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Theme:

THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

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Introduction.

Why do people all over the world learn foreign languages? Perhaps because the world is getting smaller, in a way: nations are more closely linked with each other than ever before, companies operate world-wide, scientists of different nationalities co-operate, and tourists travel practically everywhere. The ability to communicate with people from other countries is getting more and more important. And learning foreign languages broadens your horizons, too!

Before learners of a foreign language are able to communicate, they have to acquire many skills. They must learn to produce unfamiliar sounds. They must build up a vocabulary. They must learn grammar rules and how to use them. And, last but not least, they must develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and learn how to react in a variety of situations.

All people like to travel. Some travel around their own country, others travel abroad. Some like to travel into the future, others prefer to travel into the past. While I was working out my research paper and reading many books on English history, I had an exciting trip into a remote past. It was a fantastical journey our Imaginary Time Machine and a Magic Wand. The Time Machine took me into the depth of the centuries, into the very early history of Britain. I waved the Magic Wand and the words began to talk, they disclosed to me their mysteries, I discovered secrets hidden in familiar things. In other words, you will be a witness of making of English.

I. Old English. (450-1100)

a). Celtic tribes.

Make a first turn of the Time Machine and you will find yourself on the British Isles in the time of the ancient inhabitants, the Celts. The Celts were natives of the British Isles long before the English. The Celts had their language, which is still spoken by the people living in the part of Britain known as Wales. And though many changes happened on the British Isles, some Celtic words are still used in the English language.

Two thousand years ago there was an Iron Age Celtic culture throughout the British Isles. It seems that the Celts, who had been arriving from Europe from the eighth century BC onwards, intermingled with the peoples who were already there. We know that religious sites that had been built long before the arrival of the Celts continued to be used in the Celtic period.

For people in Britain today, the chief significance of the prehistoric period (for which no written records exist) is its sense of mystery. This sense finds its focus most easily in the astonishing monumental architecture of this period, the remains of which exist throughout the country. Wiltshire, in south-western England, has two spectacular examples: Silbury Hill, the largest burial mound

in Europe, and Stonehenge. Such places have a special importance for anyone interested in the cultural and religious practices of prehistoric Britain. We know very little about these practices, but there are some organizations today (for example, the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids – a small group of eccentric intellectuals and mystics) who base their beliefs on them.

The Celts preserved their language in some parts of Britain, but they did not add many words to the English vocabulary. Those, that are in use now, are mostly place-names: names of regions, towns, rivers. The Celts had a number of similar words to name rivers, like: Exe, Esk, Usk. All of them come from a word meaning *water* (*uisge*). Later this word was used to name a strong alcoholic drink made from barley or rye. It was first called “water of life”. The word changed its form and pronunciation, and today at restaurants in the West one can see on the menu among other spirits *whisky*, a Celtic word formerly meaning *water*.

b). The Romans.

One more turn of our Time Machine and it took me into the 1st century of our era. At that time Romans came into Britain, they ruled the country for 400 years. So, you can guess that many Latin words came later into the English language through Celts, because, as you know, Romans spoke Latin.

The Roman province of Britannia most of present-day England and Wales. The Romans imposed their own way of life and culture, making use of the existing Celtic aristocracy to govern and encouraging this ruling class to adopt Roman dress and Roman language. The Romans never went to Ireland and exerted an influence, without actually governing there, over only the southern part of Scotland. It was during this time that a Celtic tribe called the Scots migrated from Ireland to Scotland, where they became allies of the Picts (another Celtic tribe) and opponents of the Romans. This division of the Celts into those who experienced Roman rule (the Britons in England and Wales) and those who did not (the Gaels in Ireland and Scotland) may help to explain the development of two distinct branches of the Celtic group of languages.

The remarkable thing about the Romans is that, despite their long occupation of Britain, they left very little behind. To many other parts of Europe they bequeathed a system of law and administration which forms the basis of the modern system and a language which developed into the modern Romance family of languages. In Britain, they left neither. Moreover, most of their villas, baths and temples, their impressive network of roads, and the cities they founded, including Londinium (London), were soon destroyed or fell into disrepair. Almost the only lasting reminder of their presence are place-names like Chester, Lancaster and Gloucester, which include variants of the Roman word *castra* (a military camp).

Roman rule lasted for 4 centuries. There are many things in Britain today to remind of the Romans: wells, roads, walls.

To defend their province the Romans stationed their legions in Britain. Straight roads were built so that the legions might march quickly. Whenever they were needed, to any part of the country. These roads were made of several layers of stones, lime, mortar and gravel. They were made so well that they lasted a long time and still exist today. Thomas Hardy dedicated his poem to Roman roads. Here is the beginning.

THE ROMAN ROAD

The Roman road runs straight and bare
As the pale parting line in hair
Across the heath. And thoughtful men
Contrast its days of now and then,
And delve, and measure, and compare,
Visioning on the vacant air
Helmed legionaries who proudly rear
The eagle as they pace again the Roman road...

One of the roads has a name – “KATLING STREET”. It is a great Roman road extending east and west across Britain. Beginning at Dover, it ran through Canterbury to London, thence through St.Albans, Dunstable, along the boundary of Leicester and Warwick to Wroxeter on the Severn. The origin of the name is not known and there are several other sections of the road so called. In the late 9th century it became the boundary between English and Danish territory.

To guard their province against the Picts and Scots who lived in the hills of Scotland the Romans built a high wall, a military barrier seventy-three miles long. It was called “Hadrian’s Wall” because it was built by command of the Emperor Hadrian. Long stretches of “HADRIAN’S WALL” have remained to this day.

In the capital of Britain you can see the fragments of the old London wall built by the Romans.

