

History of the English Language Timeline

OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

- 1067 William I issued writs to the English in Old English (for the next century, Latin was the language of official documents)
- 1076-1145 Norman rule consolidated and centralized
Religious houses come to be headed by Normans
- 1086-87 Domesday Book
the 4000 English thanes from pre-Conquest period have been replaced by 200 barons
- 1121 Peterborough Chronicle begun
- 1154 Peterborough Chronicle extension in early (East Midlands) Middle English
- 1204 King John loses Normandy
French (Anglo-Norman) the standard court language through early 14c.
- 1249 Oxford University established

MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

- c. 1250 Nobility of England considered itself English, having lost its Norman holdings
Yet by now French has become a regular alternative to Latin in administrative writing
- 1284 Cambridge University established
- 1300 English is still spoken by the majority in England;
now the minority (Norman descendants) also know English (even if it isn't the mother tongue of all members of the upper classes; it is, even there, for a large number of children, though);
the attitude is shifting so that English is understood as the appropriate language for those who live in England, of whatever class;
'French as a Foreign Language' textbooks appear, teaching French through English.
- 1350 English *began* to be used in the schools
- 1362 Statute of Pleading is enacted by Parliament declaring that all lawsuits will be conducted in English.
Prior to this, French was the language of law and the courts.
After this, French is no longer the language at court, though French remains in written records.
- 1362 Parliament was opened for the first time with a speech in English
- 1385 English was *generally* used in schools
- 1425 English is generally adopted *in writing* in England
- 1430 Towns begin translating their ordinances into English
- 1450 English is generally adopted for records of towns and guilds and for some of the central government's records
English is the language typically used for writing personal letters
- 1476 Caxton introduces printing press to England
- 1485 Statutes in Parliament appear in English *alongside* French
- 1489 Statutes in Parliament are written in English *alone*

EARLY MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD

- Early 1500s First English settlements made in North America
William Tyndale's English translation of the Bible published
Many Greek and Latin borrowings enter English.
- 1549 First version of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England
- 1553 Thomas Wilson's *The Art of Rhetorique*, one of the first works on logic and rhetoric in English
- 1569 John Hart's *Orthographie*
- 1577 Henry Peacham's *The Garden of Eloquence*, a treatise on rhetoric.
- 1582 Richard Mulcaster's *Elementarie*)
- 1586 The first grammar of English--William Bullokar's *Pamphlet for Grammar* -- published.
- 1588 Elizabeth I begins becomes queen and England defeats the Spanish Armada
- 1589 Puttenham's *The Art of English Poesie*
- 1590-1611 Shakespeare's sonnets and plays
- 1604 Robert Cawdrey's *Table Alphabeticall*, the first English dictionary , is published.
- 1607 The first permanent English settlement in America is established at Jamestown, Virginia.
- 1611 The Authorized Version of the English Bible (the "King James" Bible) is published, greatly influencing the development of the written language.
- 1619 The first African slaves in North America arrive in Virginia
Alexander Gil's Logonomia Anglica
- 1623 First Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays published
- 1642 Civil War breaks out in England
- 1660 Charles II (son of Charles I) restored to English throne
- 1663 John Wallis's *Grammatica*
- 1668 John Wilkins's *Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*
- 1662 London theaters reopened
- 1666 Great Fire of London (believed generally, for no actual reason, to have been set by Catholics)
- 1673 Test Act (civil workers had to take sacrament accordg to Anglican rite and deny belief in transubstantiation – to force both Dissenters and Catholics out)
- 1685 Charles II dies, James II becomes king (Catholic younger son of Charles I)
- 1687 James II's Declaration of Indulgence – recalling the Test Act and inviting Catholics into office
- 1688 Glorious Revolution (a.k.a. Protestant Revolution, a.k.a. Bloodless Revolution): with the birth of a son and heir for James II (his wife was Mary of Modena), the prospect of another Catholic king leads to the deposition of James II, who flees to France, and accession (by invitation) of William of Orange and Mary (Protestant daughter to James II).
- 1697 Defoe proposes establishment of English academy (fails)

MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD

- 1702 Anne's reign begins (daughter of James II) upon William's death (Mary died in 1694)
- 1712 Swift's *Proposal* for an English academy

- 1714 Hanoverian king George I (Protestant grandson of James I) rules England, upon death of Queen Anne; Robert Walpole, as new Prime Minister, did much of the ruling through the reigns of both George I and George II.
- 1721 Nathan Bailey's *Universal Etymological Dictionary*
- 1727 Hanoverian king George II
- 1747 Johnson's *Plan* for the Dictionary
- 1755 Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*
- 1760 George III (first British-born Hanoverian monarch), who ruled over the widest empire in the world, and the richest nation – despite the loss of America
- 1761 Joseph Priestly's *Rudiments of English Grammar* (progressive)
- 1762 Robert Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (prescriptive)
- 1774 proposal for an "American Society of Language"
- 1776 George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (mostly progressive, though inconsistent)
- 1782 Robert Ross's *American Grammar*
- 1784 Noah Webster's *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (extremely popular in US, and pretty influential in England)
- 1795 Lindley Murray's *English Grammar*
- 1820 American Academy of Language and Belles Lettres (with J. Q. Adams as president)
- 1822 American Academy of Language and Belles Lettres disbanded
- 1828 Noah Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language*
- mid-1800s A standard variety of American English develops.
- 1860 America's population surpasses Britain's
- 1866 James Russell Lowell praises American regionalisms and disdains the British variety of Standard English
- 1879 James Murray starts editing the *New English Dictionary*, which later becomes the *Oxford English Dictionary*
- 1919 H.L. Mencken publishes *The American Language*, an investigation of American English
- 1928 *Oxford English Dictionary* published
- 1950s More speakers of English as a non-native language than speakers of English as a native language
- 1988 The Internet goes public, though it's not widely used by the public until the mid-90s
- 1994 Text messaging is introduced (though it's used widely in Europe before it is in the US, due to cell phone companies' policies) and the first modern blogs go online.

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