



# LECTURE 2

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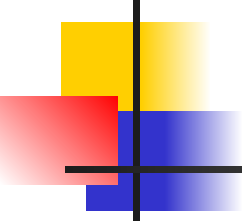
**OE Morphology.**  
**OE Syntax.**



# An Outline

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1. Grammatical categories of the Noun in OE
2. The Grammatical Categories of the Adjective in OE
3. Grammatical Categories of the Verb in OE
4. The Morphological Classification of the OE Verbs
5. Principal Features of OE Syntax

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- PIE had been an **inflected language** and PG had retained inflections to a greater a lesser extent.
  - In grammar, OE carried out some simplifications of the PG system



# Noun Grammatical categories:

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- **Case**
- **Number**
- **Gender**
- **Noun declensions**



# The Category of Case

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- **4 cases:**
  - **Nominative** (the subject case),  
**Accusative** ( the object case),  
**Genitive** (indicating possession)
  - **Dative** (used after most prepositions  
and also as the indirect object).



# The Category of Number

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- Sg. and Pl.
- Nominative      dæg      dagas
- Accusative      dæg      dæg
- Genitive      dæges      daga
- Dative      dæge      dagum



# The Category of Gender

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- MFN
  - Present-day English has only **natural gender**,
  - Gender in OE is **grammatical**.
- Cf. *OE moegden (girl), wīf (wife), bearn (child, son), and cild (child) are in fact neuter.*

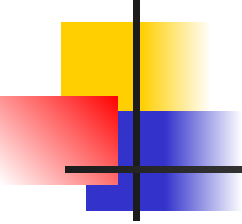


# Noun declensions

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- A group of nouns which all have **the same set of inflexions** attached to them are the members of a particular **declension**.





# Types of declensions in OE:

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- **strong declension**
- **weak declension**
- **root declension**
- **minor declensions**



# strong declension

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- *a*-stems,
- *ō*-stems,
- *i*-stems,
- *u*-stems.



# strong declension

(*a*-stems masculine)

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Singular

Plural

stān

stān**as**

stān**es**

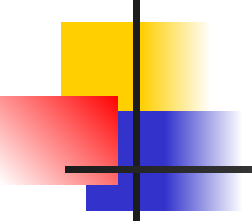
stān**a**

stān**e**

stān**um**

stān

stān**as**

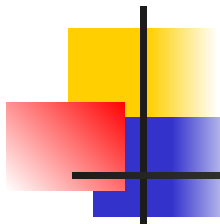
- 
- The *a*-stems form the most important declension for the later history of the language.
  - Cf. ModE *stones* – *OE* stānas
  - the plural inflexion *-as* is the antecedent of the modern standard plural marker.



# weak declension

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- **n-stems nouns**
- This declension gave the later -en plural
- Cf. ModE oxen ( < OE oxan )



<i>Singular</i>					
<i>n-stems (weak declension)</i>				<i>root-stems</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Nom.</i>	nama	ēare	tunȝe	fōt	mūs
<i>Gen.</i>	naman	ēaran	tunȝan	fōtes	mȳs, mūse
<i>Dat.</i>	naman	ēaran	tunȝan	fēt	mȳs
<i>Acc.</i>	naman	ēaran	tunȝan	fōt	mūs
<i>Plural</i>					
<i>Nom.</i>	naman	ēaran	tunȝan	fēt	mȳs
<i>Gen.</i>	namena	ēarena	tunȝena	fōta-	mūsa
<i>Dat.</i>	namum	ēarum	tunȝum	fōtum	mūsum
<i>Acc.</i>	naman	ēaran	tunȝan	fēt	mȳs
	(NE <i>name</i> )	(NE <i>ear</i> )	(NE <i>tongue</i> )	(NE <i>foot</i> )	(NE <i>mouse</i> )



# Root declension

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- Its most obvious characteristic is that they should have shown **i-mutation.**

# Singular

# Plural



■ **Nom.**

fōt

fēt

■ **Gen.**

fōtes

fōta

■ **Dat.**

fēt

fōtum

■ **Acc.**

fōt

fēt

- it is the source of irregular plurals;

PDE *foot ~ feet, man ~ men, goose ~ geese.*





# OE Adjectives

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- **Grammatical categories:**
  - 1) Number;
  - 2) Case;
  - 3) Gender;
- Degrees of comparison.
- Declensions: strong and weak.



# OE Verb

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## The categories of OE Verb:

- The category of Person (three persons)
- The category of Number (two numbers)
- The category of Mood (three moods)
- The category of Tense (present and past)

# The progressive constructions:



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Cf. Europe hio onginð... of Danai  
þære ie, seo is irnende of  
norþdæle...

*Europe she begins... from Don that  
river, that is running from  
northern-part...*



# The perfect and plusperfect constructions

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- Cf. *Ic hæbbe gebunden þone feond;*
- *I have bound that enemy''*



# Passive constructions

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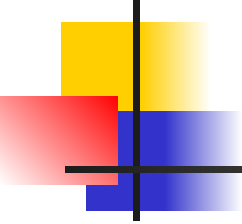
- OE *he gefeaht wip Gotan, & gefliemed  
weard & bedrifen on anne tun*
- he fought against Goths and  
put-to-flight was and driven into one  
fortress
- PDE: *he fought against the Goths and  
was put to flight and driven into  
a fortress;*



# Morphological classes of OE verbs

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- **strong,**
- **weak,**
- **preterit-presents,**
- **irregular**

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- A peculiar feature of the Germanic languages was the division of the verb into two great classes: the **weak** and the **strong** verbs.

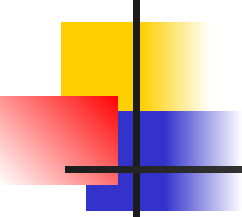


# Strong verbs

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- **7 classes** or “ablaut series”
- **Four forms**: the infinitive, the past singular, the past plural, and the past participle.
- Their major categories are formed by root-vowel alternations (ablaut).



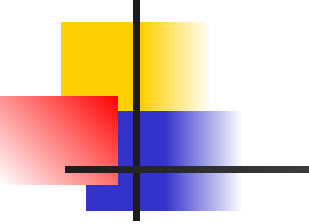
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- I. drīfan drāf      drifon      (ge) drifen
  - II. cēosan cēas      curon      coren
  - III. helpan healp hulpon holpen
  - IV. beran bær boren
  - V. sprecan spræc sprecen
  - VI. faran fōr fōron faren
  - VII. feallan fēoll fēollon feallen



# Weak verbs

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- **Three forms**: present infinitive; past tense; past participle.
- They form these forms by means of the **dental suffixes**.



Principal forms  Classes	Infinitive	Past Tense	Participle II <sup>1</sup>	NE
I	-an/-ian	-de/-ede/-te	-ed/-d/-t	
	(a) styrian (b) temman (c) dēman (d) cēpan (e) tellan (f) pyncan	styrede temede dēmede cēpte tealde pūhte	styred temed dēmed cēped teald pūht	<i>stir</i> <i>tame</i> <i>deem</i> <i>keep</i> <i>tell</i> <i>think</i>
II	-ian	-ode	-od	
	lōcian	lōcode	lōcod	<i>look</i>
III	-an	-de	-d	
	libban habban	lifde hæfde	lifd hæfd	<i>live</i> <i>have</i>

<sup>1</sup> Part. II of weak verbs, like that of strong verbs, was often marked by the prefix *ge-*. In the table the forms of Part. II are given without the prefix.



# OE Syntax

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- OE was a **highly inflected language**.
- Meaning was determined by **case endings**: that is, the relationship among words in a sentence was determined not by the word in the sentence, but by the special endings of the words