What really happened in AD 61? In AD 61 the king of the Celtic tribe Iceni died. Before he died he had named Roman Emperor Nero as his heir. He hoped that this would put his family and kingdom under the Emperor’s protection. But the result was the exact opposite of his hopes. His kingdom was plundered by centurions, his private property was taken away, his widow Boadicea was flogged, his daughters were deprived of any rights, his relatives were turned into slaves. Boadicea’s tribe rose to rebellion. Boadicea stood at the head of a numerous army. More than 70,000 Romans were killed during the revolt. But the Britons had little chance against an experienced, well-armed Roman army. The rising was crushed, Boadicea took poison to avoid capture.

Her monument on the Thames Embankment opposite Big Ben remind people

of her harsh cry: "Liberty of death" which has echoed down the ages. Some of the English words relating to meals are of Latin origin, they were borrowed from the Romans in ancient times. The Romans in the period of their flourishing and expansion came into contact with the Germanic tribes, or the Teutons, who later moved to Britain and formed there the English nation. The Romans were a race with higher civilization than the Teutons whom they considered barbarians. They taught the Teutons many useful things and gave them very important words that the forefathers of the English brought with them to Britain and that remained in the English language up to now. *Kitchen* and *table* are Latin words borrowed in those far-off days, that show a revolution in culinary arrangements; *dish*, *kettle* and *cup* also became known to the Teutons at that time.

The early words of Latin origin give us a dim picture of Roman trades traveling with their mules and asses the paved roads or the German provinces, their chests and boxes and wine-sacks full of goods that they profitably bargained with the primitive ancestors of the nowadays English. *Wine* was one of the first items of trade between the Romans and the Teutons. That's how this word came into use.

The Teutons knew only one fruit – *apple*, they did not grow fruit trees or cultivated gardens, but they seem to have been eager to learn, for they borrowed *pear*, *plum*, *cherry*.

The Teutons were an agricultural people, under the influence of the Romans they began to grow *beet*, *onion*.

Milk was one of the main kinds of food with the Teutons, but the Romans taught them methods of making *cheese* and *butter* for milk.

Among other culinary refinements that came to the Teutons from the Romans are spices: *pepper*, *mint*.

Judging by the Latin borrowings of that period the ancestors of English were very much impressed by Roman food, weren't they?

The word "calendar" came to us from Latin. In the Latin there was a word "calendarium". It meant "a record-book". Money-lenders kept a special book, in which they recorded to whom they lent money and how much interest they will get. This book was called "calendarium" because interest was paid on the "Calends". By the Calends the Romans named the first day of each month.

Time passed, the old meaning was forgotten. "Calendar" began to mean the record of days, weeks, months within a year.

This is a story of the word "calendar". But the story of how a calendar was made is still more interesting indeed. We know that a calendar provides an easy way to place a day within the week, month or year. But it is not easy to make a calendar. The trouble is that the length of a year is determined by the length of time the earth takes to revolve once on its own axis. But the earth does not take an equal number of days to complete its year. It needs 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds. Obviously you cannot divide a day of 24 hours into that. And the problem is further complicated because the month is determined by the length of time it takes the moon to go around the earth,

which is $29 \frac{1}{2}$ days into $365 \frac{1}{4}$ days, minus 11 minutes and 14 seconds. The result is that most calendars were messes.

The English got their calendar from the Romans. But at first the Romans had a very bad calendar. They had ten month of varying length, and then they added enough days at the end to make the year right. Besides the politicians changed the length of the months as they wished. They could change the length of the month to keep themselves in office longer and to leave less time for their opponents. I can't imagine that somebody will reduce June, July, August to two weeks each, and will take away more than half my summer vacation? Will you like that? Of course, not.

The calendar varied so much that by the time of Julius Caesar January came in August.

Meanwhile a very good calendar had been worked out in Asia Minor and was in use in Egypt. Julius Caesar, a great Roman emperor, changed it a little to fit the Roman customs and introduced it in Rome. This calendar was called after him "the Julian Calendar". As a matter of fact, Caesar only gave the orders; he had the advice of a Greek astronomer named Sosigenes. This calendar worked well for hundred years. But it provided only for exact figure of 365 days a year and an extra day in every four years, it did not count minutes and seconds. So, once more, the calendar year was getting farther and farther from the year of the earth's revolution around the sun.

Then in 1582 another change of calendar took place. The Roman Pope Gregory XII suppressed ten days in 1582 and started new calendar. The English people adopted the Gregorian Calendar in 1752. And for a time all dates were given two ways: one for the New Style, one for the Old Style.

Now nobody uses the Old Style any more, but of course the calendar is not quite accurate yet. Still it will be a long time before we have to add or subtract another day.

The year is divided into months and every month has its own name. Now we'd like to investigate how the names of months appeared. But first, let's think of the word "*month*" itself.

A month is a measure of time. It is a very old word. It goes back to Indo-European base. Long time ago people probably- had only three measures of time - year, which was the four seasons; a day which was the period from one sunrise to the next; and a month, which had the period from one moon to the next.

So, the Indo-European base "me-" came into Old English, and became "mona". The word meant "a measure of time". Then it began to mean "moon", since the moon measured time. Later suffix "-th" was added to the end of the word; the word "monath" meant the period of time which the moon measured. Still later the English people dropped the "a" and called it "month".

And now, stories of the names of months. The Modern English names for the months of the year all come from the Latin. But before the English people adopted the Latin names they had their native names. And, in fact, in some cases the native names are more interesting than the Latin ones.

The first month of the year is January. January is the month of Janus. Janus was a Roman God of the beginning of things. Janus had two faces: on the front and the back of the head. He could look backwards into the past and forward to the beginning year. January is a right name for the first month of the New Year, isn't it? On the New Year eve we always think of what we have done in the past year and we are planning to do better in the New Year.

Now, the Old English had its own name for January. It was "Wulf-Monath", which means "month of wolves". To-day England is thickly populated and a very civilized country and it is hard, to imagine that there was a time when wolves roamed the island. In the cold of the deep winter they would get so hungry they would come into the towns to look for food, and so January was called "the month of *the* wolves".

