
Three Periods of History of English



English in Course of Time

- Unlike Russian, English is a quickly changing language.
- But at the same time the development of English was slow, gradual and uninterrupted.
- There is a considerable difference between the language of the 9th, 13th and, say, 17th centuries, in the vocabulary, grammatical systems and phonetic peculiarities.

It is customary to divide the history of English into three periods:

**Old English,
Middle English and
New English.**

OLD ENGLISH

Anglo-Saxon

- ✓ At the beginning it was the stage of tribal dialects of the West Germanic invaders, which were gradually losing contacts with the related continental languages.
- ✓ The tribal dialects were only used for oral communication.
- ✓ The 7th century was the beginning of writing, the tribal dialects were gradually changing into local and regional dialects.

Early Old English

Early Old English lasts from the Germanic invasion of Britain till the beginning of writing, i.e. from the 5th to the close of the 7th century.



Bede (O.E.: *Bæda* or *Bēda*; 672/673 – 26 May 735), also referred to as **Saint Bede** or the **Venerable Bede** was an English monk at the Northumbrian monastery of Saint Peter. His most famous work (*The Ecclesiastical* (духовный, церковный) *History of the English People*) gained him the title "The Father of English History".

The second period of Old English

The second period of Old English extends from the 8th c. till the end of the 11th c. (the Norman Conquest, 1066).

