

Old English Phonology



Lecture 2. Plan

1. The Main Historic Events of the Period.
2. Old English Alphabet and Pronunciation.
3. English sounds as compared with the sounds in other Indo-European Languages. Grimm's Law.
4. The System of Vowels in Old English.
5. Changes in Consonants.

1. The Main Historic Events of the Period.

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British History Timeline

- The Celtic Period (the 5th century BC – 43 AD);
- Roman Britain (43 AD – 410);
- The Germanic Tribe Invasion (started in 449);
- The Scandinavian Period (the end of the 8th century – 1042)

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/interactive/timelines/british/index_embed.shtml

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Celtic People

The Celts immigrated to England in the 5th century B.C. and drove out the Stonehenge people.

Since the Celts wandered over areas from Spain to Russia and Britain, the Celtic language was spoken over a vast area of the European continent.

The Celtic language survives today in the language spoken by the Scotch Gaelic, Irish, Welsh, and Breton.

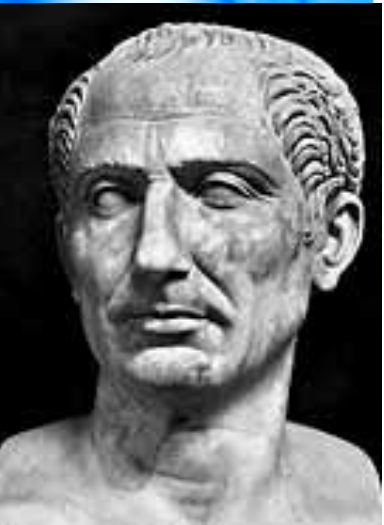
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The Romans

In 43 A.D., an army of 40,000 Roman soldiers invaded Celtic Britain and made it part of the Roman Empire.

In the 400 years the Romans ruled Britain, they introduced Christianity, Latin, built roads, established Roman laws, and protected the Celts from the fierce Picts and Scots on the north side of Hadrian's Wall.

The Main Historic Figures



Julius Caesar (100BC - 44BC)

Caesar was a politician and general of the late Roman republic, who greatly extended the Roman empire before seizing power and making himself dictator of Rome, paving the way for the imperial system. He made two expeditions to Britain, in 55 BC and 54 BC.



Claudius (10 BC - 54 AD)

Claudius I was the emperor who added Britain to the Roman Empire.

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The End of Roman Rule 410 A.D.

The Romans started pulling soldiers from Britain in 410 A.D. after 400 years of Roman rule.

Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, was under attacks from barbaric tribes.

The Celts were left without the protection of the Roman army and with no weapons to defend themselves.

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The Jutes Come to Britain

Vortigern (Вортигерн), a Celtic chieftain, asked the Jutes, a Germanic tribe, to come to Britain and fight the Picts and Scots.

In return, Vortigern promised that Jutes could have the isle of Thanet.

The Jutes defeated the Picts and Scots, but when they finished fighting, the Jutes stayed in Kent.

The start of the Germanic Tribes' Invasion

The Germanic Angle and Saxon tribes also invaded Britain.

