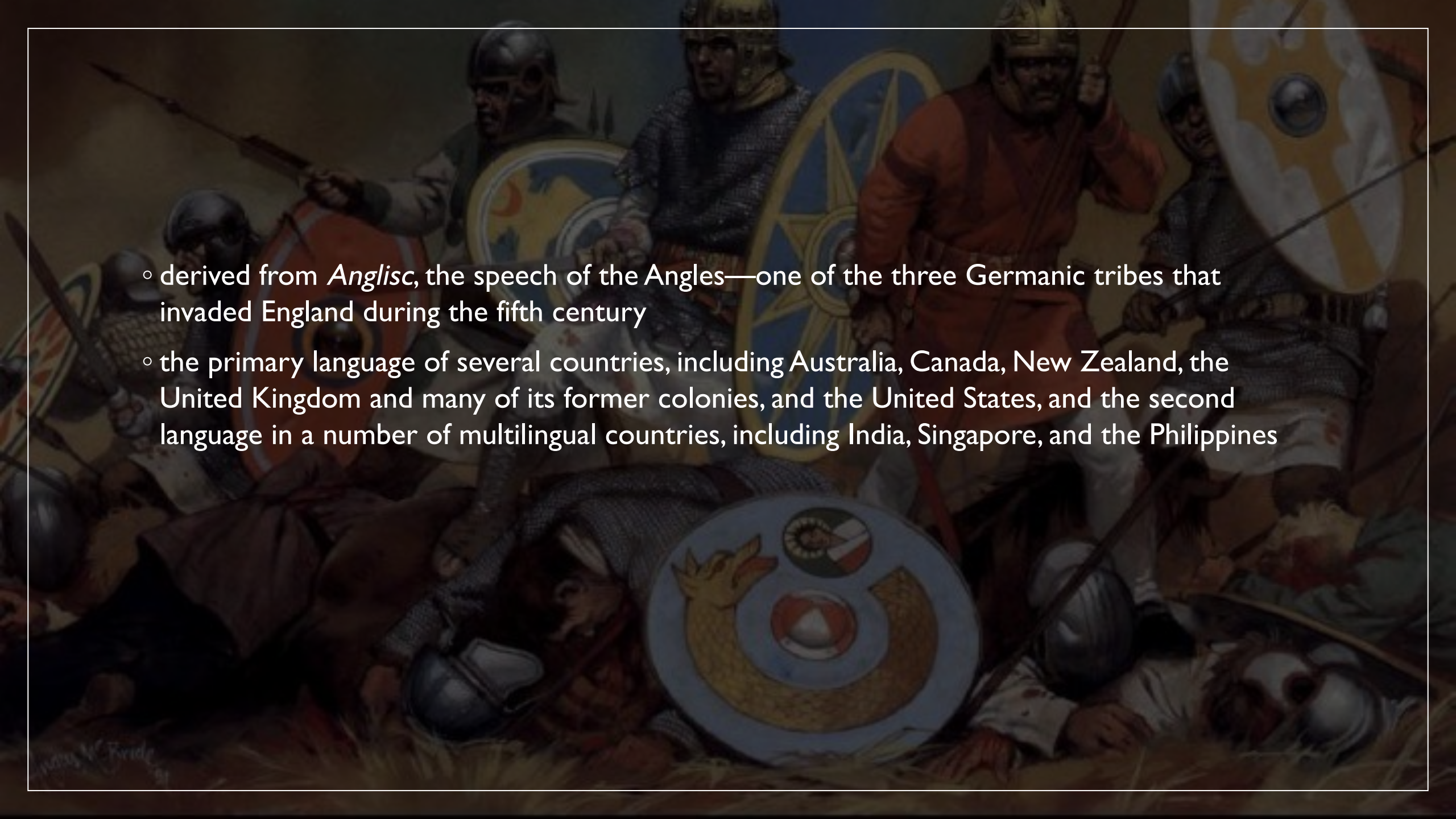


English Language: History, Definition, and Examples How It's Evolved Over Centuries—And Still Changes Today

COMPREHENSIVE OVERLOOK
OF THE NORDIC LANGUAGES IN THEIR
**OLD WORLD
LANGUAGE FAMILIES**

Sizes of the branches represent the

- 
- A historical illustration of a battle scene, likely the Battle of Hasting, showing knights in chainmail and helmets fighting with spears and shields. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent text box containing two bullet points.
- derived from *Anglisc*, the speech of the Angles—one of the three Germanic tribes that invaded England during the fifth century
 - the primary language of several countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and many of its former colonies, and the United States, and the second language in a number of multilingual countries, including India, Singapore, and the Philippines



Spoken Worldwide

- About 20 percent of the world's population speaks English as a first or secondary language
- More than 2 billion of the world's 7.7 billion people
- It is estimated that one out of four people worldwide speak English with some degree of competence



When English Was First Spoken?

