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History of the English language From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (Redirected from History of English Language) Jump to: navigation, search English is a West Germanic language that originated from the Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Britain by Germanic invaders from various parts of what is now northwest Germany and the Netherlands. Initially, Old English was a diverse group of dialects, reflecting the varied origins of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of England. One of these dialects, Late West Saxon, eventually came to dominate. The English language underwent extensive change in the Middle Ages. Written Old English of AD 1000 is similar in vocabulary and grammar to other old Germanic languages such as Old High German and Old Norse, and completely unintelligible to modern speakers, while the modern language is already largely recognisable in written Middle English of AD 1400. The transformation was caused by two further waves of invasion: the first by speakers of the Scandinavian branch of the Germanic language family, who conquered and colonized parts of Britain in the 8th and 9th centuries; the second by the Normans in the 11th century, who spoke Old Norman and ultimately developed an English variety of this called Anglo-Norman. A large proportion of the modern English vocabulary comes directly from Anglo-Norman. Close contact with the Scandinavians resulted in a significant grammatical simplification and lexical enrichment of the Anglo-Frisian core of English. However, these changes had not reached South West England by the 9th century AD, where Old English was developed into a full-fledged literary language. The Norman invasion occurred in 1066, and when literary English rose anew in the 13th century, it was based on the speech of London, much closer to the centre of Scandinavian settlement. Technical and cultural vocabulary was largely derived from Old Norman, with particularly heavy influence in the church, the courts, and government. With the coming of the Renaissance, as with most other developing European languages such as German and Dutch, Latin and Ancient Greek supplanted Norman and French as the main source of new words. Thus, English developed into very much a " borrowing" language with an enormously disparate vocabulary. Contents [hide] - 1 Proto-English - 2 Old English - 3 Middle English - 4 Early Modern English - 5 Modern English - 6 Phonological changes - 7 Grammatical changes o 7. 1 Evolution of English pronouns ï‚§ 7. 1. 1 Interrogative pronouns ï‚§ 7. 1. 2 First person personal pronouns ï‚§ 7. 1. 3 Second person personal pronouns ï‚§ 7. 1. 4 Third person personal pronouns - 8 Historic English text samples o 8. 1 Old English o 8. 2 Middle English o 8. 3 Early Modern English o 8. 4 Modern English - 9 See also - 10 Notes - 11 References - 12 External links [edit] Proto-English The languages of Germanic peoples gave rise to the English language (the Angles, Saxons, Frisii, Jutes and possibly the Franks, who traded and fought with the Latin-speaking Roman Empire in the centuries-long process of the Germanic peoples' expansion into Western Europe during the Migration Period). Latin loan words such as wine, cup, and bishop entered the vocabulary of these Germanic peoples before their arrival in Britain and the subsequent formation of England.[1] Tacitus' Germania, written around 100 AD., is a primary source of information for the culture of the Germanic peoples (the ancestors of the English) in ancient times. Germanics were in contact with Roman civilisation and its economy, including serving in the Roman military, but retained political independence. Germanic troops served in Britannia under Roman command. Except for the Frisians, Germanic settlement in Britain ocurred largely after the arrival of mercenaries in the 5th century as described by Gildas. Most Angles, Saxons and Jutes arrived in Britain as Germanic pagans, independent of Roman control. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle relates that around the year 449 Vortigern, King of the Britons, invited the " Angle kin" (Angles allegedly led by the Germanic brothers Hengist and Horsa) to help repel invading Picts. In return, the Anglo-Saxons received lands in the southeast of Britain. In response " came men of Ald Seaxum of Anglum of Iotum" (Saxons, Angles and Jutes). The Chronicle refers to waves of settlers who eventually established seven kingdoms, known as the heptarchy. Modern scholars view Hengist and Horsa as Euhemerised deities from Anglo-Saxon paganism, who ultimately stem from the religion of the Proto-Indo-Europeans.[2] [edit] Old English The first page of the Beowulf manuscript Main article: Old English language After the Anglo-Saxon invasion, the Germanic language displaced the indigenous Brythonic languages and Latin in most of the areas of Great Britain that later became England. The original Celtic languages remained in parts of Scotland, Wales and Cornwall (where Cornish was spoken into the 19th century), although large numbers of compound Celtic-Germanic placenames survive, hinting at early language mixing.[3] Latin also remained in these areas as the language of the Celtic Church and of higher education for the nobility. Latin was later to be reintroduced to England by missionaries from both the Celtic and Roman churches, and it would, in time, have a major impact on English. What is now called Old English emerged over time out of the many dialects and languages of the colonising tribes.[4] Even then, Old English continued to exhibit local variation, the remnants of which continue to be found in dialects of Modern English.[5] The most famous surviving work from the Old English period is the epic poem Beowulf composed by an unknown poet. Old English varied widely from modern Standard English. Native English speakers today would find Old English unintelligible without studying it as a separate language. Nevertheless, English remains a Germanic language, and approximately half of the most commonly used words in Modern English have Old English roots. The words be, strong and water, for example, derive from Old English. Many non-standard dialects such as Scots and Northumbrian English have retained features of Old English in vocabulary and pronunciation.[6] Old English was spoken until some time in the 12th or 13th century.[7][8] In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Old English was strongly influenced by the North Germanic language Old Norse, spoken by the Norsemen who invaded and settled mainly in the North East of England (see JÃ³rvÃ­k and Danelaw). The Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians spoke related languages from different branches of the Germanic family; many of their lexical roots were the same or similar, although their grammars were more divergent. The Germanic language of the Old English-speaking inhabitants was influenced by extensive contact with Norse colonizers, resulting perhaps in cases of morphological simplification of Old English, including the loss of grammatical gender and explicitly marked case (with the notable exception of the pronouns). English borrowed approximately two thousand lexical items from Old Norse, including anger, bag, both, hit, law, leg, same, skill, sky, take, and many others, possibly even including the pronoun they.[9] The introduction of Christianity late in the sixth century encouraged the addition of over 400 Latin loan words, such as priest, paper, and school, and fewer Greek loan words.[10] The Old English period formally ended some time after the Norman conquest (starting in 1066 AD), when the language was influenced to an even greater extent by the Normans, who spoke a French dialect called Old Norman. The use of Anglo-Saxon to describe a merging of Anglian and Saxon languages and cultures is a relatively modern development. [edit] Middle English Main article: Middle English Further information: Middle English creole hypothesis For centuries following the Norman Conquest in 1066, the Norman kings and high-ranking nobles spoke one of the French langues d'oÃ¯l, that we call Anglo-Norman, a variety of Old Norman used in England and to some extent elsewhere in the British Isles during the Anglo-Norman period and originating from a northern dialect of Old French. Merchants and lower-ranked nobles were often bilingual in