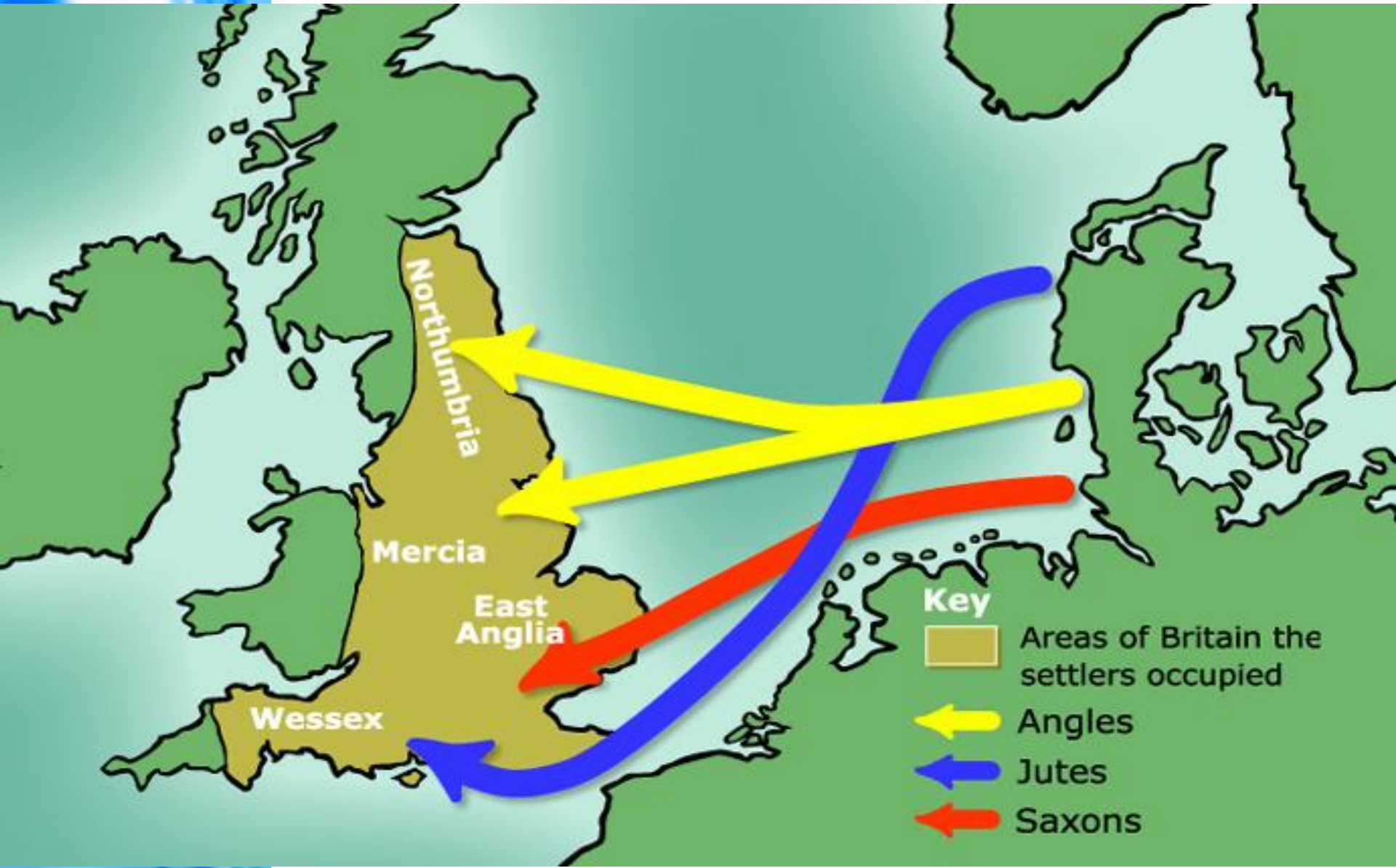
The Celts, renamed Wealas (foreigners), were driven west by them, settled in Wales.

Some Celts fled across the English channel and settled in Brittany where a form of the Celtic language can be heard today.

The present day heir to the English throne, Prince Charles, is titled the Prince of Wales. Welsh is a form of the Celtic language.



Jute, Angle, and Saxon Invasion





The 7 kingdoms formed by the newcomers were the following:

- **Jutes** – the kingdom of Kent;
- **Saxons** – Essex, Wessex and Sussex;
- **Angles** – East Anglia, Northumbria and Mercia.

These 7 principal concurrent (/kən'klrənt/
- одновременный) Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the 7th – 8th centuries are known under the general name – **Heptarchy** (/ˈhɛptɑ:kɪ/ - гептархия, семивластие).

Some documents of literature as well as the remains of material culture of the later period were ruthlessly destroyed during the raids of the Scandinavians.

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The Scandinavian Invasion

Around 878 AD Danes and Norsemen, also called Vikings, invaded the country and English got many Norse words into the language, particularly in the north of England.

The Vikings, being Scandinavian, spoke a language (Old Norse) which, in origin at least, was just as Germanic as Old English.

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The Introduction of Christianity

The arrival of St. Augustine in 597 and the introduction of Christianity into Saxon England brought more Latin words into the English language.

England received the Latin alphabet and educated people. It brought monasteries with their schools and chronicles.

Now the English history was written by the Englishmen themselves, in their own language.

Now translation as a kind of intellectual activity came into the life of Englishmen.



Alfred the Great (849 AD - 899 AD)

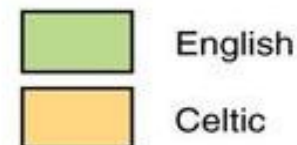
King of the southern Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex and one of the outstanding figures of English history, as much for his social and educational reforms as for his military successes against the Danes. He is the only English monarch known as 'the Great'.

