

Dutch in English

Kron

- The British colonies started to communicate with other settlements on the East Coast : Dutch, French and German - which led to new words into American English:
- Out of the more interesting Dutch borrowing, I consider the following of importance:
- *boss, cookie, coleslaw, waffle, stoop, sleigh*, probably *Yankee* (from Janke – diminutive of Jan), *Santa Claus* (Saint Nicolas, clipped to Sinterklaas in Dutch)

Dutch words

Since many of the Anglo-Saxons who settled in Britain came from the area now known as Holland or the Netherlands, it is not surprising that Old English vocabulary has many parallels in modern Dutch vocabulary. They are both Germanic languages, and in the past there was a continuum of dialects across Germanic-speaking areas. It was only in 1579, when the seven provinces that form the basis of the Netherlands gained independence and united, that Dutch, which is simply a form of *Deutsch*, the German word for 'German', became a distinct national language.

Dutch has made significant contributions to English vocabulary, falling into four main groups: words connected with food and drink; with the army and navy; with art; and a group of lively words, often not quite standard vocabulary, that supplied missing ideas to English. **Booze** [ME], from Dutch *busen* 'drink to excess', is one of the oldest words borrowed from Dutch. **Brandy** [M17th], a shortening of earlier brandewine, is from Dutch *brandewijn* 'burnt or distilled wine', while **gin** [E18th] is a shortening of *genever*, the Dutch form of Old French *genevre* 'juniper' used to flavour the drink. **Advocaat** [M20th] is a direct use of the Dutch for 'advocate, lawyer', a shortening of *advocatenborrel* 'lawyer's drink', the *borrel* being Dutch for a small alcoholic drink sipped slowly at a social gathering. Foods from Dutch include **coleslaw** [L8th] from *koolsla* 'cabbage salad'; **cookie** [E18th] from *keokje* 'little cake'; and **gherkin** [E17th] from *(au)gurkje* 'little cucumber', a word that goes back ultimately to the medieval Greek for cucumber, *angourion*.

For centuries the English fought both for and against the Dutch. An **uproar** [E16th] was originally an uprising, from *uproer*, but because of the similarity of the sound to 'roar' became a noise. Similarly, a **forlorn hope** [M16th] from *verloren hoop* was changed from its original sense of 'a lost troop' referring to soldiers leading an attack and likely to die. **Furlough** [E17th] is from Dutch *verlof*, the second element related to English 'leave', and was originally a military term. At sea, where Holland was a major power in the 17th century, the Dutch gave us **avast** [E17th] from *houd vast* 'hold fast'; the **corvette** [M17th] (via French); the **sloop** [E17th]; the **smack** [E17th]; a **cruise** [M17th] from *kruisen* 'to cross'; and the **yacht** [M16th], its spelling reflecting the original *jaghtschip*, literally 'hunting ship', a term used to mean 'fast pirate ship'. A sailor's **pea jacket** [E18th] is also Dutch from *pijaker* formed from *pij* 'coat of coarse cloth' and the word for jacket, while the Dutch *swabber*, a sailor set to swabbing decks, was adopted into English and then shortened to **swab** [M17th].

In art **easel** [L16th] comes from *ezel* 'donkey', which carries the load of the painting, and **etch** [M17th] comes from *etsen*, from a Germanic root meaning 'cause to eat'; as well as **landscape** [L16th] from *landschap*.

As for that group of lively words, it includes **boss** [E19th] from *baas* 'master'; **bumpkin** [L16th] either from *boomken* 'little tree' or *boomekijn* 'little barrel'; **frolic** [E16th] from *vrolijk* 'merry, cheerful'; **frump** [M16th], a mixture of Middle English *frumple* 'wrinkle' and Dutch *verrompelen*, and which travelled via 'mocking speech' and 'bad temper' to its modern sense; **gruff** [LME] from *grof* 'coarse, rude'; **scrape**, where an Old English original was reinforced by *schrapen* 'to scratch'; **slobber** [LME] from *slobberen* 'to walk through mud'; **snoop** [M19th] originally meaning 'to eat on the sly' in both languages; and **split** [L16th] from *splitten*, originally used of a ship to break on rocks. Finally, Dutch also gave us **catkin** [L16th] from *catteken* 'kitten'; **iceberg** [L18th] from *ijsberg* 'ice hill'; and **walrus** [E18th], which the Dutch had already borrowed and inverted from Old Norse *hrosshvair* 'horse whale'.