The name of February comes from the Latin "februa" - "purification". It was a month when the ancient Romans had a festival of purification.

Before the English adopted the Latin name, they called this month "Sprate-Kale-Month". "Kale" is a cabbage plant, "sprate" means to sprout. So, it was "the month when cabbages sprout"

March is a month of Mar's, the Roman God of war. March was the earliest warm time of the year when the Romans could start a war. Before the time of Julius Caesar the Roman year began with March which was then the first month of the year.

The Old English name for March was "Hlyd-Monath", which means "the month of noisy winds". March in Britain often comes with strong winds. By the way, this explains the saying: "If March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb".

There are a few stories about the meaning of the name "April"! The most spread one is a pretty story that the month was named from a Latin word "aperire" - "to open". It is a month when buds of trees and flowers begin to open.

The English before they adopted the Latin names, called April "Easter-Monath", the month of Easter.

May is named for the Roman goddess of growth and increase, Maia. She was the Goddess of spring, because in spring everything was growing, flourishing, increasing.

The English name is not so poetic. They called the month "Thrimilce", which means something like "to milk three times". In May the cows give so much milk that the farmers had to milk them three times a day.

Month of "June" was so called after the Junius family of Rome, one of the leading clans of ancient Rome. Besides, the Roman festival of Juno, the Goddess of Moon, was celebrated on the first day of the month.

We think of June as the month of brides and roses, but to the Anglo-Saxons it was "Sere-Monath", the "dry month".

July is the month of Julius Caesar. The month began to be called that in the year when Julius Caesar was killed.

The English called July “Maed-Monath”, “meadow month”, because the meadows are in bloom in July.

Now, comes “August”. This month was once called “sexillis”, as it was the sixth month from March, with which, as you remember, the year once opened. It was then changed into August in honour of the Roman emperor Augustus Caesar, the nephew of Julius Caesar. This man was chosen by Julius Caesar as his heir, he took the name Caesar, and was given the title “Augustus” by the Roman Senate. This month was “a lucky Month” for Augustus Caesar. By the way, Augustus refused to have fewer days in his month of August than there were in the month of July. So he borrowed a day from February and added it to August; that is why August has 31 days.

The Old English name for August was "Wead-Monath", the month of weeds. You know, the Old English word "weed" meant vegetation in generale.

“September”, “October”, “November” and “December” are just "seventh", "eighth", "ninth" and "tenth" months of the year. You remember that before the Romans changed their calendar, March was the first month.

The English had more descriptive names for these month. September was called "Harfest-Monath", "the harvest month". October was "Win-Monath", "the wine month". November was "Bloo-Monath", because in November the English sacrificed cattle to their gods. December was “Mid-Winter-Monath”, because this month was the middle month of winter.

C). Germanic tribes.

At the beginning of the 5th century the Romans left the islands, they had to save their own country from barbarians. If you want to know what events followed after that, turn on the Time Machine again. So, here we are, in the 5th century, This is the time of the birth of the English language. The Germanic tribes of Angles, Saxons and Jutes invaded the misty fertile island. Some of the native Britons were killed, many others fled from the invaders "as from fire" into the hilly parts of the country. Angles, Saxons and Jutes spread all over the fertile lands of the Isles. Gradually they became one nation - English. They developed one language - English. As historians write, "the English language arrived in Britain on the point of a sword"! The people of that time of the history are called Anglo-Saxons, their language is old English or Anglo-Saxon as well.

The next destination of our Time Machine is the 7th century, when Christianity was introduced in Britain, monasteries with schools and libraries were set up all over the country. The English language was considerably enriched by the Latin words.

Now, with the help of the Time Machine we'll fly over into the 8th century. At this time the ancient Scandinavians, called the Vikings, began to raid Britain. The Vikings continued their wars with the English until the time the

Anglo-Saxon king Alfred the Great made a treaty with them and gave them a part of the country, that was called "Danelaw". The Vikings settled there, married English wives and began peaceful life on the territory of Britain. Later military conflicts resumed again, but by the 11th century they were over. The influence of these events on the English language was great, indeed. A large number of Scandinavian words came into English from "Danes" as the Anglo-Saxons called all the Vikings.

One reason why Roman Britannia disappeared so quickly is probably that its influence was largely confined to the towns. In the countryside, where most people lived, farming methods had remained unchanged and Celtic speech continued to be dominant.

The Roman occupation had been a matter of colonial control rather than large-scale settlement. But, during the fifth century, a number of tribes from the north-western European mainland invaded and settled in large numbers. Two of these tribes were the Angles and the Saxons. These Anglo-Saxons soon had the south-east of the country in their grasp. In the west of the country their advance was temporarily halted by an army of Celtic Britons under the command of the legendary King Arthur. Nevertheless, by the end of the sixth century, they and their way of life predominated in nearly all of England and in parts of southern Scotland. The Celtic Britons were either Saxonized or driven westwards, where their culture and language survived in south-west Scotland, Wales and Cornwall.

The Anglo-Saxons had little use for towns and cities. But they had a great effect on the countryside, where they introduced new farming methods and founded the thousands of self-sufficient villages which formed the basis of English society for the next thousand or so years.

The Anglo-Saxons were pagan when they came to Britain. Christianity spread throughout Britain from two different directions during the sixth and seventh centuries. It came directly from Rome when St Augustine arrived in 597 and established his headquarters at Canterbury in the south-east of England. It had already been introduced into Scotland and northern England from Ireland, which had become Christian more than 150 years earlier. Although Roman Christianity eventually took over the whole of the British Isles, the Celtic model persisted in Scotland and Ireland for several hundred years. It was less centrally organized, and had less need for a strong monarchy to support it. This partly explains why both secular and religious power in these two countries continued to be both more locally based and less secure than it was elsewhere in Britain throughout the medieval period.

