

Etymology of English Words

1. Etymological composition of ME.
2. Native and borrowed elements.
3. Classification of borrowings according to the language and degree of assimilation.
4. Etymological doublets. 5. International words.

<http://www.etymonline.com>



ONLINE ETYMOLOGY DICTIONARY

The English language is the sea which receives tributaries from every region under heaven

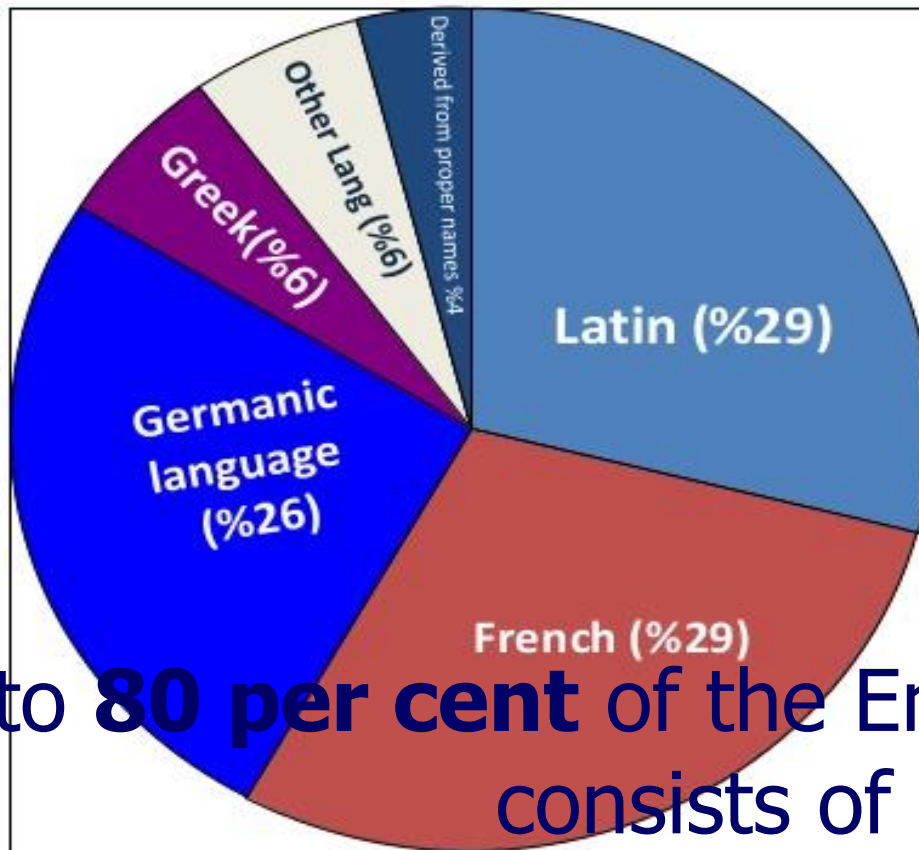
Ralph Waldo Emerson

- **Native American languages:** *caucus, pecan, raccoon.*
- **Spanish:** *junta, siesta, cigar.*
- **German:** *rucksack, hamburger, frankfurter, seminar.*
- **Italian:** *piano, soprano, confetti, spaghetti, vendetta.*
- **South Asian languages:** *bungalow, jungle, sandal.*
- **Yiddish:** *goy, knish, schmuck, kosher.*
- **Dutch:** *cruise, curl, dock, leak, pump, scum, yacht.*
- **Chinese:** *mandarin, tea, serge.*
- **Japanese:** *bonsai, hara-kiri, kimono, tycoon, karate, judo.*

A **borrowing** (a loan word) is a *word taken over from another language and modified in phonemic shape, spelling, paradigm or meaning according to the standards of the English language.*



The Origin of English Words



Up to **80 per cent** of the English vocabulary consists of borrowed words.

For more than **1,000 years** the process of borrowing words from other languages has been going on.

- The Normans bestowed on English words such as *duchess, city, mansion, and palace*. The Anglo-Saxon gave English *ring* and *town*.
- Latin (*mini, maxi*) and Greek (*micro*) – a fruitful source of vocabulary since the 16th century
- **Latinate words** – words originally Latin. Latinate words are common in English: *distinct, describe, transport, evidence, animal, create, act, generation, recollection, confluence, etc.*

In English, a **material culture** word *rouge* was borrowed from French, a **social culture** word *republic* from Latin, and a **religious culture** word *baptize* from Greek.

Such words become completely absorbed into the system:

- *garage* (French),
- *thug* (Hindustani),
- *tomato* (Aztec).

Original spelling, pronunciation and foreign identity:

- *rendezvous, coup, gourmet, détente* (French);
- *status quo, ego, curriculum vitae, bona fide* (Latin);
- *patio, macho* (Spanish);
- *kindergarten, blitz* (German);
- *kowtow, tea* (Chinese,);
- *incognito, bravo* (Italian).

