

How french has influenced old english



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How French Has Influenced English William the Conqueror won the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and for the next three centuries, all the kings of England spoke French. During the Norman occupation, about 10, 000 French words were adopted into English, some three-fourths of which are still in use today. This French vocabulary is found in every domain, from government and law to art and literature.

Robert of Gloucester (Robert Fitzroy, 1st Earl of Gloucester (before 1100 - 31 October 1147) was an illegitimate son of King Henry I of England) wrote in his chronicle: " Vor bote a man conne frenss me hel? of him lute", meaning " Unless a man know French, one counts of him little", hence French became the language of a superior social class. French dialects influenced English also. Today we have chase, guardian, guarantee and regard from Central French (or Francien), side by side with catch, warden, warrant and reward from Norman French.

The present-day vocabulary of English is approximately half Germanic (English and Scandinavian) and half Romance (French and Latin). The two types are strangely blended. Whereas some titles of nobility prince, peer, duke, duchess, marquis, marchioness, viscount, viscountess and baron are French, the names of the highest rulers, King and Queen, are English. There is still used R. S. V. P. (Repondez s`il vous plait) printed on invitation cards or Messrs (for Messieurs) in everyday correspondence.

Parliament, meaning `speaking, conference`, is French, but Speaker, the title of the First Commoner, is English. Town, hall, house and home are English, but city, village, palace, mansion, residence and domicile are French. French, too, are chamber and apartment, whereas room and bower are English;

justice, just, judge, jury and juridical are all French, as well as court, assize, prison, bill, act, council, tax, custom, mayor, chattel, moneyand rent, which all came into the language before the close of the thirteenth century.

The names of the live animals: ox, swine and calf are English, whereas those of the cooked meats beef, pork and veal are French. The superiority of French cooking is demonstrated by culinary terms as: boil, broil, fry, grill, roast, souse and toast. Breakfast is English, but dinner and supper are French. Hunt is English, but chase, quarry, scent and track are French. Names of the older crafts are English: baker, fisherman, miller, saddler, builder, shepherd, shoemaker, wainwright, weaver and webber.

Those of more elegant occupations are French: carpenter, draper, joiner, mason and tailor. The names of the commoner parts of the human body are English, but face and voice are French. Generally the English words are stronger, more physical and more human. We feel more at ease after getting a hearty welcome than after being granted a cordial reception. We can compare as well freedom with liberty, friendshipwith amity, kingship with royalty, holiness with sanctity, happinesswith felicity, depth with profundity, and love with charity.