In 886 AD, Alfred negotiated a treaty with the Danes. England was divided, with the north and the east (between the Rivers Thames and Tees) declared to be Danish territory - later known as the 'Danelaw' ("Данелаг" – область датского закона). Alfred therefore gained control of areas of West Mercia and Kent which had been beyond the boundaries of Wessex.

Alfred had a strong belief in the importance of education and learnt Latin in his late thirties. He then arranged, and himself took part in, the translation of books from Latin to Anglo-Saxon.

The Dialects spoken by the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisians

- Northumbrian (нортумбрский);
- Mercian (мерсийский);
- Kentish (кентийский);
- West-Saxon (уэссекский)



The Available Texts



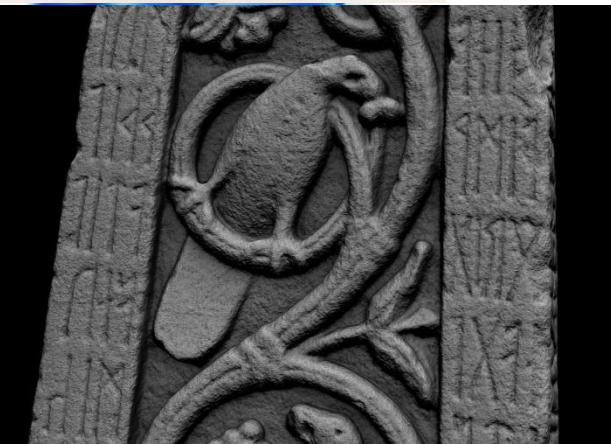
- Kentish (кентийский):

The Ecclesiastical History of the English People (Latin: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* – Церковная история Англоv), written by the Venerable Bede in about AD 731, is a history of the Christian Churches in England, and of England generally.

- Northumbrian (нортумбрийский):

- ✓ *Caedmon's Hymn* (Песнь Кэдмонда, 7th с.);
- ✓ Bede's *Death Song* (Предсмертная песнь Бэды, 8th с.);
- ✓ the Runes on the Ruthwell Cross from the Dream of the Rood;
- ✓ *Beowulf*

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/evolvingenglish/accessvers/index.html>



The Available Texts

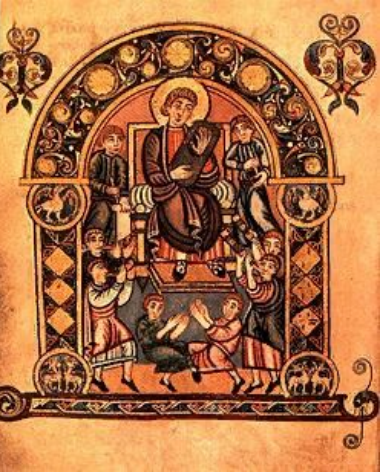
- Mercian (мерсийский):

Six Mercian hymns are included in the Anglo-Saxon glosses to the *Vespasian Psalter* /'sɔ:ltə/ (*Веспасианов псалтырь*)

- West-Saxon (уэссекский):

- ✓ King Alfred's Preface to Gregory's *Pastoral Care*;
- ✓ Orosius's *World History* (*Historia adversus paganos*);
- ✓ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*;
- ✓ Aelfric's works – *Gospels*, *Lives of Saints*, *Latin Grammar*, *Old Testament*, *Old Saxon Chronicles*;
- ✓ Wulfstan's *Homilies* (поучения, проповеди), one of which *Sermo Lupi ad Anglo* (*The Wulf's Sermon to the English*) is about the fate of the ravaged country after the Scandinavian conquest

(<http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/evolvingenglish/accessvers/index.html>)




2. Old English Alphabet and Pronunciation.




The Runes

The **runes** are the letters in a set of related alphabets known as runic alphabets, which were used to write various Germanic languages before the adoption of the Latin alphabet and for specialised purposes thereafter.

They are the symbols that were very vague, that might at the same time denote a sound, a syllable or a whole word.

Runes are the 24 letters (later 16 in Scandinavia and 30 or more in Anglo-Saxon England) of an ancient Germanic alphabet used from the 2d or 3d to the 16th century. Perhaps derived ultimately from the Etruscan alphabet, the runic alphabet was used mainly for charms and inscriptions, on stone, wood, metal, or bone. Each letter had a name, which was itself a meaningful word. The rune , for instance, could stand for either the sound "f" or the fehu, "cattle", which was the name given to the rune.

