

英语师范系
英美概况重点课
第3课 英语史

Which English

**--A Brief History
of English Language**

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The Celts



The Celtic tribes spoke a language that survives today in **Scotch Gaelic, Irish, Welsh, and Breton. It also survives in the names of many places in Britain.**

Latin Influence

As the Romans extended their empire, their language Latin, became the *lingua franca* of most of Britain.

The English alphabet adapted from Roman scripts appeared sometime between AD 500 and 700

Old English of Anglo-Saxon (about AD 450-1066)

Old English, used both Latin and Germanic scripts, is a West Germanic language closely related to Old Frisian. It had a grammar similar in many ways to Classical Latin, and was much closer to modern German and Icelandic than modern English in most respects, including its grammar.

**The Old English of Anglo-Saxon
is the ancestor of modern
English.**

The second major source of loanwords to Old English were the Scandinavian words introduced during the Viking invasions of the 9th and 10th centuries.

Items of Basic Vocabulary

- anger

anqr ("=trouble, affliction"); root *ang* ("=strait, straitened, troubled");

- ball

bq llr ("=round object")

- cake

kaka ("=cake")

- die

deyja ("=pass away")

- fog

from Old Norse *fok* through Danish *fog*, meaning "spray", "shower", "snowdrift"

- ***Beowulf***

Beowulf an Old English heroic epic poem set in Scandinavia, commonly cited as one of the most important works of Anglo-Saxon literature.

Its composition by an anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet is dated between the 8th and the early 11th century.

- ***Ecclesiastical History of the English People***

The ***Historia ecclesiastica gentis***

Anglorum (in English: ***Ecclesiastical History of the English People***) is a work in Latin by **Venerable Bede** on the history of the Christian Churches in England, and of England generally; its main focus is on the conflict between Roman and Celtic Christianity.

Middle English

Middle English developed out of Late Old English in Norman England (1066–1154) and was spoken throughout the Plantagenet era (1154–1485).

Trilingualism in Mediaeval England

French

English

Latin

The blend of Anglo-Saxon, Latin and French which developed in the three centuries after the Norman Conquest is known as Middle English

- **Geoffrey Chaucer**

he is best known today for ***The Canterbury Tales***. Chaucer is a crucial figure in developing the legitimacy of the vernacular, Middle English, at a time when the dominant literary languages in England were French and Latin.



The Middle English dialect used by Chaucer was that of **London**

Modern English: the Language of Shakespeare



In early modern English, from about AD 1500, the introduction of new words were related to subjects like astronomy, philosophy, literature and theology.

By the time of William **Shakespeare**, all of his works were written in **Modern English**.

• **Words of Greek Origin**

During the 16th and 17th centuries scientific investigations brought new words into the language derived from words used in ancient Greece.

Medicine:

Cholesterol, from the Greek *chole-* (bile) and *stereos* (solid) followed by the chemical suffix *-ol* for an alcohol

Osteoporosis ("porous bones", from Greek: *ostoun* meaning "bone" and *poros* meaning "pore") is a disease of bones that leads to an increased risk of fracture.

Technology: -logy, psycho-, tele-; amazon, odyssey...

Words of Italian Origin

Many current terms relating to **architecture**, e.g. balcony (from Italian: *balcone*); and **literature**, **art**, and especially **music** come from Italian

Words of French Origin

cliché, bon mot, résumé, coup d' état, avant-garde, genre, laissez-faire...

Difference between Middle English and Modern English

The changes from Middle English to Modern English involve mainly pronunciation, vocabulary, and spelling.

Standard English and Social Class

- Received Pronunciation

Received Pronunciation (RP), also called the **Queen's (or King's) English**, is the accent of Standard English in England

“the standard accent of English as spoken in the south of England”

--Oxford Dictionary

RP is sometimes referred to as *Oxford English* or *BBC English* because those organizations are often considered standard-bearers for it.



Is there any relation
between certain accent
and social class?

English Today



How is English today?

What are the factors that could influence the evolution of a language in modern world?

Do you know any other borrowed words or expression in English?