Britain experience another wave of Germanic invasions in the 8th century. These invaders, known as Vikings, Horsemen or Danes, came from Scandinavia. In the ninth century they conquered and settled the extreme north and west of Scotland, and also some coastal regions of Ireland. Their conquest of England was halted when they were defeated by King Alfred of the Saxon kingdom of Wessex. This resulted in an agreement which divided England

between Wessex, in the south and west, and the “Danelaw” in the north and east.

However, the cultural differences between Anglo-Saxons and Danes were comparatively small. They led roughly the same way of life and spoke two varieties of the same Germanic tongue (which combined to form the basis of modern English). Moreover, the Danes soon converted to Christianity. These similarities made political unification easier, and by the end of the 10th century England was one kingdom with a Germanic culture throughout.

Most of modern-day Scotland was also united by this time, at least in name, in a Gaelic kingdom.

Paopla in Anglo-Saxon times. Living uncomfortably close to the natural world, were well aware that though creation is inarticulate it is animate, and that every created thing, every “with”, had its own personality.

The riddle is a sophisticated and harmless form of invocation by imitation: the essence of it is that the poet, by an act of imaginative identification assumes the personality of some created thing - an animal, a plant, a natural force.

The specialists consider that they know not enough about The Exeter Book collection of riddles. Ridding was certainly a popular pastime among the Anglo-Saxons, especially in the monasteries, and there are extant collections (in Latin, of course,) from the pens of Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne, Tatwin, Archbishop of Canterbury and others.

The provenance and genesis of the collection are unknown, and from internal evidence one can only draw the modest conclusion that the ninety-five riddles were not written by one man.

In English a student and the little black circle in the center of the eye are both called “pupils”? And the connection between them is a doll. Both the words came into the English language through French from the Latin. In Latin there was a word “pupa” – “a girl”, and “pupus” – “a boy”. When the Latin ending “illa” was added to “pupa” or “pupus”, the word meant “a little girl” or “a little boy”. Since little girls and little boys went to school, they became “pupils”.

But “pupilla”, a little girl, also meant “a doll”. It is easy to understand why, isn’t it? Now, if you look into the pupil of someone’s eye when the light is just right, you can see your reflection. Your figure, by the way, is very, very small like a tiny doll. The Romans named the black circle in the eye “pupilla” because of the doll they could see there. And the word came into the English as “pupil” as well. And thus, we have in the English language two words that are spelt the same and have the same origin, but mean different things: “pupil” – a student, and “pupil” – a black circle in the center of your eye.

Professor casts a quick glance at the wall and noticed a map there. “This map is made of paper. But the word itself meant *cloth* once. This word came into English from Latin, the Latin *mappa* was *cloth*. First maps were drawn on fabrics. In Latin the combination of the words appeared: *mappa mundi* – “cloth of the world”. It was the first representation of the world as a drawing on the cloth. Later maps began to be made of paper, but the word remained.

By another route the same word came into English for the second time. In Late Latin this word was corrupted into *nappa*, and later, through French, it entered the English language with the new meaning of *napkin*.”

“When a teacher asks you a question. She expects you will give a correct answer. *Answer* is a very strange word. Its spelling makes no sense until you know its origin. This is a very old word. In Old English the noun was *andswaru* and the verb – *andswearing*. So, you see, it consisted of two parts: *and* and *swear*. The word *and* at that time meant *against*; *swear* meant *to give a solemn oath*. In the youth of the English language *andswaru* was “a solemn oath made against an accusation”. A man had to pronounce a solemn in reply to an accusation, to prove that it is wrong. In the course of historical development the word lost its solemnity and it means now *a reply, to reply*. Any little child answer you back today.”

Professor History remarks, “I see that some of you write with a ballpoint pen, others with a pencil, and there are some who write with a fountain pen. So, you can’t do without ink, after all. A simple three-letter word *ink* comes from a nine-letter ancestor that meant *a branding iron*. And now a few steps away from the skill of writing towards the skill of healing wounds. When we have a wound we cauterize it, we burn it with heat or with a chemical in order to close it and prevent it from becoming infected. The ancient Greeks used to cauterize a wound as we do, and the grandparent word of *cauterize* is *kauterion*, a branding iron. The Greek not only sealed wounds with heat, but they used much the same process in art for sealing fast the colours of their painting. It was customary then to use wax colours fixed with heat or, as they expressed it, *encauston, burned in*. In Latin this word changed to *encaustum*, and it became the name for a kind of purple *ink* that the emperors used when they signed their official documents. In Old French *encaustum* became *enque*. English adopted the word as *enke* or *inke*, that is how today we have our *ink*, coloured liquid used for writing or printing.”

“The start of spoken language is buried in mystery and in a tangle of theories,” Professor History begins his lecture. “The history of written language also disappears in the jungles, in the deserts and far fields of unrecorded time. But at least the words that have to do with writing tell us much about the early beginning of the art and the objects that were used to record the written symbols.

The word *write* was spelled *writan* in Old English. It first meant *to scratch*, and it is exactly what the primitives did on their birch-bark or shingles with sharp stones and others pointed instruments. In the more sophisticated lands that surrounded the Mediterranean the papyrus plant was used instead of the bark of the trees; as you already know, that gave us the word *paper*.

Pen with which we write now, in its Latin form *penna*, meant a feather and in some ancient collections you can still see quill pens. And *pencil* that we hold inherits its name from the Latin *penicillum*, meaning *a little tail*, and this refers to the time when writing was done with a tiny brush that looked indeed like a little tail.

The term *letter* designating a written symbol, a letter of the alphabet is thought to be relative to the Latin word *linere*, to smear, to leave a dirty mark on some surface. Isn't it a good description of some of the early writing?