Anglo-Norman French and English, whilst English continued to be the language of the common people. Middle English was influenced by both Anglo-Norman and, later, Anglo-French (see characteristics of the Anglo-Norman language). Even after the decline of Norman-French, standard French retained the status of a formal or prestige language–as with most of Europe during the period–and had a significant influence on the language, which is visible in Modern English today (see English language word origins and List of English words of French origin). A tendency for French-derived words to have more formal connotations has continued to the present day. For example, most modern English speakers consider a " cordial reception" (from French) to be more formal than a " hearty welcome" (from Germanic). Another example is the rare construction of the words for animals being separate from the words for their meat, e. g., beef and pork (from the French bÅ“ uf and porc) being the products of " cows" and " pigs"–animals with Germanic names. English was also influenced by the Celtic languages it was displacing, especially the Brittonic substrate, most notably with the introduction of the continuous aspect–a feature found in many modern languages but developed earlier and more thoroughly in English.[11] While the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle continued until 1154, most other literature from this period was in Old Norman or Latin. A large number of Norman words were taken into Old English, with many doubling for Old English words. The Norman influence is the hallmark of the linguistic shifts in English over the period of time following the invasion, producing what is now referred to as Middle English. English literature reappeared after 1200, when a changing political climate and the decline in Anglo-Norman made it more respectable. The Provisions of Oxford, released in 1258, was the first English government document to be published in the English language after the Norman Conquest. In 1362, Edward III became the first king to address Parliament in English. By the end of the century, even the royal court had switched to English. Anglo-Norman remained in use in limited circles somewhat longer, but it had ceased to be a living language. Geoffrey Chaucer is the most famous writer from the Middle English period, and The Canterbury Tales is his best-known work. Although the spelling of Chaucer's English varies from that of Modern English, his works can be read with minimal assistance. The English language changed enormously during the Middle English period, both in grammar and in vocabulary. While Old English is a heavily inflected language, an overall diminishing of grammatical endings occurred in Middle English. Grammar distinctions were lost as many noun and adjective endings were leveled to -e. The older plural noun marker -en largely gave way to -s, and grammatical gender was discarded. Approximately 10, 000 French loan words entered Middle English, particulary terms associated with government, church, law, the military, fashion, and food.[12] English spelling was also influenced by Norman French in this period, with the /Î¸/ and /Ã°/ sounds being spelled th rather than with the Old English letters Ã¾ (thorn) and Ã° (eth), which did not exist in Norman. These letters remain in the modern Icelandic alphabet, which is descended from the alphabet of Old Norse. [edit] Early Modern English Main article: Early Modern English The English language underwent extensive sound changes during 1400's, while its spelling conventions remained rather constant. Modern English is often dated from the Great Vowel Shift, which took place mainly during the 15th century. English was further transformed by the spread of a standardised London-based dialect in government and administration and by the standardising effect of printing. Consequent to the push toward standardization, the language acquired self-conscious terms such as " accent" and " dialect".