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They were of specific shape, designed to be **cut on the wooden sticks**, and only few people knew how to make them and how to interpret them.

Runic inscriptions that came down from the oldest settlers on the isles are few, and the language (as it is interpreted) is not what might be called Old English - **it was rather an ancient language which might be very close to the languages of other Germanic tribes.**

Some English sounds had no counterpart in Latin, so **three signs developed from runes were added, plus ligature æ**, now well known as a transcription symbol (In writing and typography, a ligature occurs where two or more graphemes or letters are joined as a single).

The **Latin alphabet** was carried throughout medieval Europe by **the Roman Catholic church** - to the Irish and Merovingians in the 6th century and the Anglo-Saxons and Germans in the 7th. The oldest surviving texts in the English language written with Latin letters date back to 700.



feoh - f "wealth" ur - u "cattle" þorn - þ "thorn" os - o "mouth" rad - r "ride" cen - c "torch" ziefu - ʒ "gift" pynn - p "joy" hæzl - h "hail"



nyd - n "need" is - i "ice" jear - j "year" eeoh - eo "yew" peorð - p "game" eolxec3 - x "elk-sedge" sizel - s "sun" tyr - t "Tyr" beorc - b "birch"



eoh - e "horse" man - m "man" lagu - l "lake" ing - ŋ "Ing" œðel - œ "estate" dæ3 - d "day" ac - a "oak" æsc - æ "ash"



yr - y "bow" ear - ea "earth" iar - ia "serpent" kalc - k "chalice" kalc - kk "chalice" gar - g "spear" cpeorð - cp "fire" stan - st "stone"

f	u	th	a	r	k	g	w
h	n	i	j	ae	p	z	s
t	b	c	m	l	ng	d	o

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/write-your-name-in-runes.html>

So the letters of the Old English alphabet were as follows, and they denoted the following sounds

1. a [a] *ǣan* (go) and (and)

2. æ [æ] *ðæt* (that)

3. b [b] *bān* (bone)

4. c [k] *caru* (care) and [tʃ] before front vowels *cild* (child)

5. d [d] *dēor* (deer; in old times animal)

6. e [e] *mete* (meat; in old times food)

7. f [f] *findan* (find) and [v] in intervocal position *lufu* (love)

8. ȝ was one of the remnants of the runic alphabet called *joh* (yoke), and it had several readings:


[g] *ǣan* (go)

[j] *ǣar* (year)

[ȝ] at the beginning of the word before back vowels and after n and between two back vowels:


sorȝian (sorrow), *folȝian* (follow), *ȝuma* (man, human), *daȝas* (days)

<http://www.runetree.co.uk/?articles/2013/06/29/the-anglo-saxon-alphabet-and-pronunciation.html>

- 
9. h [h] *hām* (home), *him* (him), *huntoð* (hunting)
 10. i [ɪ] *hit* (it), *him* (him), *lim* (limb)
 11. l [l] *lytel* (little), *līf* (life), *lufu* (love)
 12. m [m] *man* (man), *macian* (make)
 13. n [n] *nama* (name), *nēah* (near)
 14. o [o] *fōn* (catch), *mōna* (moon)
 15. p [p] *pera* (pear)
 16. r [r] *riht* (right), *riŋan* (ring), *wyrcaŋ* (work)
 17. s [s] *sittan* (sit), *siŋan* (sing)
 18. t [t] *trēo* (tree), *tellan* (tell)
 19. ð was developed from the rune *thorn* [θ] *ðæt* (that), *ðirda* (third), *ðin* (thing); [ð] in the intervocal position *ōðer* (other), *brōðor* (brother)
 20. u [u] *wudu* (wood)
 21. w [w] in original Old English texts it was *wynn* from the rune meaning joy: *winnan* (win), *weorðan* (become)
 22. x [ks] *oxa* (ox)
 23. y [y] *fyllan* (fill), *lytel* (little)

3. English Sounds as Compared with the
Sounds in Other Indo-European Languages.
Grimm's Law. Verner's Law.

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The language of the period bears a lot of traces in common with other inflected Indo-European languages, Ukrainian and Russian including.

Its characteristics:

- ✓ the nominal parts of speech were declined;
- ✓ the infinitive of the verb likewise had a distinct infinitival suffix;
- ✓ the structure of the sentence had a subject, a predicate and secondary parts;
- ✓ just like in our Slavic languages word order was free;
- ✓ the nominal parts of speech had cases;
- ✓ there was agreement between the subject and the predicate;
- ✓ double negation was not prohibited.