But what is written should be read. In *read* we have an odd little word, from the Old English *raedan*, which meant first *to guess, to discern*. And again it is just what you had to do to interpret what was scratched on wooden shingles. Anything that had to be interpreted was called *a raedels*. Later on people began to think that the word *raedels* was a plural because of the "s" on the end. A new singular, *raedel* was formed and here is the ancestor of our word *riddle*. Finally the word *read* took on its modern meaning: if you can read, you have the ability to look at and understand what is written.

Of course the basis of all writing is *language*. But it is first of all, a spoken activity, and hence this noun is derived from a word referring to the organ of speech primarily involved. In this case it is the French word *language*, which goes back to the Latin *lingua*, tongue. The English, though, retained their native word to name that soft movable part inside your mouth which you see for tasting and licking and for speaking", a tongue. Sometimes you may hear the word *tongue* used in the meaning of language, but it is an old-fashioned and literary use.

If you want to read what is written in a foreign language, you need a dictionary. The term *dictionary* comes from the Latin word *dictio*, from *dico*, say or speak. A dictionary is really a record of what people say, of the pronunciation, spellings, and meanings that they give to words."

In Old English there was a different word with which the Englishmen called bread, it was *half*. But then as a result of the Vikings invasion and Scandinavian influence on the English language a new word of the same meaning entered the English vocabulary from Scandinavian: *cake*. Since the English had already their own word (*half*), they started to use the word *cake* for a special type of bread. First it referred to a small loaf of bread of flat and round shape. From the 15th century it began to mean sweet food, as it does now.

To the Scandinavians, living in Britain, called their bread by the word *brauth*. The English had a similar word – *bread* meaning *a lump, a piece of bread*. Under the influence of the Scandinavian language the word *bread* widened its meaning and began to mean bread in general, while the word *loaf* (from Old English *half*) narrowed its meaning, now it is a large lump of bread which we slice before eating.

The Great Englishman Caxton, who introduced printing in Britain in 1476, wrote in a preface to one of the books about a funny episode with *egg*. The thing is that in Old English the word *egg* had a different form which spelled as *ey* in Middle English; its plural form was *eyren*. And again the Scandinavians brought with them to Britain their word *egg*. It first spread in the northern English dialects, the southerners did not know it and used their native word.

Caxton tells the readers that once English merchants from the northern regions were sailing down the Thames, bound for the Netherlands. There was no wind

and they landed at a small southern village. The merchants decided to buy some food. They came to a house and one of them asked a woman if she could sell them *eggs*. The woman answered that she did not understand him because she did not know French. The merchant became very angry and said that he did not speak French either. Then another merchant helped. He said they wanted *eyren*, the woman understood him and brought them *eggs*.

For rather a long period of time two words existed in Britain: a native English word *eyren* was used in the South, and the Scandinavian borrow *eggs* in the North. The Scandinavian word has won after, as you can see.

D). The Norman French.

I made another excursion into the past. The Time Machine has carried me into the 11th century, into the year of 1066. An awful picture opens before my eyes: a great battle at Hastings, the English king Harold is killed, the English are defeated, the Norman invaders have won a victory. The Normans came from across the British Channel, from the part of France called Normandy. They conquered the English under the head of their leader, Duke William, who later got the name of William the Conqueror. The Normans brought into Britain not only their king, but their French language as well. So it explains why there are so many French words in the English vocabulary.

The successful Norman invasion of England in 1066 brought Britain into the mainstream of western European culture. Previously most links had been with Scandinavia. Only in Scotland did this link survive; the western isles (until the thirteenth century) and the northern islands (until the fifteenth century) remaining under the control of Scandinavian kings. Throughout this period the English kings also ruled over areas of land on the continent were often at war with the French kings in disputes over ownership.

Unlike the Germanic invasions, the Norman invasion was small-scale. There was no such thing as a Norman area of settlement. Instead, the Norman soldiers who had been a part of the invading army were given the ownership of land – and of the people living on it. A strict feudal system was imposed. Great nobles, or barons, were responsible directly to the king; lesser lords, each owing a village, were directly responsible to a baron. Under them were the peasants, tied by a strict system of mutual duties and obligations to the local lord, and forbidden to travel without his permission. The peasants were the English-speaking Saxons. The lords and the barons were the French-speaking Normans. This was the beginning of the English class system.

The existence of two words for the larger farm animals in modern English is a result of the class divisions established by the Norman conquest. There are the words for the living animals (e.g. *cow*, *pig*, *sheep*), which have their origins in Anglo-Saxon, and the words for the meat from the animals (e.g. *beef*, *pork*,

mutton.), which have their origins in the French language that the Normans brought to England. Only the Normans normally ate meat; the poor Anglo-Saxon peasants did not!

The strong system of government which the Normans introduced meant that the Anglo-Norman kingdom was easily the most powerful political force in British Isles. Not surprisingly therefore, the authority of the English monarch gradually extended to other parts of these islands in the next 250 years. But the end of the thirteenth century, a large part of eastern Ireland was controlled by Anglo-Norman lords in the name of the English king and the while of Wales was under his direct rule (at which time the custom of naming the monarch's eldest son the "Prince of Wales" began). Scotland managed to remain politically independent in the medieval period, but was obliged to fight occasional wars to do so.

II. Middle English. (1100-1500)

The English which was used from about 1100 to about 1500 is called Middle English. The cultural story of this period is different. Two hundred and fifty years after the Norman Conquest, it was a Germanic language (Middle English) and not the Norman (French) language which had become the dominant one in all classes of society of England. Furthermore, it was the Anglo-Saxon concept of common law, and not Roman law, which formed the basis of the legal system.

