

3 HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

- THE OLDEST HISTORY

The Pre-Celtic civilisation, The Celtic civilisation, Roman Britain

- OLD ENGLISH

The Germanic Period, Viking Age

- MIDDLE ENGLISH

The Battle of Hastings, the Normans, the Anglo-Saxons, French, Geoffrey Chaucer, Henry VI

- MODERN ENGLISH

centralisation, the Tudors

3 HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

THE OLDEST HISTORY

1 The **Pre-Celtic civilisation:**

- **Iberians** – Mediterranean countries (between 3000 and 2000 BC)
- prehistorical documents (Stonehenge)
- no influence of the further development of language

2 The **Celtic civilisation:**

- tribes: the **Gaels** & the **Britons** (North-Western Germany)
- during the 6th – 2nd ct. BC
- place names (cca 24: Avon, Thames, London, Dover, Glen-, Loch, etc.)

3 **Roman Britain**

- Roman colony (end 1st ct. – early 5th ct. AD), the **Great Roman Empire**
- lasting impression on British culture and society (cities, public roads/baths/monuments, theatres, etc)
- Latin origin words – cca 200: capital, Chester (fortified camp, Roman town), plant (plante), candle (candel), wall (vallum), street (via strata) etc.
- no Latinisation of the country

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OLD ENGLISH (600 – 1100)

1 The **Germanic Period** (6th – 9th ct.)

Angles, Saxons, Jutes

the 5th ct., Low German dialects

Old English speech – heterogeneous (different G. tribes, regional dialects)

e.g.: Oak-, -borough (fortified place), -don (hill)

2 **Viking Age** (800 – 1066 AD, Viking, ON = a pirate raid)

Scandinavians: Denmark, Norway, Sweden

793 Viking Age of Invasion, 870s the Danes – Northern England

1066 The Norman Conquest = end of the Viking era

words of Scandinavian origin: e.g., THEY, fellow, take, hunting, husband, sky, anger, dirt, egg, fog, happy, reindeer, silver, sister, smile, Thursday, want, etc.

Sc. family names: Davidson, Jackson, Henderson, etc.

duplication of words (etymol. doublets): e.g. ON dike, sick, skill vs. OE ditch, ill, craft

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MIDDLE ENGLISH (1100 – 1500)

- The Battle of Hastings – the Norman Conquest
- Normans – spoke French, English speaking population – Old English
- Two level society (French/Anglo-Saxon) + following examples (see below)
- Later: the Normans allied with the Anglo-Saxon English (Engl. mixed with Fr. w.)
- Late 14th/early 15th ct. English – official language
- Geoffrey Chaucer/Cantenbury Tales established written London English as a base for a new national literary Standard English.
- written dialect standardized (reign Henry VI)
Chancery English – new official language

Two level society (French/Anglo Saxon)

Nobility – English/French

- beef/boef
- veal/veau
- pork/porc
- mutton/mouton
- lamb/venison

Peasant – English/German

- cow/Kuh
- calf/Kalb
- swine/Schweine
- sheep/Shöps
- lamb/Lamb

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MODERN ENGLISH

- centralisation of the state under the reign of Tudors
- strengthening of political and economic unity in England