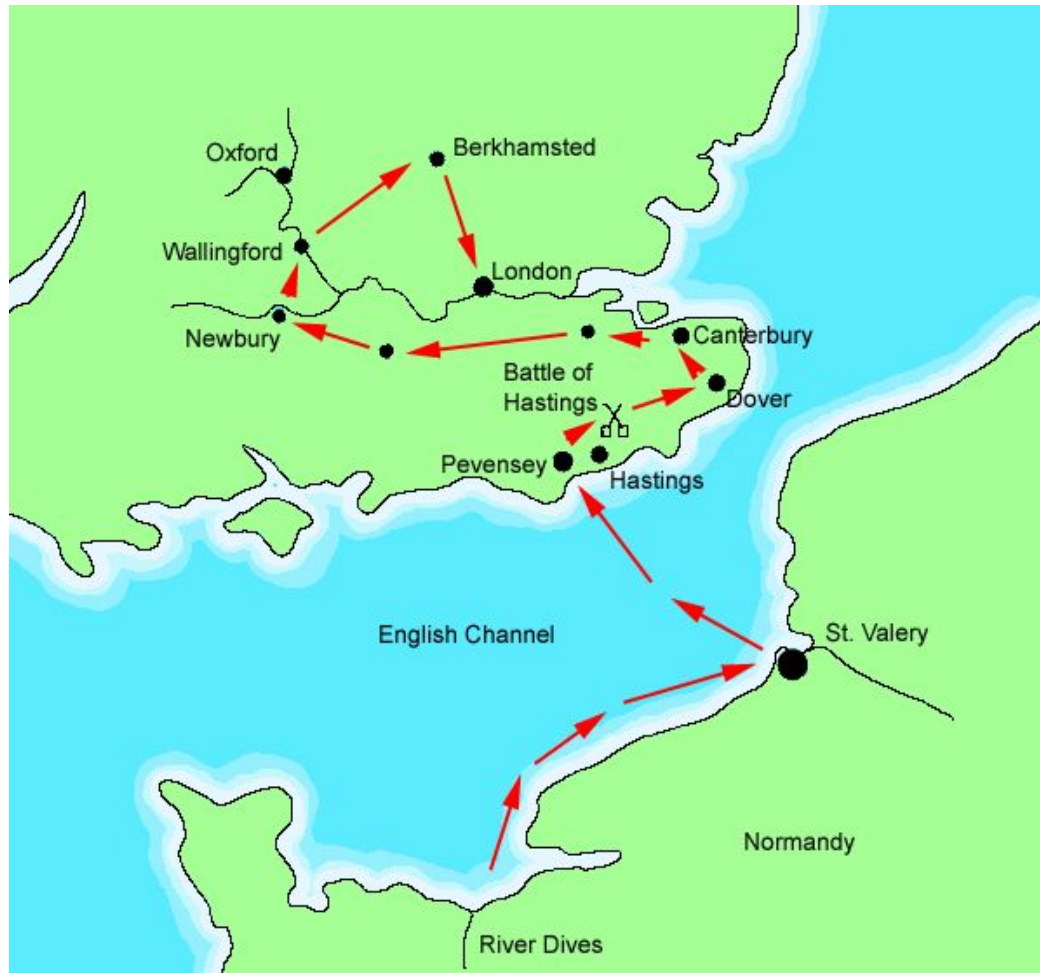


Peculiarities of Old English

✓ Old English was a typical Old Germanic language with a purely Germanic vocabulary and few foreign borrowings.

✓ As for grammar, Old English was an inflected or “synthetic” language with a well developed system of morphological categories.

The Middle English period.



The Norman Conquest of the 11th century is regarded as the beginning of the Middle English period. **It lasted from the 11th c. till the 15th c.**

Early Middle English

Historic Events

- 1066, the year of the Norman Conquest
- The official language in England was French for 300 years.
- The feudal system and foreign influence caused the greatest dialectal divergence (расхождение).

Linguistic Peculiarities

- The time of great linguistic changes at all the levels of the language.
- English absorbed two layers of borrowings: the Scandinavian element in the North-East (due to the Scandinavian invasions since the 8th c.) and the French element in the South-East (due to the Norman Conquest).
- Grammatical changes were so drastic that by the end of this period they transformed the English language into mainly an analytical one.

Classical Middle English

- The time of restoration of English in the position of the state and literary language and the time of literary flourishing.
- The main dialect used in writing and literature was the mixed dialect of London, which arose in the 14th century.

The New English period

□ **The introduction of printing** in the 15th century is considered the beginning of the New English period.

William Caxton is the first English printer. The first English book, printed in 1475, was Caxton's translation of the story of Troy.



“The age of normalization and standardization / correctness”.

- Early New English lasted from the introduction of printing (1475) till the middle of the 17th c. The period from the mid-17th c. to the close of the 18th c. is usually called “the age of normalization and standardization / correctness”.

Establishment of the **Written Standard**

- ❑ Towards the end of Early NE, one of the forms of the national literary language – its **Written Standard** – had been established.
- ❑ Its growth and recognition as the correct or “**prestige**” form of the language of writing had been predetermined by
 1. the **unification** of the country;
 2. the **progress of culture**.

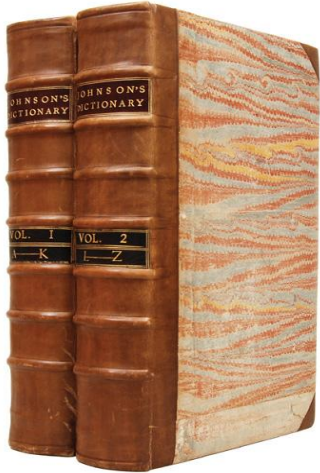
Normalizing Tendencies



- The role of English **grammars and dictionaries** in the period of normalization was very significant.
- The greatest achievement of the 18th c. English lexicography is certainly connected with the name of **Dr. Samuel Johnson**, who believed that the English language should be purified and corrected.



Dr. Samuel Johnson



Published on 15 April 1755 and written by [Samuel Johnson](#), ***A Dictionary of the English Language***, sometimes published as ***Johnson's Dictionary***, is among the most influential [dictionaries](#) in the history of the [English language](#).



"Johnson's writings had, in philology, the effect which Newton's discoveries had in mathematics" (Webster).

Late Modern English (1800-Present)

- The principal 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.

English nowadays

The last 30 or 40 years can be singled out as the final stage of the development, presenting the present-day English.