A considerable number of words of the language had parallels in other known Indo-European languages (*brōđor* брат; *duru* дверь). Some of sounds are found in all languages that we know, some are now known as phonetic symbols, and they are specifically English sounds.

But some sounds which are found elsewhere, may not stand in the English words of Indo-European origin in the same places.

sunu (son) – Ukr., Rus. *син, сын*; Lat. *sunus*; Lith *sunùs*; Sanskrit *sunus*
brōđor (brother) – Ukr., Rus. *брат*; Lat. *frater*; Greek *phrater*; Sanskrit
bhratar; French *frere*

twā two) – Ukr., Rus. *два*; Lat. *duo*; Greek *duo*; Spanish *duo*; French *deux*

đrēo (three) Ukr., Rus. *три* Lat. *tres*; Greek *treis*; Spanish *tres*; French *trois*

fisc (fish) Ukr. *ричка*; Rus. *рыбка*; Spanish *pesca*; French *poisson*

ētan (eat) Ukr. *їдки*; Lat. *edere*; Rus. *еда*

wītan (wit, wits, witch) (to know) Ukr. *відомий, відьма*; Rus. *ведьма*;
Sanskrit *vidati*

đæt (that) Gk *tó*, Sanskrit *tad*; Lat. *istud*; Rus. *то*; Ukr. *та, той*

eahta (eight) Lat., Gk *octo*; Ukr., Rus. *октава*

By carefully studying present-day English words and comparing them with the words of our language we can relate words in the languages:

flame Rus. *пламя*; Ukr. *полум'я*.

In the process of its development a great number of words were taken into English from other languages (mainly Latin or Greek):

first – *primary*; *two* – *double*; *eight* – *octopus*; *eye* – *binoculars*; *tooth* – *dentist*

In some others the changes are so significant, that we cannot see common features without knowing the major shifts in sound system:

Gynecology /'gɪnɪ'kɒlədʒi/ also **gynaecology** from French *gynécologie*, from Greek *gynaik-*, comb. form of *gyne* “*woman, female*”.

Queen before 900; Middle English *quene*, *quen*, Old English *cwēn* woman, queen; cognate with Old Saxon *quān*, Old Norse *kvān*, Greek *gyné* woman, Russian *zhená*, Sanskrit *jani* wife

<https://www.etymonline.com/>

Grimm's Law

Jacob Ludwig Grimm (1785-1863), a German philologist and a folklorist (generally known together with his brother Wilhelm for their Grimm's Fairy Tales (1812-22) studied and systematized these correlations in his *Deutsche Grammatik* (1819-37).

His conclusions are formulated (called **Grimm's law** or the **First Consonant shift**).

The **essence of Grimm's law** is that the quality of some sounds (namely plosives) changed in all Germanic languages while the place of their formation remained unchanged. Thus, voiced aspirated plosives (stops) lost their aspiration and changed into pure voiced plosives, voiced plosives became voiceless plosives and voiceless plosives turned into voiceless fricatives.

<i>bh dh gh</i> → <i>b d g</i>	Sanskrit <i>bhrata</i> → Goth <i>brōðar</i> , Old English <i>brōðor</i> (brother);
<i>b d g</i> → <i>p t k</i>	Lith. <i>bala</i> , Ukr. <i>боломо</i> → Old English <i>pōl</i> ; Lat. <i>granum</i> → Goth. <i>kaurn</i> , Old English <i>corn</i> ;
<i>p t k</i> → <i>f θ h</i>	Lat. <i>pater</i> → Goth <i>fadar</i> , Old English <i>fæder</i>

There are some exceptions to Grimm's law: *p t k* did not change into *f θ h*, if they were preceded by *s* (*tres* - *ðreo*, but *sto* - *standan*).

Verner's Law

Another exception was formulated by a Danish linguist **Karl Adolph Verner** (1846— 96) in 1877:

if an Indo-European voiceless stop was preceded by an unstressed vowel, the voiceless fricative which developed from it in accordance with Grimm's law became voiced, and later this voiced fricative became a voiced plosive (stop).

That is: $p t k \rightarrow b d g$.

Greek *pater* has a Germanic correspondence *fadar*; *fæder* because the stress in the word was on the second syllable, and so voiceless plosive was preceded by an unstressed vowel.