- derived from a Proto-Indo-European language spoken by travelers wandering Europe about 5,000 years ago
- divided into three major historical periods: Old English, Middle English, and Modern English

Old English

- was brought to the British Isles by Germanic peoples: the Jutes, Saxons, and Angles, starting in 449
- West Saxon's dialect
- the dialect spoken there became the official "Old English"

- **The Lord's Prayer** (Our Father)

Fæder ure

ðu ðe eart on heofenum

si ðin nama gehalgod

to-becume ðin rice

geweorþe ðin willa on eorðan swa swa on heofenum.


Urne ge dæghwamlican hlaf syle us to-deag

and forgyf us ure gyltas

swa swa we forgifap urum gyltendum

ane ne gelæde ðu us on costnunge

ac alys us of yfle.



That though thou hors be foule or le
If he will serue the recke the noght
loke that thou herte be mezy euyr m
yes oft y he so mote 3 ride or go.
But 3 be mezy y wis 3 wolt be blan
And right anon he hath his tale tan
And thus he seide to vs euerichon.

This swete preest this good man sw
Here endith the prolog And begynn

Dore widowe found
was whilom dwell
Be sides a groue ston
This widowe of u
Sethyns thilke dau
In pacence ladde a

Evolution of the English Language

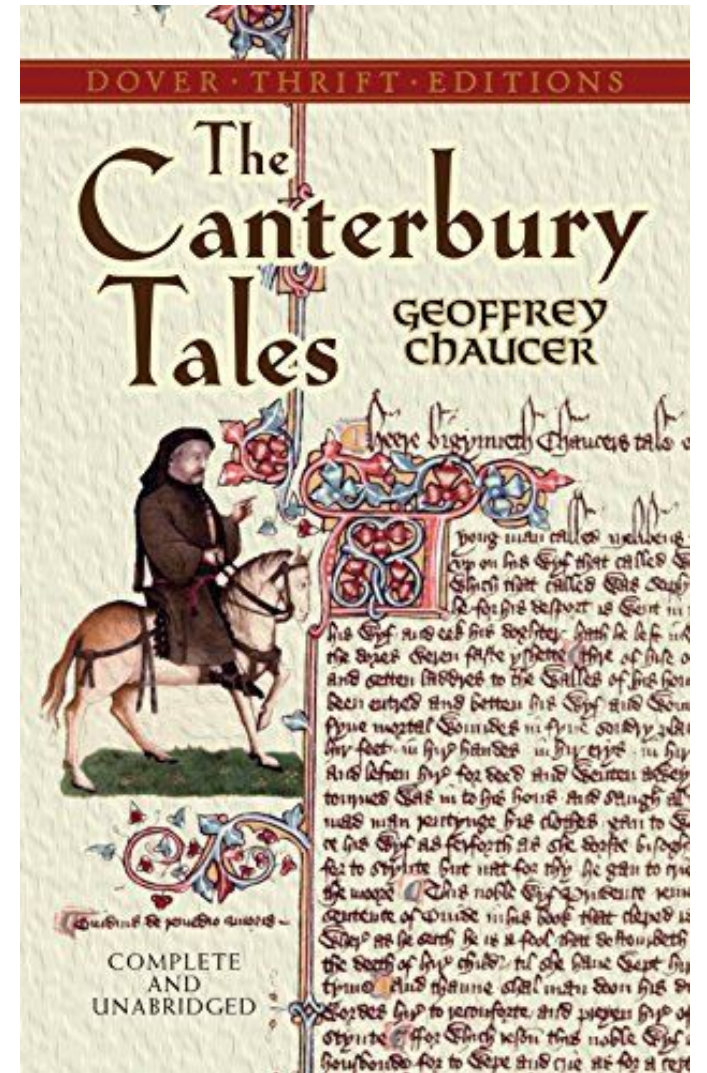
- the Norman conquest in 1066 - the Norman French dialect arrived in Britain
- Old English no longer dominated
- spoken by the aristocracy
- Middle English

Evolution of the English Language

- the loss of gender for nouns, some word forms (called inflections), the silent "e," and the coalescing of a more constrained word order
- people with the Norman French background wrote down the English words as they sounded
- the establishment of the S[ubject]-V[erb]-O[bject] type of word-order as normal
- Chaucer wrote in Middle English in the late 1300s

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*

*"Whan that Aprill, with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour..."*





Evolution of the English Language

- the monosyllabic words for basic concepts, bodily functions, and body parts inherited from Old English and shared with the other Germanic languages
- *God, man, tin, iron, life, death, limb, nose, ear, foot, mother, father, brother, earth, sea, horse*
- Words from French are often polysyllabic terms for the institutions of the Conquest (church, administration, law), for things imported with the Conquest (castles, courts, prisons), and terms of high culture and social status (fashion, literature, art, decoration).



