

4 ORIGIN OF ENGLISH WORDS

MAJOR INFLUENCES

Roman

(55 BC – 410 AD)

Scandinavian

(750 – 1050)

Norman and French

(1066 – 1500)

Latin and Greek

(three waves 1st – 16th ct.)

MINOR INFLUENCES

Celtic

Dutch

Italian

Other languages:

**Spanish, German, Russian, Czech,
Hindi, Japanese, American Indian
languages, etc.**

4 ORIGIN OF ENGLISH WORDS

MAJOR INFLUENCES

Roman (55 BC – 410 AD)

- words connected with Roman occupation (see above)
- common objects borrowed from Latin (due to trade connection with the Roman Empire by Germanic tribes)
- butter/buttyrum, wine/vinum, cheese/caseus, etc.

Scandinavian (750 – 1050)

- 20% Old Norse words
- war and violence (slaughter, war), society and culture (husband, steak), animals (bug, reindeer), landscape (sky, rotten), place names with affixes -by/-bie (yard, village – Kirkby, Lockerbie), beck (stream – Beckton, Holbeck), -thorpe (farm, land – Scunthorpe), surnames (Johnson), they

Norman and French (1066 – 1500)

- words of Norman origin
- administration (state, reign parliament), titles of nobility (baron, prince), military (war, peace, army, captain), law (justice, judge, prison), economy and trade (money, tax), religion (pray, service), housing (city, village, palace), cooking (pork, beef, veal, boil), occupations and crafts (carpenter, painter, tailor)
- words borrowed from Modern French are of French origin, e.g. restaurant, chef, entrepreneur, fiancé, etc.

Latin and Greek (three waves cca 1st – 16th ct.)

- 1st period of Latin influence: during the Roman occupation
- 2nd wave: *the end of the 6th ct., 100 years, Christianisation, e.g. angel/angelus, altar/altare, candle/candel, nun/nonna, pope/papa, psalm/psalmus, etc.
- 3rd wave: (14th, 15th, 16th centuries - Renaissance), Gr+L = languages of learning, science, culture throughout the Europe; Gr through Latin; no change (genius, species, criterion), slightly changed (explain/explanare, system/systema, temperature/temperatura); grammar system (single negation), pronunciation, stylistics.

Lexical twins/triplets

English - words with similar meaning but different origin
- used for particular register
e.g. medicine/veterinary = words of L or Gr. origin (e.g. renal, dental, /bovine, ovine)

Lexical twins:

OE *sweat, happiness, house, wish* vs. Fr *perspire*, L *felicity*, Fr *mansion, desire*

Lexical triplets:

OE *ask, fast, kingly* vs. L *interrogate, secure, regal*, Fr *question, firm, royal*

Latin and Greek adjectives

English: home, earth, tooth, head eye, ear, tongue, mouth, kidney, heart, dog, cow, sheep, horse

Classical: domestic, terrestrial, dental, capital, ocular, auricular, lingual, oral, renal, cordial, canine, bovine, ovine, equine

Semantic change in history

extention/generalisation (*office*), narrowing/specialisation (*deer, girl*), shift (*navigator/pilot*), figurative use (*crane*), amelioration (*mischievous*),
pejoration/deterioration (*notorious*)

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MINOR INFLUENCES

Celtic

(e.g. whisky, penguin, clan, corgi, shamrock); folk etymology, special sheep counting system

Dutch

maritime terminology (dock, gin, commodore, yacht), drawing, painting (sketch, landscape)

Italian

business (bank, risk, bankrupt), music (opera, aria), art and architecture (graffiti, balcony)

Other languages:

Spanish (guitar, tornado), **German** (muffin, schnitzel), **Russian** (cosmonaut, vodka), **Czech** (polka, robot), **Hindi** (jungle, shampoo), **Japanese** (tycoon, karate), **American Indian languages** (opossum, totem), etc.

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NATIVE AND LOAN WORDS

Native words:

Original English stock (OE period)

Diachronic linguistics:

1. Indo-European origin
2. Common Germanic stock

Central core words (83%/1,000 but only 38%/10,000).

High lexical and grammatical valency (ability to combine with other words).

High frequency and developed polysemy.

Monosyllabic, great word-building power, set expressions

Loan words:

Borrowed words (70%),

Assimilated to English standards (length, importance, frequency)

Degree of assimilation:

1. Completely assimilated words
2. Partially assimilated words
3. Unassimilated words

Native words

Indo-European origin

- Kinship (father, mother, son)
- Nature (sun, moon, water, tree)
- Animals, birds (bull, cat, wolf)
- Human body (arm, eye, foot)
- Verbs (come, sit, stand)

Cognates in vocabularies of different I-E languages form the **oldest layer**.

Common Germanic stock (Anglo-Saxon)

- bigger part of the native vocab, more semantic groups
- parallels in German, Norwegian, Dutch, Icelandic, Faroese, ...
- general character (summer, winter, rain, bridge, house, shop, shirt, shoe, life, need, to bake, to buy, to learn, to make, to see, ...)

Loan Words

The degree of assimilation depends on the

- a) length of the period over which the word has been used,
- b) importance for communication,
- c) frequency.

1. Completely assimilated words (*wine, window, chair*)

2. Partially assimilated words

a) not assimilated semantically: *sari, toreador*

b) not assimilated grammatically:

bacillus, formula, phenomenon vs. pl. *bacilli, formulae, phenomena*

c) not assimilated phonetically or graphically: *ballet, tobacco, café*

3. Unassimilated words: *chauffeur, haute couture, faux pas, barbarisms (ciao!)*