

History of English – BBK – key topics, terms and sources

slides (archival – handle with care!): [intro](#) - [OE](#) - [ME](#) - [EModE](#) - [varieties](#)

revision/intro ([Yule 2020 here](#) or [here](#): Ch.17) (extra: [Language Change and Historical Linguistics: Crash Course Linguistics](#))

- historical (diachronic) linguistics, comparative reconstruction, regular sound correspondences
- the family tree metaphor, cognates
- external vs internal history
- types of linguistic change
- synthetic/fusional/inflecting vs analytic/isolating grammar (read [this](#), especially [this](#))

+ etymology (<https://www.etymonline.com/>)

the beginnings of English

- the place of English within IE and within the Germanic family; the closest present-day relatives of English (Scots and Frisian) (extra: [SEVEN DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF GERMANIC](#))
- the periodisation of the history of English
- external history to Old English: the Anglo-Saxon Invasion and the Viking invasions
- attestations of OE: major genres, chief works (Bede, King Alfred the Great, *Beowulf*, *The Battle of Maldon*, *Caedmon's Hymn*...)

(suggested watch: *Tracing English as far back as possible* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leAx3QZ7eRs>)

Old English

- the OE period, OE dialects
- OE writing (the use of the Latin alphabet; runes)
- the OE sound system ([umlaut](#) [*mouse-mice*, *Anglia-English*] and [ablaut](#) [*sing-sang-sung*]; fricatives as in *wolf-wolves*) (related: [apophonic reduplications in English](#) :))
- a few grammatical features (inflecting/fusional grammar: case, gender, strong and weak verbs; word order)
- vocabulary and borrowings from other languages (compounds, coinages, kennings; Latin and Scandinavian loans incl. *they/them*)

Middle English

- the Norman Conquest, the ME period, ME dialects
- the writing system: the Norman influence
- pronunciation (schwa; French influence on word stress and in *h*-dropping; the velar fricative)
- a few grammatical features (emerging analytical grammar: *do*-insertion, perfect and progressive constructions)
- French and Latin influence on the ME word stock, Norman French vs Parisian/Central French loans

(suggested watch: *Why is English Spelling So Weird?* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhqr-GNNgGo>)

Early Modern English

- the EModE period and well-known literary works from it; external history: the printing press, colonisation, the spread of English
- major differences between EModE and Present-Day English: pronouns; verbal morphology

- orthography: <i/y> and <u/v (w)>; the rise of orthographic consonant doubling and silent <-e>; silent letters; minims and LOVE-words (read [this](#))
- the Great Vowel Shift; the FOOT-STRUT Split
- lexis: the Inkhorn Controversy
- standardisation: Caxton, Johnson and Webster

(suggested watch: *How British and American Spelling Parted Ways*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmxHfRCrMCM>)

varieties of Modern English

- the English language around the world: Kachru's three circles
- the Severn-Wash line in England; British-type and American-type Englishes; North American English vs Southern Hemisphere Englishes; rhoticity around the English-speaking world
- pidgins and creoles
- the Great Divide; RP vs GA, StBrE vs StAmE

Recommended readings:

Yule, G. (2020) *The Study of Language*. 7th edn. CUP.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1E4irQQlhL3ZELU6VpwHtYfapgVHw7pbl/view?usp=sharing>

or

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CN-5PjFTZo4sp-cQUUwuieoHQTWUmgO/view?usp=sharing>

Algeo, J. (2010) *The Origins and Development of the English Language*. 6th edn. Cengage Learning.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iKHKOCWLFa9dOynxJdG4L8btU7lCVP6A/view?usp=sharing>

Smith, J. J. (2023) *Essentials of Early English*. 3rd edn. Routledge.

<https://libgen.is/book/index.php?md5=CD1839E0B618AE7AF36206ABA06A49D0>

Kristó, L. (ms.) *Introduction to the History of the English Language*. PPCU Budapest.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1l8od6lVER6mtSFQmGc6XpYRcKlFBny2/view?usp=sharing>

Balogné Bérces, K. (2009) *Beginner's English Dialectology*. Ad Librum Budapest.

<http://mek.oszk.hu/15100/15126/>

Extras:

[Collection of resources](#) (overlaps with the list below)

- <https://jakubmarian.com/map-of-languages-and-language-families-of-europe/>
- <https://www.mondly.com/blog/languages-of-europe/>
- videos by Simon Roper: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChnRk6mxWsSOGElm8phdSxw/videos>
- Proto-Indo-European spoken: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P78Sjf8NL2k>
- Beauty of the Germanic Languages video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPrwttHgGnc>
- Germanic languages tree: https://img-9gag-fun.9cache.com/photo/aY41KjN_700bwp.webp
- Saga in Proto-Germanic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhcbTpoWKjs>
- Anglo-Saxon invasion map:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saxons#/media/File:Anglo-Saxon_Homelands_and_Settlements.svg
- Hist. of E. summary:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lyXASK1OwV24KMg1QeHMcOPJugbGikSr/view?usp=share_link

- Revision quiz: <https://forms.gle/3ZF9r74uTf5hb26U8>
- External and internal history overview exercise and chart:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1njTAaNOFAhDC-pzKjWt1GWOmN5THH4Kj/view?usp=share_link
- *Beowulf*: Reading and translating the opening lines: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDXmxLDbp7c>
- *The Battle of Maldon*: Passage 1 (scroll down for sound recording):
https://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/spokenword/oe_maldon1.php?d=tt
- *Caedmon's Hymn*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29v_adW9dn0
- *The Lord's Prayer* in OE, ME, EModE and ModE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhgXnEGSn4A>
- The Bible in Old, Middle, and Early Modern English (Matthew 17:13–17):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAttJFZXvbM>
- The analysis of *The Lord's Prayer* in OE:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mzaUbOkIm-Ut0TkBb0FemiS8b7_ewF6B/view?usp=share_link
- From Old English to Middle English: The effects of language contact:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsfcOpQjfE0>
- *Sumer is icumen in* Early ME song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ergMuPGxeKY>
- GVS chart: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NLIipaeqyZr_KE5lqq7v-f2kcywUy1w/view?usp=share_link
- Why is English Spelling So Weird? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhqr-GNNgGo>
- How British and American Spelling Parted Ways <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmxHfRCrMCM>
- etc. 😊