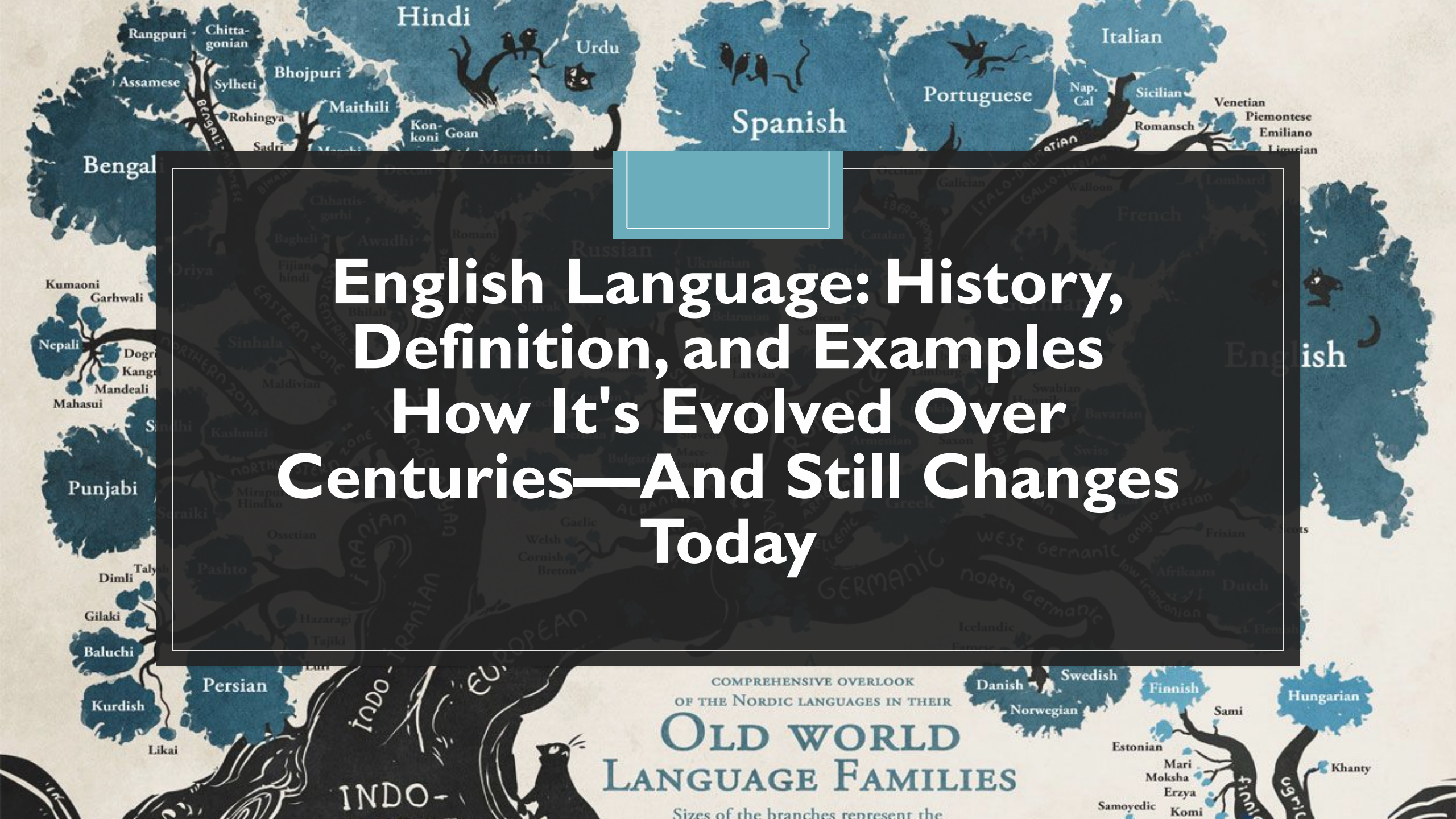
Usage of Modern English

- 1500
- English incorporated many words from Latin and Greek
- the Great Vowel Shift = from the 1400s through the 1750s

- For example, a Middle English long high vowel such as e eventually changed to a Modern English long i, and a Middle English long oo evolved into a Modern English ou sound. Long mid- and low-vowels changed as well, such as a long a evolving to a Modern English long e and an ah sound changing to the long a sound.

Today's English

- English is ever adopting new words from other languages (350 languages, according to David Crystal in "English as a Global Language").
- About three-quarters of its words come from Greek and Latin
- Ammon Shea points out in "Bad English: A History of Linguistic Aggravation," "it is certainly not a Romance language, it is a Germanic one. Evidence of this may be found in the fact that it is quite easy to create a sentence without words of Latin origin, but pretty much impossible to make one that has no words from Old English."



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