[13] By the time of William Shakespeare (mid 16th - early 17th century),[14] the language had become clearly recognisable as Modern English. In 1604, the first English dictionary was published, the Table Alphabeticall. Increased literacy and travel have facilitated the adoption of many foreign words, especially borrowings from Latin and Greek since the Renaissance. (In the 17th century, Latin words were often used with the original inflections, but these eventually disappeared). As there are many words from different languages and English spelling is variable, the risk of mispronunciation is high, but remnants of the older forms remain in a few regional dialects, most notably in the West Country. During the period, loan words were borrowed from Italian, German, and Yiddish. British acceptance of and resistance to Americanisms began during this period.[15] [edit] Modern English Main article: Modern English The Dictionary of the English Language was the first full featured English dictionary. Samuel Johnson published the the authoritative work in 1755. To a high degree, the dictionary standardized both English spelling and word usage. Meanwhile, grammar texts by Lowth, Murray, Priestly, and others attempted to prescribe standard usage even further. Early Modern English and Late Modern English vary essentially in vocabulary. Late Modern English has many more words, arising from the Industrial Revolution and the technology that created a need for new words as well as international development of the language. The British Empire at its height covered one quarter of the Earth's surface, and the English language adopted foreign words from many countries. British English and American English, the two major varieties of the language, are spoken by 400 million persons. British English is the prestige variety, while American English is more influential. The total number of English speakers worldwide may exceed one billion.[16] [edit] Phonological changes Main article: Phonological history of English [edit] Grammatical changes The English language once had an extensive declension system similar to Latin, modern German or Icelandic. Old English distinguished between the nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive cases; and for strongly declined adjectives and some pronouns also a separate instrumental case (which otherwise and later completely coincided with the dative). In addition, the dual was distinguished from the more modern singular and plural.[17] Declension was greatly simplified during the Middle English period, when accusative and dative pronouns merged into a single objective pronoun. Nouns in Modern English no longer decline for case, except for the possessive, and for remnants of the former system in a few pronouns. [edit] Evolution of English pronouns " Who" and " whom", " he" and " him", " she" and " her", etc. are remnants of both the old nominative versus accusative and also of nominative versus dative. In other words, " her" (for example) serves as both the dative and accusative version of the nominative pronoun " she". In Old English as well as modern German and Icelandic as further examples, these cases had distinct pronouns. This collapse of the separate case pronouns into the same word is one of the reasons grammarians consider the dative and accusative cases to be extinct in English – neither is an ideal term for the role played by " whom". Instead, the term objective is often used; that is, " whom" is a generic objective pronoun which can describe either a direct or an indirect object. The nominative case, " who", is called simply the subjective. The information formerly conveyed by having distinct case forms is now mostly provided by prepositions and word order. Modern English morphologically distinguishes only one case, the possessive case – which some linguists argue is not a case at all, but a clitic (see the entry for genitive case for more information). With only a few pronominal exceptions, the objective and subjective always have the same form. [edit] Interrogative pronouns Case Old English Middle English Modern English Masculine/Feminine (Person) Nominative hwÄ� who who Accusative hwone / hwÃ¦ne whom who / whom1 Dative hwÄ�m / hwÇ£m Instrumental Genitive hwÃ¦s whos whose Neuter (Thing) Nominative hwÃ¦t what what Accusative hwÃ¦t what / whom Dative hwÄ�m / hwÇ£m Instrumental hwÈ³ / hwon why why Genitive hwÃ¦s whos whose2 1 - In some dialects who is used where Formal English only allows whom, though variation among dialects must be taken into account. 