# DETAILS

## Orthography:

- Old English was written in the script of the Latin alphabet introduced by Irish Christian missionaries from around the 9th century. This was replaced by insular script, a cursive and pointed version of the half-uncial script. This was used until the end of the 12th century when continental Carolingian minuscule (also known as *Caroline*) replaced the insular.

## Old English letters:

- The letter ðæt (called *eth* or *edh* in modern English) was an alteration of the Latin letter d.
- the runic letters thorn (þ) and wynn (ƿ) are borrowings from futhorc.



# OLD ENGLISH

## Olde English

### Olde English

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
H	I	J	K	L	M	N
O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
V	W	X	Y	Z		

A B C D E F G H I J  
K L M N O P Q R S T  
U V W X Y Z

A B C D E F G H I J  
K L M N O P Q R  
S T U V W X Y Z a b c  
d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s  
t u v w x y z 0 1 2 3 4 5 6  
7 8 9 ! " \$ % ? & \* ( )

# OLD ENGLISH TO MIDDLE ENGLISH

## *Vowel changes between Old and Early Middle English*

Old English

i:, y: → i:

æ: → ɛ:

o: → ɔ:

i, y → i

Middle English

e:, (ø:) → e:

ɑ: → ɔ:

u: → ʊ:

æ, a → a

# MIDDLE ENGLISH

Middle English refers to the dialects of the English language spoken in parts of the British Isles until the 15th Century.

The history of middle English is often divided into 3 periods:

- Early middle English (1100-1250)
- Central middle English (1250-1400)
- Late middle English (1400-1500)

# EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH

- It has a largely Anglo-Saxon vocabulary.

Further changes:

- The grammatical relations that were expressed in Old English are replaced in Early Middle English with prepositional constructions.
- Example: the form "dog's" for the longer "of the dog".
- most of the other case endings disappeared in the Early Middle English period, including most of the roughly one dozen forms of the definite article ("the").
- The dual grammatical number (expressing two of a thing) also disappeared from English during the Early Middle English period further simplifying the language.

# CENTRAL MIDDLE ENGLISH

- The Central Middle English period (about 1250 to about 1400), was marked by:
  - the formation of literary dialects
  - the orthography which was influenced by the Anglo-Norman writing system
  - the loss of pronunciation of final unaccented *-e*
  - and the borrowing of large numbers of Anglo-Norman words
- Also:
  - During this period the London dialect met its greatest development, in the hands of writers as John Gower and Geoffrey Chaucer.

# LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH

- Late Middle English period (about 1400 to about 1500) was influenced by the development of the London literary dialect and the gradual of the northern dialects such as the Scottish . During this period the basic lines as they appear in Modern English were first established. Among the characteristic differences between Old and Middle English were the substitution of natural gender in Middle English for grammatical gender and the loss of the old system of declensions in the noun and adjective and, largely, in the pronoun.

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD ENDED ABOUT 1470 WHEN A FORMER OF LONDON - BASED ENGLISH BEGAN TO BECOME WIDESPREAD

## The Important Events

- **1066.** The event that began the transition from Old English to Middle English was the Norman Conquest of 1066
- **1150.** Approximate date of the earliest surviving texts in Middle English.
- **1171.** Henry II declares himself overlord of Ireland, introducing Norman French and English to the country. About this time the University of Oxford is founded.
- **1204.** The dialect differences between Anglo-Norman and Francien. more isolated from continental Europe.
- **Late 13th century.** Under Edward I, royal authority is consolidated in England and Wales. English becomes the dominant language of all classes.

# ENGLISH OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The desire for order and certainty, which emerged amidst the turmoil of the seventeenth century, was reflected in the development of the language. Particularly in the latter half of the century, Englishmen, reacting against the novelties and unregulated spontaneity which characterised Elizabethan expression, began to call for an ordered, rational language.

English was discovered to have no body of grammatical rules that could serve as a systematic and unfailing guide to "correct" expression, and therefore Latin models were turned to once more. John Dryden, who was one of the loudest in his outcries against the unruly language of his predecessors ("we . . . have not so much as a tolerable dictionary, or a grammar, so that our language is in a manner barbarous", he wrote) is said at one point in his career to have translated his thoughts first into Latin to discover their most proper form of expression in English.

# EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

The Royal Society, founded in 1660 by a group of learned men and scientists, objected to the Elizabethan love of verbal gymnastics on the ground that it was unscientific, and demanded of its members instead "a close, naked, natural way of speaking positive expressions, clear sense, a native easiness, bringing as near the mathematical plainness as they can". The scientists were supported in this matter by the Puritans, who objected to display of any kind, whether in matters of religion, dress, or language.

# EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

As Englishmen expanded their interests abroad in the seventeenth century, their language continued to absorb foreign words. Increased commercial rivalry with the Dutch brought in such terms as *bowsprit*, *brandy*, *cruise*, *freight*, *keel*, *smack*, and *sloop*. From the American colonies came such words as *canoe*, *maize*, *papoose*, and *squaw*. The popularity of Italian music in the latter half of the century gave rise to terms such as *aria*, *oratorio*, *allegro*, *contralto*, *cantata*, *opera*, *piano*, *soprano*, and *trombone*. The main change, however, was the growing emphasis on ease and clearness of expression, which came to full bloom in attempts to standardise, refine, and give permanent order and status to English in the eighteenth century.

THE END