See also BASE, BAT, BLUFF, BLUNDER, BOOR, BOROUGH, BOULEVARD, BOW, BOY, BULLY, BUTT, CORK, CRAP, CROCKERY, CROON, DEAR, DECOY, DOCK, DOLE, DROLL, DRUM, DUST, DYKE, FILIBUSTER, FLOUT, FORLORN, FRAUGHT, FUZZ, GANNET, GEEK, GLIB, GOLF, GROOVE, HAG, HUMP, HUNKY-DORY, HUSKY, INTERLOPER, KINK, KIT, KNICKERS, LEAD, LIVE; MAIL, MANIKIN, MEASLES, MITE, NAG, NORMAN, ORANGE, PACK, PAMPER, PIP, PIT, PLAQUE, POPPYCOCK, QUACK, RABBIT, ROAST, SCAB, SCAMP, SCHOOL, SCONE, SLEDGE, SLIM, SLIP, SMACK, SNACK, SNUG, SPICK, SPIKE, SPOKE, SWIRL, TATTOO, TRAM, TRICE, TRIP, TRUFFLE, UTTER, WAFFLE, WAGON, WHIP.

Going Dutch

*Is your boss a bit gruff? Maybe he is given to snooping—you probably wish he would go for a cruise on his yacht, maybe to the Netherlands, where all of these words come from. The English and **Dutch** languages are closely related, and despite three 17th-century naval conflicts Britain and the Netherlands have long been connected.*

THE 'boss' of all our Dutch words is **boss**, which is from *baas* 'master'. It started life in the USA at the beginning of the 19th century, and when it arrived in Britain was restricted to workmen's slang. If the boss is addicted to **snooping** he is now spying, but originally he would be stealing tasty items of food and eating them on the sly—the meaning of the

Dutch source *snoepen*, and the first English use in the 1840s.

***BOOZE** is a Dutch word, and so are two of our most popular alcoholic drinks. The full name for **brandy** was originally **brandy wine**, a term that entered English in the early 17th century from Dutch *brandewijn*, literally 'burnt wine'. 'Burning' referred to the heating of low-strength alcohol over a fire so that the alcohol was given off as a vapour that condensed as brandy. **Gin** is flavoured with juniper berries, and was traditionally made in the Netherlands. In the early 18th century the word was spelled **genever** or **geneva**, which came via Dutch from Old French *genevre* 'juniper'. To avoid confusion with Geneva in Switzerland the drink was sometimes called **Hollands geneva** or just **Hollands**.

Many words to do with the sea and sailing came the short distance across the North Sea to Britain, most of them in the 17th century. The source of **cruise** was probably Dutch *kruisen* 'to cross', which is related to ***CROSS** itself. The names of the **corvette**, the **sloop**, the **smack**, and the **yacht** are all Dutch: the last of these is from *jaghte* 'light sailing vessel', which was derived from *jaghtschip* 'fast pirate ship'.

Words for items of food that have entered the English language from Dutch include **coleslaw**, literally 'cabbage salad', **cookie**, and **gherkin**. In Dutch a cookie was a *koekje*, or 'little cake', which was its meaning when it appeared in Scotland in the 1750s.

In English **frolic** first meant 'playful, happy' when it entered the language in the early 16th century from Dutch *vrolijk*. A less cheerful word is **gruff**, originally meaning 'coarse'. Like **cookie** it started life in Scotland rather than England, in the late 15th century. In Dutch a **bumpkin** is either 'a little tree' or 'a little barrel'—either way, it probably referred to the ungainly figure of a short, stout countryman.

See also CABOODLE, EASEL, GROOVE, LOTTERY, SNOOP, TREK, WAGON