Despite English rule, northern and central Wales was never settled in great numbers by Saxon or Norman. As a result the (Celtic) Welsh language and culture remained strong. Eisteddfods, national festivals of Welsh song and poetry, continued throughout the medieval period and still take place today. The Anglo-Norman lords of eastern Ireland remained loyal to the English king but, despite laws to the contrary, mostly adopted the Gaelic language and customs.

The political independence of Scotland did not prevent a gradual switch to the English language and customs in the lowland (southern) part of the country. First, the Anglo-Saxon element here was strengthened by the arrival of many Saxon aristocrats fleeing the Norman conquest of England. Second, the Celtic kings saw that the adoption of an Anglo-Norman style of government would strengthen royal power. By the end of this period a cultural split had developed between the lowlands, where the way of life and language was similar to that in England, and the highlands, where (Celtic) Gaelic culture

and language prevailed – and where, because of the mountainous landscape, the authority of the king was hard to enforce.

It was in this period that Parliament began its gradual evolution into the democratic body which is it today. The word “parliament”, which comes from the French word *parler* (to speak), was first used in England in the thirteenth century to describe an assembly of nobles called together by the king. In 1295, the Model Parliament set the pattern for the future by including elected representatives from urban and rural areas.

Many food names in English are French borrowings. After the Norman Conquest under William the Conqueror (1066) French words began to enter the English language increasing in number for more than three centuries. Among them were different names of dishes. The Norman barons brought to Britain their professional cooks who showed to English their skill.

Learners of the English language notice that there is one name for a live beast grazing in the field and another for the same beast when it is killed and cooked. The matter is that English peasants preserved Anglo-Saxon names for the animals they used to bring to Norman castles to sell. But the dishes made of the meat got French names. That is why now we have native English names of animals: *ox, cow, calf, sheep, swine*, and French names of meals from whose meat they are cooked: *beef, veal, mutton, pork*. (By the way “lamb” is an exception, it is a native Anglo-Saxon word). A historian writes that an English peasant who had spent a hard day tending his oxen, calves, sheep and swine probably saw little enough of the beef, veal, mutton and pork, which were gobbled at night by his Norman masters.

The French enriched English vocabulary with such food words as *bacon, sausage, gravy*; then: *toast, biscuit, cream, sugar*. They taught the English to have for dessert such fruits as: *fig, grape, orange, lemon, pomegranate, peach* and the names of these fruits became known to the English due the French. The English learned from them how to make *pastry, tart, jelly, treacle*. From the French the English came to know about *mustard* and *vineyard*. The English borrowed from the French verbs to describe various culinary processes: *to boil, to roast, to stew, to fry*.

One famous English linguist exclaimed: “It is melancholy to think what the English dinner would have been like, had there been no Norman Conquest!”

The period of Middle English is the time of the fast development of English literature. The greatest poet of the 14th century was Geoffrey Chaucer. He is often called the father of English poetry, although, as we know, there were many English poets before him. As we should expect, the language had changed a great deal in the seven hundred years since the time *Beowulf* and it is much easier to read Chaucer than to read anything written in Old English. Here are the opening lines of *The Canterbury Tales* (about 1387), his greatest work:

Whan that Aprille with his shoures swote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the
rote

*When April with his sweet showers has stuck
to the roots the
dryness of March...*

There are five main beats in each line, and the reader will notice that rhyme has taken the place of Old English alliteration. Chaucer was a well-educated man who read Latin, and studied French and Italian poetry; but he was not interested only in books. He traveled and made good use of his eyes; and the people whom he describes are just like living people.

The Canterbury Tales total altogether about 17,000 lines – about half of Chaucer’s literary production. A party of pilgrims agree to tell stories to pass the time on their journey from London to Canterbury with its great church and the grave of Thomas a Becket. There are more than twenty of these stories, mostly in verse, and in the stories we get to know the pilgrims themselves. Most of them, like the merchant, the lawyer, the cook, the sailor, the ploughman, and the miller, are ordinary people, but each of them can be recognized as a real person with his or her own character. One of the most enjoyable characters, for example, is the Wife of Bath. By the time she tells her story we know her as a woman of very strong opinions who believes firmly in marriage (she has had five husbands, one after the other) and equally firmly in the need to manage husbands strictly. In her story one of King Arthur’s knights must give within a year the correct answer to the question “What do women love most?” in order to save his life. An ugly old witch knows the answer (“to rule”) and agrees to tell him if he marries her. At last he agrees, and at the marriage she becomes young again and beautiful.

A good deal of Middle English prose is religious. The *Ancren Riwle* teaches proper rules of life for anchoresses (religious women) how they ought to dress, what work they may do, when they ought not to speak, and so on. It was probably written in the thirteenth century. Another work, *The Form of Perfect Living*, was written by RICHARD ROLLE with the same sort of aim. His prose style has been highly praised, and his work is important in the history of our prose.

JOHN WYCLIFFE, a priest, attacked many of the religious ideas of his time. He was at Oxford, but had to leave because his attacks on the Church could no longer be borne. One of his beliefs was that anyone who wanted to read the Bible ought to be allowed to do so;

but how could this be done by uneducated people when the Bible was in Latin? Some parts had indeed been put into Old English long ago, but Wycliffe arranged the production of the whole Bible in English. He himself translated part of it. There were two translations ! (1382 and 1388), of which the second is the better.

It is surprising that Wycliffe was not burnt alive for his attacks on religious practices. After he was dead and buried, his bones were dug up again and thrown into a stream which flows into the River Avon (which itself flows into the River Severn):

The Avon to the Severn runs,
The Severn to the sea,
And Wycliffe's dust shall spread abroad,
Wide as the waters be.

An important Middle English prose work, *Morte D'Arthur* [= Arthur's Death], was written by SIR THOMAS MALORY. Even for the violent years just before and during the Wars of the Roses, Malory was a violent character. He was several times in prison, and it has been suggested that he wrote at least part of *Morte D'Arthur* there to pass the time.