2 - Usually replaced by of what (postpositioned). [edit] First person personal pronouns Case Old English Middle English Modern English Singular Nominative iÄ‹ I / ich / ik I Accusative mÄ“ / meÄ‹ me me Dative mÄ“ Genitive mÄ« n min / mi my, mine Plural Nominative wÄ“ we we Accusative Å« s / Å« siÄ‹ us us Dative Å« s Genitive Å« ser / Å« re ure / our our, ours (Old English also had a separate dual, wit (" we two") etcetera; however, no later forms derive from it.) [edit] Second person personal pronouns Old and Middle English singular to the Modern English archaic informal Case Old English Middle English Modern English Singular Nominative Ã¾Å« Ã¾u / thou thou (you) Accusative Ã¾Ä“ / Ã¾eÄ‹ Ã¾é / thee thee (you) Dative Ã¾Ä“ Genitive Ã¾Ä« n Ã¾i / Ã¾Ä« n / Ã¾Ä« ne / thy /thin / thine thy, thine (your) Plural Nominative Ä¡Ä“ ye / È�e / you you Accusative Ä“ ow / Ä“ owiÄ‹ you, ya Dative Ä“ ow Genitive Ä“ ower your your, yours Note that the ye/you distinction still existed, at least optionally, in Early Modern English: " Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" from the King James Bible. Here the letter Ã¾ (interchangeable with Ã° in manuscripts) corresponds to th. Formal and informal forms of the second person singular and plural Old English Middle English Modern English Singular Plural Singular Plural Singular Plural Case Formal Informal Formal Informal Formal Informal Formal Informal Formal Informal Formal Informal Nominative Ã¾Å« Ä¡Ä“ you thou you ye you Accusative Ã¾Ä“ / Ã¾eÄ‹ Ä“ ow / Ä“ owiÄ‹ thee you Dative Ã¾Ä“ Ä“ ow Genitive Ã¾Ä« n Ä“ ower your, yours thy, thine your, yours your, yours (Old English also had a separate dual, È�it (" ye two") etcetera; however, no later forms derive from it.) [edit] Third person personal pronouns Case Old English Middle English Modern English Masculine Singular Nominative hÄ“ he he Accusative hine him him Dative him Genitive his his his Feminine Singular Nominative hÄ“ o heo / sche / ho / he / È�ho she Accusative hÄ« e hire / hure / her / heore her Dative hire Genitive hire hir / hire / heore / her / here her, hers Neuter Singular Nominative hit hit / it it Accusative hit hit / it / him Dative him Genitive his his / its its Plural Nominative hÄ« e he / hi / ho / hie / Ã¾ai / Ã¾ei they Accusative hÄ« e hem / ham / heom / Ã¾aim / Ã¾em / Ã¾am them Dative him Genitive hira here / heore / hore / Ã¾air / Ã¾ar their, theirs (The origin of the modern forms is generally thought to have been a borrowing from Old Norse forms Ã¾Ã¦ir, Ã¾Ã¦im, Ã¾Ã¦ira. The two different roots co-existed for some time, although currently the only common remnant is the shortened form 'em. Cf. also the demonstrative pronouns.) [edit] Historic English text samples [edit] Old English Beowulf lines 1 to 11, approximately AD 900 HwÃ¦t! WÄ“ GÄ�r-Dena in geÄ�rdagum, Ã¾Ä“ odcyninga Ã¾rym gefrÅ« non, hÅ« Ã°Ä� Ã¦Ã¾elingas ellen fremedon. Oft Scyld ScÄ“ fing sceaÃ¾ena Ã¾rÄ“ atum, monegum mÇ£gÃ¾um, meodosetla oftÄ“ ah, egsode eorlas. SyÃ°Ã°an Ç£rest wearÃ° fÄ“ asceaft funden, hÄ“ Ã¾Ã¦s frÅ�fre gebÄ�d, wÄ“ ox under wolcnum, weorÃ°myndum Ã¾Ä�h, oÃ°Ã¾Ã¦t him Ç£ghwylc Ã¾Ä�ra ymbsittendra ofer hronrÄ�de hÈ³ran scolde, gomban gyldan. ÃžÃ¦t wÃ¦s gÅ�d cyning! Which, as translated by Francis Gummere, reads: Lo, praise of the prowess of people-kings of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped, we have heard, and what honor the athelings won! Oft Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes, from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore, awing the earls. Since erst he lay friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him: for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve, till before him the folk, both far and near, who house by the whale-path, heard his mandate, gave him gifts: a good king he! Here is a sample prose text, the beginning of The Voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan. The full text can be found at The Voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan, at Wikisource. ÅŒhthere sÇ£de his hlÄ�forde, Ã†lfrÄ“ de cyninge, Ã°Ã¦t hÄ“ ealra NorÃ°monna norÃ¾mest bÅ« de. HÄ“ cwÃ¦Ã° Ã¾Ã¦t hÄ“ bÅ« de on Ã¾Ç£m lande norÃ¾weardum wiÃ¾ Ã¾Ä� WestsÇ£. HÄ“ sÇ£de Ã¾Ä“ ah Ã¾Ã¦t Ã¾Ã¦t land sÄ« e swÄ« Ã¾e lang norÃ¾ Ã¾onan; ac hit is eal wÄ“ ste, bÅ« ton on fÄ“ awum stÅ�wum styccemÇ£lum wÄ« ciaÃ° Finnas, on huntoÃ°e on wintra, ond on sumera on fiscaÃ¾e be Ã¾Ç£re sÇ£. HÄ“ sÇ£de Ã¾Ã¦t hÄ“ Ã¦t sumum cirre wolde fandian hÅ« longe Ã¾Ã¦t land norÃ¾ryhte lÇ£ge, oÃ¾Ã¾e hwÃ¦Ã°er Ç£nig mon be norÃ°an Ã¾Ç£m wÄ“ stenne bÅ« de. ÃžÄ� fÅ�r hÄ“ norÃ¾ryhte be Ã¾Ç£m lande: lÄ“ t him ealne weg Ã¾Ã¦t wÄ“ ste land on Ã°Ã¦t stÄ“ orbord, ond Ã¾Ä� wÄ« dsÇ£ on Ã°Ã¦t bÃ¦cbord Ã¾rÄ« e dagas. ÃžÄ� wÃ¦s hÄ“ swÄ� feor norÃ¾ swÄ� Ã¾Ä� hwÃ¦lhuntan firrest faraÃ¾. ÃžÄ� fÅ�r hÄ“ Ã¾Ä� giet norÃ¾ryhte swÄ� feor swÄ� hÄ“ meahte on Ã¾Ç£m Å�Ã¾rum Ã¾rÄ« m dagum gesiglau. ÃžÄ� bÄ“ ag Ã¾Ã¦t land, Ã¾Ç£r Ä“ astryhte, oÃ¾Ã¾e sÄ“ o sÇ£ in on Ã°Ã¦t lond, hÄ“ nysse hwÃ¦Ã°er, bÅ« ton hÄ“ wisse Ã°Ã¦t hÄ“ Ã°Ç£r bÄ�d westanwindes ond hwÅ�n norÃ¾an, ond siglde Ã°Ä� Ä“ ast be lande swÄ� swÄ� hÄ“ meahte on fÄ“ ower dagum gesiglan. ÃžÄ� sceolde hÄ“ Ã°Ç£r bÄ« dan ryhtnorÃ¾anwindes, for Ã°Ç£m Ã¾Ã¦t land bÄ“ ag Ã¾Ç£r sÅ« Ã¾ryhte, oÃ¾Ã¾e sÄ“ o sÇ£ in on Ã°Ã¦t land, hÄ“ nysse hwÃ¦Ã¾er. ÃžÄ� siglde hÄ“ Ã¾onan sÅ« Ã°ryhte be lande swÄ� swÄ� hÄ“ meahte on fÄ« f dagum gesiglan. Ã�Ä� lÃ¦g Ã¾Ç£r Ä�n micel Ä“ a Å« p on Ã¾Ã¦t land. Ã�Ä� cirdon hÄ« e Å« p in on Ã°Ä� Ä“ a for Ã¾Ç£m hÄ« e ne dorston forÃ¾ bÄ« Ã¾Ç£re Ä“ a siglan for unfriÃ¾e; for Ã¾Ç£m Ã°Ã¦t land wÃ¦s eall gebÅ« n on Å�Ã¾re healfe Ã¾Ç£re Ä“ as. Ne mÄ“ tte hÄ“ Ç£r nÄ�n gebÅ« n land, siÃ¾Ã¾an hÄ“ from his Ä�gnum hÄ�m fÅ�r; ac him wÃ¦s ealne weg wÄ“ ste land on Ã¾Ã¦t stÄ“ orbord, bÅ« tan fiscerum ond fugelerum ond huntum, ond Ã¾Ã¦t wÇ£ron eall Finnas; ond him wÃ¦s Ä�wÄ« dsÇ£ on Ã¾Ã¦t bÃ¦cbord. ÃžÄ� Boermas heafdon sÄ« Ã¾e wel gebÅ« d hira land: ac hÄ« e ne dorston Ã¾Ç£r on cuman. Ac Ã¾Ä�ra Terfinna land wÃ¦s eal wÄ“ ste, bÅ« ton Ã°Ç£r huntan gewÄ« codon, oÃ¾Ã¾e fisceras, oÃ¾Ã¾e fugeleras. This may be translated as: Ohthere said to his lord, King Alfred, that he of all Norsemen lived north-most. He quoth that he lived in the land northward along the North Sea. He said though that the land was very long from there, but it is all wasteland, except that in a few places here and there Finns [i. e. Sami] encamp, hunting in winter and in summer fishing by the sea. He said that at some time he wanted to find out how long the land lay northward or whether any man lived north of the wasteland. Then he traveled north by the land. All the way he kept the waste land on his starboard and the wide sea on his port three days. Then he was as far north as whale hunters furthest travel. Then he traveled still north as far as he might sail in another three days. Then the land bowed east (or the sea into the land – he did not know which). But he knew that he waited there for west winds (and somewhat north), and sailed east by the land so as he might sail in four days. Then he had to wait for due-north winds, because the land bowed south (or the sea into the land – he did not know which). Then he sailed from there south by the land so as he might sail in five days. Then a large river lay there up into the land. Then they turned up into the river, because they dared not sail forth past the river for hostility, because the land was all settled on the other side of the river. He had not encountered earlier any settled land since he travelled from his own home, but all the way waste land was on his starboard (except fishers, fowlers and hunters, who were all Finns). And the wide sea was always on his port. The Bjarmians have cultivated their land very well, but they did not dare go in there. But the Terfinn’s land was all waste except where hunters encamped, or fishers or fowlers.