Different types of borrowing:

- (1) when the two languages represent different social, economic, and political units (**cultural borrowing**)*;
- (2) when the two languages are spoken by those within the same social, economic, and political unit (**intimate borrowing**)*.
- Another principal type is between dialects of the same language (**dialect borrowing**)*.

May I have the
language of origin?

Learn Latin & Greek Elements
([CLICK HERE!](#))



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graph TD; A[English vocabulary] --- B[Native Element<br/>Indo-European<br/>& Germanic]; A --- C[Borrowed elements]
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English vocabulary

Native Element
Indo-European
& Germanic

**Borrowed
elements**

Native Element – words that are not borrowed from other languages.

- A **native word** is a word that belongs to the OE word-stock. The Native Element constitutes only up to 20-25% of the English vocabulary.
- Many of the common words of ME (*home, stone, meat*) are native, or OE words.
- Most of the irregular verbs in English derive from OE (*speak, swim, drive, ride, sing*), as do most of the English shorter numerals (*two, three, six, ten*) and most of the pronouns (*I, you, we, who*).

Indo-European Element

- words expressing family relations: *brother, daughter, father, mother, son*;
- names of parts of the human body: *foot, eye, ear, nose, tongue*;
- names of trees, birds, animals: *tree, birch, cow, wolf, cat*;
- names expressing basic actions: *to come, to know, to sit, to work*;
- words expressing qualities: *red, quick, right, glad, sad*;
- numerals: *one, two, three, ten, hundred*, etc.

Common Germanic

- nouns: *hand, life, sea, ship, meal, winter, ground, coal, goat;*
- adjectives: *heavy, deep, free, broad, sharp, grey;*
- verbs: *to buy, to drink, to find, to forget, to go, to have, to live, to make;*
- pronouns: *all, each, he, self, such;*
- adverbs: *again, forward, near; '*
- prepositions: *after, at, by, over, under, from, for.*

3 periods of Latin borrowings in OE:

1. Latin-Continental borrowings.
2. Latin-Celtic borrowings (*port, fountain, mountain*).
3. Latin borrowings connected with the Adoption of Christianity.



To the first period belong

- military terms (*wall, street*, etc.),
- trade terms (*pound, inch*),
- names of containers (*cup, dish*),
- names of food (*butter, cheese*),
- words connected with building (*chalk, pitch*), etc. Roman influence was felt in the names of towns: *Manchester, Lancaster*, etc. from the Latin word *caster* — лагерь.

- Such words as *port*, *fountain* and *mountain* were borrowed from Latin through Celtic.
- With the Adoption of Christianity mostly religious terms were borrowed: *dean*, *cross*, *alter*, *abbot* (Latin); *church*, *devil*, *priest*, *anthem*, *school*, *martyr* (Greek).
- Latin and Greek borrowings of the Middle English period are connected with the Great Revival of Learning and are mostly scientific words: *formula*, *inertia*, *maximum*, *memorandum*, *veto*, *superior*, etc. They were not fully assimilated, retaining their grammar forms.

- Many words from Greek came into English by way of French and Latin. Directly or indirectly, Greek contributed *athlete*, *acrobat*, *elastic*, *magic*, *rhythm*, and many others.
- There are some classical borrowings in Modern English as well: *anaemia*, *aspirin*, *iodin*, *atom*, *calorie*, *acid*, *valency*, etc.
- There are words formed with the help of Latin and Greek morphemes (roots or affixes): *tele*, *auto*, etc.

French had most influence on the EVoc;
it also influenced its spelling.

- government terms: *to govern, to administer, assembly, record, parliament;*
- words connected with feudalism: *peasant, servant, control, money, rent, subsidy;*
- military terms: *assault, battle, soldier, army, siege, defence, lieutenant;*
- words connected with jury: *bill, defendant, plaintiff, judge, fine;*
- words connected with art, amusement, fashion, food: *dance, pleasure, lace, pleat, supper, appetite, beauty, figure, etc.*

- During the 17th century English took lots of words to do with **cooking**, the **arts**, and a more sophisticated **lifestyle** in general (*chic, prestige, leisure, repertoire, resume, cartoon, critique, cuisine, chauffeur, questionnaire, coup, elite, avant-garde, bidet, detente, entourage*) .
- English also borrowed from Greek, Latin, and French a number of word parts for use as affixes and roots: *non-, de-, anti-*.

- **Scandinavian Borrowings** are connected with the Scandinavian Conquest of the British Isles (the end of the 8th century). **Nine hundred** words: *to take, leg, to hit, skin, same, cake, egg, kid, window, ill, happy, ugly, to call, to give, to get, etc.*
- Words beginning with *sk* like *sky*, etc;
- Pronouns and pronominal forms : *same, both, though, they, them, their* .