Malory wrote eight separate tales of King Arthur and his knights but when Caxton printed the book in 1485 (after Malory's death) he joined them into one long story. Caxton's was the only copy of Malory's work that we had until, quite recently 1933-4; a handwritten copy of it was found in Winchester College.

The stories of Arthur and his knights have attracted many British and other writers. Arthur is a shadowy figure of the past, but probably really lived. Many tales gathered round him and his knights. One of the main subjects was the search for the cup used by Christ at the Last Supper. (This cup is known as The Holy Grail. Another subject was Arthur's battles against his enemies, including the Romans. Malory's fine prose can tell a direct story well, but can also express deep feelings in musical sentences. Here is part of the book in modern form. King Arthur is badly wounded:

Then Sir Bedivere took the king on his back and so went with him to the water's edge. And when they were there, close by the bank, there came a little ship with many beautiful ladies in it; and among them all there was a queen. And they all had black head-dresses, and all wept and cried when they saw King Arthur.

III. Modern English (1500-to the present day)

By the beginning of 20th century, Britain was no longer the world's richest country. Perhaps this caused Victorian confidence in gradual reform to weaken. Whatever the reason, the first twenty years of the century were a period of extremism in Britain. The Suffragettes, women demanding the right to vote, were prepared both to damage property and to die for their beliefs; the problem of Ulster in the north of Ireland led to a situation in which some sections of the army appeared ready to disobey the government; and the government's introduction of new types and levels of taxation was opposed so absolutely by the House of Lords that even Parliament, the foundation of the political system, seemed to have an uncertain future in its traditional form. But

by the end of the First World War, two of these issues had been resolved to most people's satisfaction (the Irish problem remained) and the rather un-British climate of extremism died out.

The significant changes that have taken place in this century are dealt with elsewhere in this book. Just one thing should be noted here. It was from the beginning of this century that the urban working class (the majority of the population) finally began to make its voice heard. In Parliament, the Labour party gradually replaced the Liberals (the 'descendants' of the Whigs) as the main opposition to the Conservatives (the 'descendants' of the Tories). In addition, trade unions managed to organize themselves. In 1926, they were powerful enough to hold a General Strike, and from the 1930s until the 1980s the Trades Union Congress (see chapter 14) was probably the single most powerful political force outside the institutions of government and Parliament. From about 1600, explorers, adventurers, settlers and soldiers went out from Britain to found settlements and colonies overseas. They took the English language with them. At the height of their power, during the 19th century, the British could claim that the sun never set on their Empire. Today almost all the countries of the old Empire have become independent. However, most of them are now members of the Commonwealth of Nations, and English continues to be an important language for them.

After the Second World War the United States became what Britain had been in the 19th century: politically and economically one of the most powerful nations in the world. As its power spread, so the English language spread.

Five hundred years ago they didn't speak English in North America. The American Indians had their own languages. So did the Inuit (often called 'Eskimos') and Aleuts in Canada. So did the Aborigines in Australia, and the Maoris in New Zealand.

The English arrived and set up their colonies. And then other people came from all over the world, bringing many different languages and cultures.

The USA has the biggest mixture of all: it is often called a 'melting pot' of cultures. In 1619 a small ship arrived in Jamestown, Virginia, with twenty slaves from Africa. For over two hundred years, the Americans imported, bought and sold African slaves. Today there are over 29 million black Americans living in the USA.

In 1848 the population of the United States was still very small. Then two important things happened: they discovered gold in California and a new law, the Homestead Act, gave free land to farmers. Suddenly millions of immigrants came to America, 'The Land of Opportunity'.

At first they were English, Irish, German and Scandinavian. Then Italians, Jews, Chinese, Japanese, Russians and Poles came. Most immigrants came because economic conditions at home were bad. But there were also other problems in Europe. About three million Jews came to the USA between 1880 and 1910 because of religious persecution in Russia and other countries.

Today the USA is still much richer than most of its neighbors. Its most recent new citizens are many Spanish-speaking people from Puerto Rico, Mexico and South America.

The population of Britain is only about 58 million. But throughout the world English is spoken by over 700 million people.

About 350 million people speak English as their first language in 12 countries such as Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa.

About 300 million use English as a second or official language in over 60 countries, for example, in India. They usually use it when doing business, or when completing official documents and forms.

It is estimated that at least 100 million people throughout the world use English fluently as a foreign language.

There are over 3,000 languages in the world. So why has English become so widely spoken?

Today the English language is almost the same all over the world. You can tell a person's nationality from their accent - Australian, Scottish, Canadian and so on. But the words are more or less international.

It's strange that the differences in Britain itself are greater than those between Britain and other English-speaking countries. For a Londoner, it's easy to understand an American, but quite difficult to understand the dialect of Newcastle in the North of England!

But not many people speak dialects in Britain these days. A hundred years ago (before radio and television) all ordinary working people did. In Emily Bronte's book *Wuthering Heights* the old man Joseph speaks Yorkshire dialect:

“Take these in tuh t'maister, lad. Un' bide theare. Aw's gang up tuh my awn rahm.”

(Take these in to the master, boy. And stay there. I'm going up to my own room.)

Don't worry. Joseph doesn't say very much in the book - the rest is in normal English!

In a country like New Zealand, English is the first language. In fact it's the only language for most people. About 100,000 Maoris have their own language, but they also speak English. Most of this book is about countries where English is the first language - Canada, Ireland, the USA and so on.

But in more than sixty other countries English is a second language. The government, business and universities use it. Some of the people, but not all, speak it well and use it for certain parts of their lives.

IV. Conclusion.

I enjoy learning English, it is really great! I like to learn new words, to look up in the dictionary their meanings. English grammar is difficult, but I try hard to understand it, to learn the rules, to put them into practice.

I think it is very interesting to read English books, newspapers, magazines. I came to know a lot of exciting facts and new things. It is like a new world where you can enter if you know the language.