[18] [edit] Middle English From The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer, 14th century: Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote The droghte of March hath perced to the roote And bathed every veyne in swich licour, Of which vertu engendred is the flour; Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth Inspired hath in every holt and heeth The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne, And smale foweles maken melodye, That slepen al the nyght with open yÃ« (So priketh hem Nature in hir corages); Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages [edit] Early Modern English From Paradise Lost by John Milton, 1667: Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste Brought death into the world, and all our woe, With loss of Eden, till one greater Man Restore us, and regain the blissful seat, Sing, Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed, In the beginning how the Heavens and Earth Rose out of chaos: or if Sion hill Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed Fast by the oracle of God, I thence Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song, That with no middle Flight intends to soar Above the Aonian mount, whyle it pursues Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme. [edit] Modern English Taken from Oliver Twist, 1838, by Charles Dickens: The evening arrived: the boys took their places; the master in his cook's uniform stationed himself at the copper; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out, and a long grace was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared, the boys whispered each other and winked at Oliver, while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger and reckless with misery. He rose from the table, and advancing, basin and spoon in hand, to the master, said, somewhat alarmed at his own temerity– " Please, sir, I want some more." The master was a fat, healthy man, but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder, and the boys with fear. " What!" said the master at length, in a faint voice. " Please, sir," replied Oliver, " I want some more." The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle, pinioned him in his arms, and shrieked aloud for the beadle. [edit] See also Book: English language Wikipedia books are collections of articles that can be downloaded or ordered in print. - Phonological history of the English language - American and British English differences - English phonology - English studies - Inkhorn debate - Languages in the United Kingdom - Middle English creole hypothesis - Middle English declension - History of the Scots language - Changes to Old English vocabulary Lists: - List of dialects of the English language - List of Germanic and Latinate equivalents - Lists of English words of international origin [edit] Notes 1. ^ Baugh, Albert and Cable, Thomas. 2002. The History of the English Language. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall. pp. 79-81. 2. ^ Examples include Simek (2007: 59–60) and Mallory (2005: 135). 3. ^ Crystal, David. 2004. The Stories of English. London: Penguin. pp. 24-26. 4. ^ Origin of the Anglo-Saxon race : a study of the settlement of England and the tribal origin of the Old English people; Author: William Thomas Shore; Editors TW and LE Shore; Publisher: Elliot Stock; published 1906 p. 3, 393 5. ^ Origin of the Anglo-Saxon race : a study of the settlement of England and the tribal origin of the Old English people; Author: William Thomas Shore; Editors TW and LE Shore; Publisher: Elliot Stock; published 1906 p. 3 6. ^ " Geordie dialect". Bl. uk. 2007-03-12. http://www. bl. uk/learning/langlit/sounds/case-studies/geordie/. Retrieved 2010-06-19. 7. ^ " 4. 1 The change from Old English to Middle English". Uni-kassel. de. http://www. uni-kassel. de/fb8/misc/lfb/html/text/4-1frame. html. Retrieved 2010-06-19. 8. ^ The Oxford history of English lexicography, Volume 1 By Anthony Paul Cowie 9. ^ Baugh, Albert and Cable, Thomas. 2002. The History of the English Language. 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The Electronic Introduction to Old English. Oxford: Blackwell. http://www. wmich. edu/medieval/resources/IOE/inflpron. html. 18. ^ Original translation for this article: In this close translation readers should be able to see the correlation with the original. [edit] References - Cercignani, Fausto, Shakespeare's Works and Elizabethan Pronunciation, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981. - Mallory, J. P (2005). In Search of the Indo-Europeans. Thames & Hudson. ISBN 0-500-27616-1 - Simek, Rudolf (2007) translated by Angela Hall. Dictionary of Northern Mythology. D. S. Brewer. 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