Verner's law explains why some verbs in Old English changed their root consonant in the past tense and in the Participle II - originally, these grammatical forms had the stress on the second syllable. Hence the basic forms of such verbs as *sniðan* (cut) and *weorðan* (become) were *sniðan* — *snað* - *snidon* - *sniden*; *weorðan* - *wearð* - *wurdon* - *worden*.

So, in present-day English we may find the words and morphemes of common Indo-European origin that differ in sound form from their counterparts in other languages, but Grimm's law will show their similarity to the words of Indo-European languages.

4. The System of Vowels in Old English.



The System of Vowels in Old English

monophthongs

7 short:
a æ e i o u y

7 long:
a:æ:e:i:o:u:y:

diphthongs

4 short:
ea eo ie io

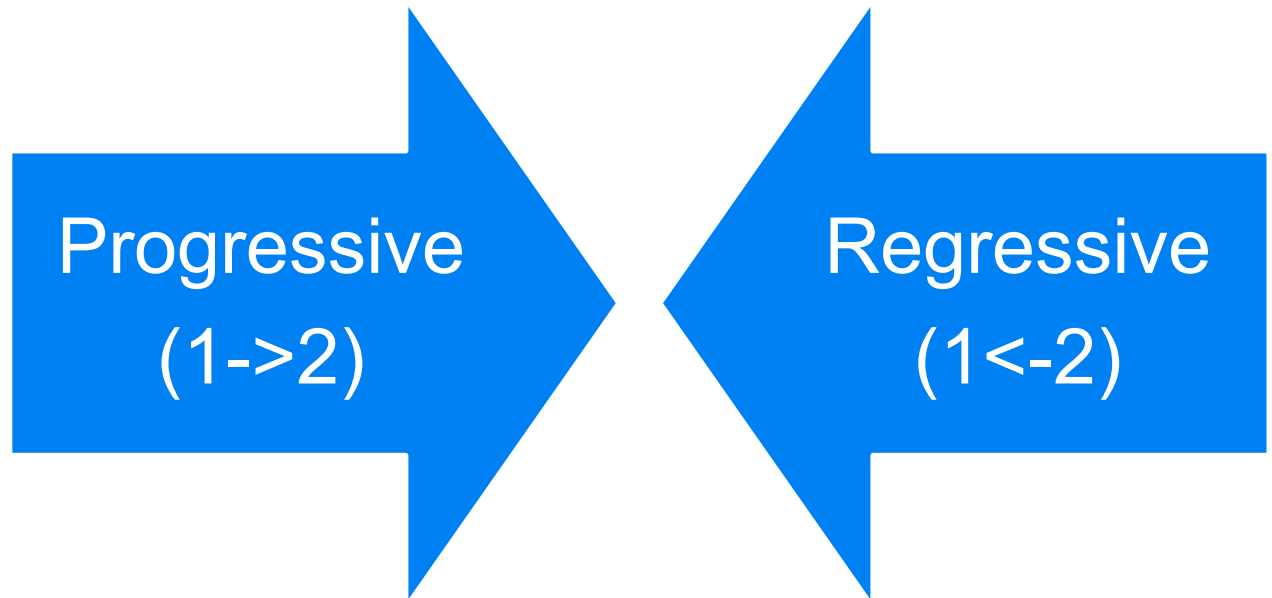
4 long:
ea: eo:
ie: io:

The System of Vowels in Old English

	front unround	front round	central	back
HIGH	i	y		u
MID	e	æ/e	e	o
LOW	æ		a	

Assimilative changes are the changes that occurred in the language in specific surroundings – the sound might change when it is preceded or followed by some other sound or sound cluster.

TYPES OF ASSIMILATION



The Changes in Vowels

1) **Fracture/breaking** (преломление). Diphthongization of short vowels 'a', 'æ', 'e' before the clusters:

a + r+ cons., 'l + cons. => ea

æ + h+ cons. => ea

e + h final => eo

a > ea

hard > heard (hard)

arm > earm (arm)

half > healf (half)

ahta > eahta (eight)

e > eo

hairto, herte > heorte (heart)

erl > eorl (earl)

2) **Palatal Mutation/ i-umlaut** (перегласовка). A back sound changes its quality if there is a front sound in the next syllable. A change of vowel caused by partial assimilation to the following vowel: i-mutation – caused by 'i', 'j' of the following syllable:

The Changes in Vowels

a > æ; a > e	<i>wakjan</i> – <i>wæccan</i> (to observe, to be awake) <i>sandian</i> – <i>sendan</i> (to send) <i>nannian</i> – <i>nemnan</i> (to name) <i>talian</i> – <i>tælan</i> – <i>tellan</i> (to tell) <i>salian</i> – <i>sælan</i> – <i>sellan</i> (to sell, originally to give) <i>satian</i> – <i>sætan</i> – <i>settan</i> (to set)
ā > ǣ	<i>lārian</i> – <i>lǣran</i> (to learn, to teach) <i>hālian</i> – <i>hǣlan</i> (to heal) <i>ān</i> – <i>ǣniȝ</i> (any)
o > oe > e	<i>ofstian</i> – <i>efstan</i> (to hurry) <i>dohter</i> – <i>dehter</i> (dative case of daughter)
ō > oe > ē	<i>wōpian</i> – <i>wēpan</i> (to weep) <i>dōmian</i> – <i>dēman</i> (to deem, to judge)
u > y	<i>fullian</i> – <i>fyllan</i> (to fill) <i>kuninȝ</i> – <i>cyninȝ</i> (king)
ū > ȳ	<i>mūs</i> – <i>mȳs</i> (mice) <i>cūðian</i> – <i>cȳðan</i> (to announce)

The Changes in Vowels

ea > ie

eald – *ieldra* (elder)

hleahian – *hliehhan* (to laugh)

eo > ie

feor – *fierra* (further)

zeonȝ – *zienȝra* (younger)

ēa > īe

hēarian – *hīeran* (hear)

zelēafa – *zelīefan* (believe)

ēo > īe

zetrēowi – *zetrīewe* (true)

The Changes in Vowels

3) **Diphthongization after palatal consonants.** Vowels under the influence of the initial palatal consonants 'ǰ', 'c' (before front vowels) and the cluster 'sc' (all vowels) are diphthongized. Some linguists doubt that *i* was pronounced. They think it was just to signify the palatal nature of the preceding sound.

- a > ea, *skal* – *sceal* shall
 scacan – *sceacan* (shake)
 scamu – *sceamu* (shame)
- ā > ēa *skaggwon* – *scēawian* (to show)
- e > ie *ʒefan* – *ʒiefan* (give)
 ʒetan – *ʒietan* (get)
- æ > ea (the æ sound was actually derived from a)
 ʒæf – *ʒeaf* (gave)
 ʒæt – *ʒeat* (gate)
- ā > ēa (the ā sound was actually derived from ā)
 jār – *ʒēar* (year)
- o > eo *scort* – *sceort* (short)
 yong – *ʒeonʒ* (young)

The Changes in Vowels

4) **Back / Velar Mutation.** Phonetic change caused by a back vowel (*u, o, a* (sometimes)) of the following syllable, which resulted in the diphthongization of the preceding vowel:

i > io *hira – hiora* (their);

silufr – siolufr (silver)

sifon – siofon (seven)

limu – liomu (limbs)

e > eo *heorot – heorot* (hart)

hefon – heofon (heaven)

efor – eofor (boar)

a > ea *saru – searu* (armour)

5) **Mutation before *h*.** Sounds *a* and *e* that preceded *h* underwent several changes, mutating to diphthongs *ea, ie* and finally were reduced to *i/y*. The words with such mutation are not very numerous.

naht – neaht – niht – nieht – nyht (night)

The Changes in Vowels

6) **Contraction.** If, after a consonant had dropped, two vowels met inside a word, they were usually contracted into one long vowel.

a + h + vowel > ēa *slahan* – *slēan* (slay)

e + h + vowel > ēo *sehen* – *sēon* (see)

i + h + vowel > ēo *tihan* – *tēon* (accuse)

o + h + vowel > ō *fohan* – *fōn* (catch)

hohan – *hōn* (hang)

7) **Lengthening of Vowels (quantitative change).** Before 'nd', 'ld, 'mb' the vowels are lengthened:

bindan – *bīndan*; *climban* – *clīmban*, *cild* – *cīld* (bind, climb, child)

It explains the exception in the rules of reading the sounds in the closed syllables in the present-day English (*climb*, *find*, *bold*, *told*, *comb*).

Still, if there was a consonant after this cluster the vowel was not lengthened: *cildru* (children).