English folklore is very rich. I believe, it is good to know English proverbs and tongue-twisters, English rhymes and limericks. English sayings and songs.

When you learn tongue-twisters, it helps you to improve your phonetics. I know quite a number of them. Here is a good one:

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper:

A peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked:

If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper

Where's the peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked!

This one is my favorite:

A thatcher of Thatchwood went to Thatchet a-thatching

Did a thatcher of Thatchwood go to Thatchet a-thatching?

If a thatcher of Thatchwood went to Thatchet a-thatching

Where's the thatching the thatcher of Thatchwood has thatched?

While writing my research paper report I had to read a lot of books on English History I came to know a lot of English folk songs, they are simple and nice. Some of them help me to learn words. Solomon Grundy is a folk song it helps you to remember the days of the week. It is a sad song/ but the same it's funny too.

Solomon Grundy

Born on Monday

Christened on Tuesday

Married on Wednesday

Ill on Thursday

Worse on Friday

Died on Saturday

Buried on Sunday

This is the end

Of poor old Solomon Grundy.

English proverbs are useful in many situations. Here are a few examples. When there's a will, there's a way. Or: All's well that ends well. No sweet without sweat. Lend money and lose a friend. East or West, home is best.

English jokes are very funny. They often laugh at nationalities of the British Isles. Here is a typical one. "An Englishman, a Scotsman and an Irishman were alone on a desert island." One day the Englishman found an old bottle. He broke it and out came a genie. The genie said: "I'll give you and your

friends three wishes. But choose well, because you may have only one wish each” “My wish is quite simple”, - said the Englishman, - “I wish to be taken home”. “Your wish is my command”, - said the genie, and the Englishman disappeared. “Yes, I'd like the same”, - said the Scotsman. And in a minute he was at home as well. Then the genie turned to the Irishman. “And what about you? What's your wish?” The Irishman thought a little and then said: “I'm very lonely without my friends. I wish they were back here with me.”

English literature has very rich traditions. English poetry is well known in the world best Russian poets translated English poetry into Russian. But of course, when you study English it's a pleasure to learn English poems in the original. My favorite poem is “If by R. Kipling. I think, he gives very good advice for the young people in this poem.

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you*
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master:
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim.
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same.

You can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build them up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch and toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginning
And never breathe a word about your loss;

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you

Except the will which says to them; “Hold on!”

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue
Or walk with kings – nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, out non much;

If you can *ill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds’ worth of distance run.
Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it,
And – which is more – you’ll be a Man, my son!

Yes, to learn English is such a fun, indeed!!!

List of Literature

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Supplement

OE	Gothic	Description; Position; Pronunciation	Examples
<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	Short back vowel; Mainly in open syllables, when the following one contains a back vowel; English <i>cup</i>	<u><i>macian</i></u> (to make), <u><i>habban</i></u> (to have)
<i>ō</i>	<i>ai</i>	Long back [a] vowel; In any kind of syllables; English <i>star</i>	<u><i>stōn</i></u> (a stone), <u><i>hōtan</i></u> (to call)
<i>æ</i>	<i>a</i>	Short back vowel; Met mainly in closed syllables, or in open ones, if the next syllable contains a front vowel; English <i>bad</i>	<u><i>dæg</i></u> (a day), <u><i>wæter</i></u> (water)
<i>æ</i> ,	<i>ū, ǫ</i>	Long back vowel; as Gothic <i>ū</i> found only in some verbal forms, as Gothic <i>ǫ</i> is the result of the so - called <i>i</i> - mutation; German <i>za "hlen</i>	<u><i>stæc 'lon</i></u> (stolen), <u><i>hæc 'lan</i></u> (to cure)
<i>e</i>	<i>i, ai, a</i>	Short front vowel; as Gothic <i>i, ai</i> noticed only in some infinitives, otherwise is result of the mutation of <i>i</i> ; English <i>bed</i>	<u><i>sengean</i></u> (to sing)
<i>ū</i>	<i>y</i>	Long front [e] vowel; resulted from the <i>i</i> - mutation of <i>y</i> ; German <i>Meer</i>	<u><i>dūman</i></u> (to judge)
<i>i</i>	<i>i, ie</i>	Short front vowel; can be either stable or unstable, the unstable sound can interchange with <i>ie</i> and <i>y</i> ; English <i>still</i>	<u><i>bindan</i></u> (to bind), <u><i>niht - nyht</i></u> (a night)
<i>h</i>	<i>ie</i>	Long front [i] vowel; also stable and unstable (mutating to <i>ə</i>); English <i>steal</i>	<u><i>wrhtan</i></u> (to write), <u><i>hh - hə</i></u> (they)

<i>o</i>	<i>u, au</i>	Short back vowel; English <i>cost</i>	<u><i>coren</i></u> (chosen)
<i>y</i>	<i>o</i>	Long back [o] vowel; English <i>store</i>	<u><i>scyc</i></u> (divided)
<i>u</i>	<i>u, au</i>	Short back vowel; used only when the next syllable contains another back vowel; English <i>book</i>	<u><i>curon</i></u> (they chose)
<i>ʊ</i>	<i>ʊ</i>	Long back [u] vowel; English <i>stool</i>	<u><i>lʊcan</i></u> (to look)
<i>y</i>	<i>u</i>	Short front vowel; <i>i</i> - mutation of <i>u</i> ; German <i>fu"nf</i>	<u><i>gylden</i></u> (golden)
<i>ɛ</i>	<i>ʊ</i>	Long front [y] vowel; <i>i</i> - mutation of <i>ʊ</i> , German <i>glu "hen</i>	<u><i>mɛs</i></u> (mice)
<i>a.</i>	<i>o</i>	A special short sound met only before nasals in closed syllables	<u><i>monn</i></u> (a man)