



Syrian Arab Republic

Ministry Of Education

National Center for the Distinguished

The Origin Of

ENGLISH

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I- Preface:

English, is an international language and had become the most widespread language in the world, which is spoken in more than one hundred country and used by more people than any other language on the Earth. About 400 million people speak this language every day, but there is something that most people do not know-its origin. The ultimate origin of English is a matter of speculation since we have no real information about it.

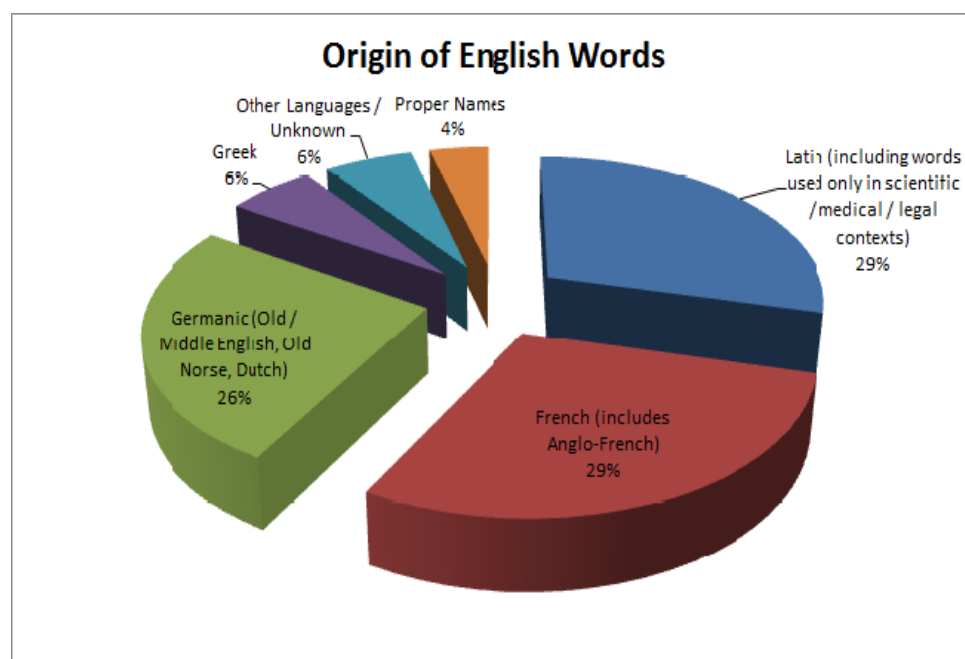
Seminar's Problem:

How old is English?

Where did English come from?

Who did develop this language, the British or the Americans?

Do English and other languages have the same origin? Or does it have a Latin origin???



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CHAPTER 1 | THE Old English

(450-1100)

A-The Pre-Old English:

*English is a member of the Indo-European family of languages. This broad family includes most of the European languages spoken today. The Indo-European family includes several major branches: Latin and the modern Romance languages (French etc.); the Germanic languages (English, German, Swedish etc.); the Indo-Iranian languages (Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit etc.); the Slavic languages (Russian, Polish, Czech etc).

The influence of the original Indo-European language can be seen today, even though no written record of it exists. The word for father, for example, is vater in German, pater in Latin, and pitr in Sanskrit. These words are all similar words in different languages that share the same root.*¹

B-The Ultimate Origin of English:

*The history of the English language really started with the

<http://www.anglik.net/englishlanguagehistory.htm> ¹

arrival of three Germanic tribes who invaded Britain during the 5th century A.D. These tribes, the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes, crossed the North Sea from what is known today as Denmark and northern Germany. At that time, the inhabitants of Britain spoke a Celtic language. But most of the Celtic speakers were pushed west and north by the invaders - mainly into what is now Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The Angles came from "Englaland" [sic] and their language was called "English" - from which the words "England" and "English" are derived. These tribes spoke similar language, which in Britain developed into what we call it now Old English.*²

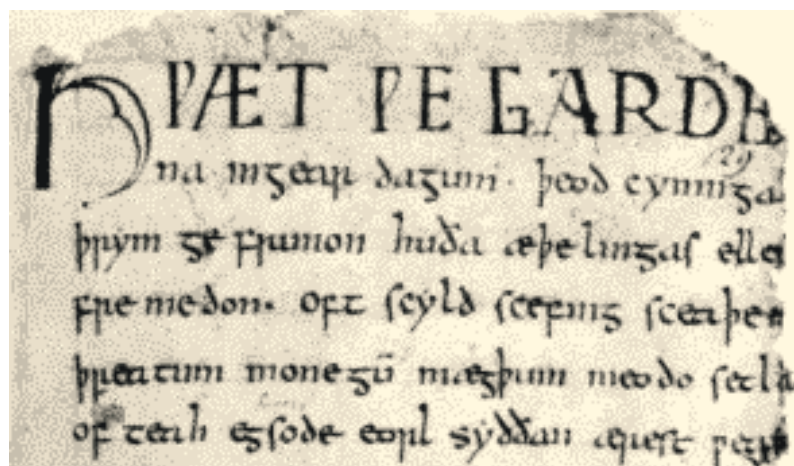


Picture(2): Germanic invaders entered Britain on the east and south coasts in the 5th century

²<https://www.englishclub.com/english-language-history.htm>

C-Some Key Events In the old English Period:

- * 449 Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Frisians began to occupy Great Britain, thus changing its major population to English speakers and separating the early English language from its Continental relatives.
- 597 Saint Augustine of Canterbury arrived in England to begin the conversion of the English by baptizing King Ethelbert of Kent, thus introducing the influence of the Latin language.
- (787-1066) Britain was invaded by many countries, like Scandinavia and Denmark. Finally, Britain was occupied by the army of William, the duke of Normandy, who was crowned king of England in 25 December 1066 A.C.*3



Picture(1): A poem written in Old English period

CHAPTER 2 | The Middle English (1100-1500)

A-After the Invading:

William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy (part of modern France) invaded and conquered England in 1066 A.D. These invaders (called the Normans) brought a dialect of old French known as Anglo-Normans that it had big Germanic influences in addition to the basic Latin roots. Before this invading, Latin had only minor influence on the English language. The Royal Court, the ruling, business and the upper classes spoke the Anglo-Normans but lower classes spoke English. After that, in the 14th century, English became dominant in Britain again, but with many French words added.

And whan I sawgh he wolde never fine
To reden on this cursed book al night,
Al sodeinly thre leves have I plight
Out of his book right as he redde, and eke
I with my fist so took him on the cheeke
That in oure fir he fil bakward adown.
And up he sterte as dooth a wood leon
And with his fist he smoot me on the heed
That in the floor I lay as I were deed.
And whan he swagh how stille that I lay,
He was agast, and wolde have fled his way,
Till atte laste out of my swough I braide:
"O hastou slain me, false thief?" I saide,
"And for my land thus hastou mordred me?
Er I be deed yit wol I kisse thee."

Picture(4): An example of Middle English by Chaucer

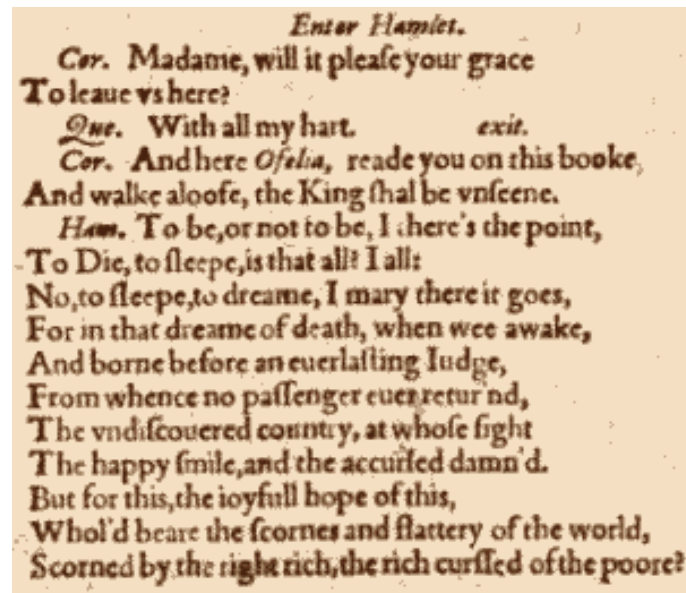
B-Some Key Events In Middle English Period:

- 1066 The Normans conquered England, replacing the native English nobility with Anglo-Normans and introducing Norman French as the language of government in England.
- 1337 The Hundred Years' War began and lasted until 1453, promoting English nationalism.
- 1476 William Caxton brought printing to England, thus promoting literacy throughout the population.
- 1485 Henry Tudor became king of England, ending thirty years of civil strife, called the War of the Roses, and introducing 118 years of the Tudor dynasty.

CHAPTER 3 | The Modern English (1500-Present)

A-Early Modern English (1500-1800):

Towards the end of Middle English, a sudden and distinct change in pronunciation (the Great Vowel Shift) started, with vowels being pronounced shorter and shorter. In Middle English name was pronounced "nam-a", five was pronounced "feef," and down was pronounced "doon". From the 16th century, the British had contact with many peoples from around the world. There was also the invention of printing which meant that there was a common language in print. After that, Spelling and grammar became fixed, then in 1604 the first English dictionary was published. The next wave of innovation in English came with the Renaissance of Classic. The revival of classical scholarship brought many classical Latin and Greek words into the Language. Many familiar words and phrases were or first recorded by Shakespeare, some 2,000 words and countless idioms are his.



Picture(5): "To be, or not to be", written in Early Modern English by Shakespeare

B- Late Modern English (1800-Present):

The major distinction between early- and late-modern English is vocabulary. Pronunciation, grammar, and spelling are largely the same, but Late-Modern English has many more words. These words are the result of two historical factors. The first is the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the technological society. This necessitated new words for things and ideas that had not previously existed. The second was the British Empire. At its height, Britain ruled one quarter of the earth's surface, and English adopted many foreign words and made them its own. Virtually every language on Earth has contributed to the development of English, from Finnish (sauna) and Japanese (tycoon) to the vast contributions of French and Latin.

Conclusion:

I found out from my research that English is not only based on one language but it is a mixture of many languages. And the influence of Latin on English is not as much as most people think. In fact, This influence is a minor one. Also we now know that English is not that old because it started in the 5th century.

Something else, English came from Britain, but it has a lot of influences of many other languages and cultures. Therefore, maybe, British or the Americans developed it. In my opinion, real English was developed in Britain but the English that the whole universe speak today was developed more recently in America.

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Resources:

1- <https://www.englishclub.com/english-language-history.htm> in 21/10/2015

2- <http://www.anglik.net/englishlanguagehistory.htm> in 21/10/2015

3- Algeo, John, The Original and the Development of the English Language, Sixth Edition.

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