Over 120 lang-s are on record as sources of the EVoc

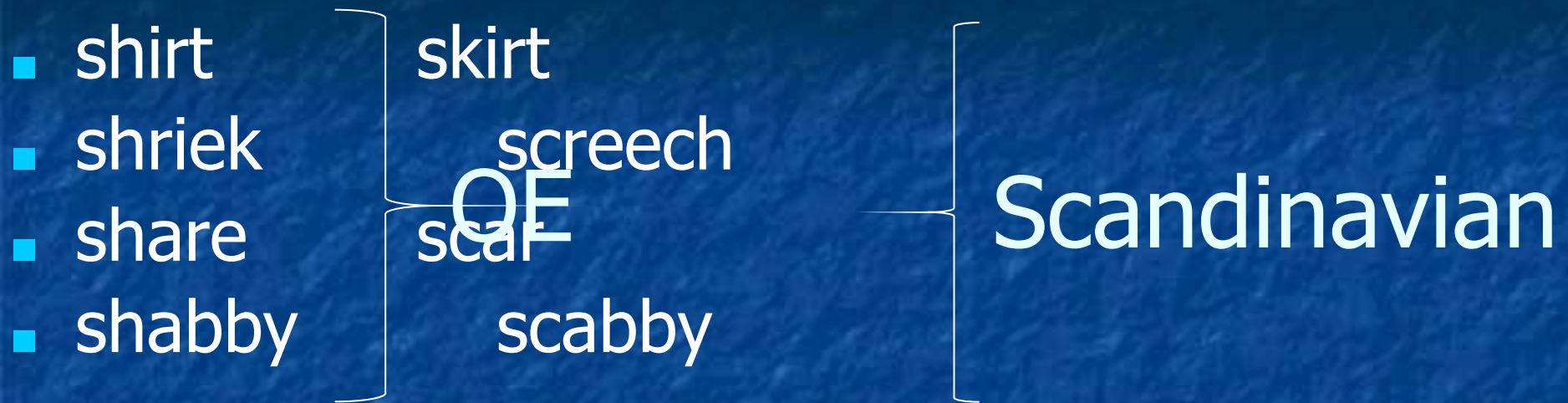
- **Arabic:** *algebra, algorithm, fakir, giraffe, sultan, harem, mattress;*
- **Turkish:** *yogurt, kiosk, tulip;*
- **Farsi:** *caravan, shawl, bazaar, sherbet;*
Eskimo: *kayak, igloo, anorak;*
- **Hindi:** *punch, shampoo;*
- **Amerindian** languages: *toboggan, wigwam, Chicago, Missouri, opossum;*
- **Portuguese:** *marmalade, cobra;*
- **Russian:** *bistro, tszar, balalaika, tundra, robot, perestroika.*

Borrowed words can be classified according to the *aspect* which is borrowed:

- phonetic borrowings (*table, chair, people*);
- translation loans (*Gospel, pipe of peace, masterpiece*);
- semantic borrowings (*pioneer*);
- morphemic borrowings (*beautiful, uncomfortable*).

- ***Assimilation*** of borrowed words is their adaptation to the system of the receiving language in pronunciation, in grammar and in spelling.
- **completely assimilated** borrowings that correspond to all the standards of the language (*travel, sport, street*),
- **partially assimilated** words (*taiga, phenomena, police*),
- **unassimilated** words (*coup d'état, tête-à-tête, ennui, éclat*).

Etymological Doublets (ED)



words of the same etymological root but which came into the language by different ways

One of the doublets is native, the other is borrowed:

screw (n) Scandinavian — *shrew* (n) English.

Both doublets may be from different, but co-generic languages :
captain (Latin) — *chieftain* (French); *senior* (Latin) — *sir* (French); *canal* (Latin) — *channel* (French).

ED-s may be borrowed from the same language but in different historical periods:

- travel* (Norman borrowing) — *travail* (Parisian borrowing); *corpse* (Norman borrowing) — *corps* (Parisian borrowing);
- a triple: *hospital* (Latin) — *hostel* (Norman French) — *hotel* (Parisian French).

Both doublets are native, but one originates from the other:

history — *story*; *phantasy* — *fancy*; *defence* — *fence*, *shadow* — *shade*.

International Words

- **words of identical origin that occur in several languages as a result of simultaneous or successive borrowings from one ultimate source (I.V. Arnold)**
- International words reflect the history of world culture.
- New inventions, political institutions, foodstuffs, leisure activities, science, technological advances : *sputnik, television, antenna, bionics, gene, cybernetics, bungalow, anaconda, coffee, chocolate, grapefruit, etc.*

KEY TERMS: *origin, native, borrowing (loan word), assimilation, hybrid, etymological doublet.*

origin – the beginning or cause of something

assimilation – taking in, fitting into, or becoming similar (to) <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british>

native – conferred by birth; derived from origin; born with one; inherent; inborn; not acquired

borrowing – appropriation (of ideas or words etc) from another source

hybrid – word that is composed of parts from different languages: monolingual (a Greek prefix and a Latin root) <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org>