8) **Gradation / Ablaut** (чередование гласных в морфеме). Alternation of vowels in different grammatical forms: in strong verbs: Infinitive (*ziban* - *давать*), Past. Sing. (*zaf*), Past Pl. (*zebum*), Second Part. (*zibans*);

5. Changes in Consonants.



A vertical blue abstract graphic on the left side of the slide, featuring flowing, wavy lines that create a sense of movement and depth. The colors range from light blue to a deeper, more saturated blue.

The System of Consonants in Old English

The Old English system of consonants phonemes have changed but little in comparison with other Germanic languages.

The system of consonants of the Old English period is presented in the following table (every short consonant in OE had a corresponding long one):

Old English Consonants

Place of articulation Manner of articulation		Labial, labiodental	Forelingual (dental)	Mediolingual (palatal)	Back-lingual (velar)
		Noise conso- nants	voiced	p p:	p p:
plosive					
voiceless	b b:		b b:	g':	g g:
voiced	f f:		θ θ: s s:	x' x':	x x: (h)
fricative					
voiceless	v	ð z	ɣ' (j)	ɣ	
Sonorants		m m:	n n:		
		w	r l	j	(j)



		MANNER	VOICING	PLACE					
				Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Obstruent	Stop	Voiceless	p			t		k	ʔ
		Voiced	b			d		g	
	Fricative	Voiceless		f	θ	s	ʃ		h
		Voiced		v	ð	z	ʒ		
	Affricate	Voiceless					tʃ		
		Voiced					dʒ		
Sonorant	Nasal	Voiced	m			n		ŋ	
	Liquid	Lateral				l			
		Rhotic	Voiced					r (ɹ)	
	Glide	Voiced	w				j	(w)	



Место образования / Способ образования		Смычные				Щелевые			Смычно-щелевые	
		Взрывные		Сонорные		Фрикативные		Сонорные		
		глухие	звонкие	носовые	боковые	глухие	звонкие	срединные	глухие	звонкие
Губно-губные		p	b	m			w			
Губно-зубные						f	v			
П Е Р Е Д Н Е Я З Ы Ч Н Ы Е	Зубные					s	z			
	А	Межзубные				θ	ð			
	П	Альвеолярные	t	d	n	l				
	И									
	К	Палатально-альвеолярные					ʃ	ʒ	ʧ	ʤ
	Я									
З	Заальвеолярные						r			
Ы	Среднеязычные палатальные						j			
Б	Заднеязычные велярные		k	g	ŋ					
Ч	Фарингальные						h			
Н										
Ы										
Е										

1. Voicing of fricatives in intervocalic position

f > v

ofer (over)
hlāf – hlāfas
(loaf – loaves)
wif – wīfe
(wife – wives)


θ > ð

ōðer (other)
raðe (quickly)

s > z > r

Voiced sibilant *z* was very unstable in Old English (and other west-Germanic languages) and very soon changed into *r* (**rhotacism**)

wesun – weren (now *were*, but *was*)
maiza – māra (now *more*, but *most*)



2. Palatalization of the sounds *k'*, *sk'* and *kg'* (marked as *c*, *sc* and *cȝ*) developed in assibilation, that is formation of a sibilant in places before front vowels.

c > [k] > [tʃ] > ch

cild > *child*

ceosan > *choose*

hwilc > *which*

sc [sk] > [ʃ] > sh

sceap > *sheep*

scip > *ship*

sceotan > *shoot*

cȝ [gg'] > [dʒ] > dg

3. Assimilation before *t*.

The sound *t* when it was preceded by a number of consonants changed the quality of a preceding sound.

velar + t > ht

sēcan – (*sōcte*) > *sōhte* (*seek* – *sought*)

brinȝan > *brōhte* –
(*bring* – *brought*)

labial + t > ft

ȝesceapan > *ȝeaseaft* (*creature*)

dental + t > ss

witan > *wisse* (*instead of witte-knew*)

fn > mn

stefn > *stemn* (*voice*)

fm > mm

4. Loss of consonants in certain positions

Besides **h** that was lost in intervocal position, the sounds **n** and **m** were lost before **h**, entailing the lengthening of the preceding vowel:

bronhte – *brōhte* (*brought*)

fimf – *fif* (*five*)

onðer – *ōðer* (*other*)

munð – *mūð* (*mouth*)

Other examples of similar loss was the loss of **ʒ** before *d* and *n*; the vowel was lengthened, too:

mæʒden – *māeden* (*maiden*)

sæʒde – *sæde* (*said*)

5. Metathesis of r

In several OE words the following change of the position of consonants takes place:

cons + r + vowel > cons + vowel + r

ðridda – ðirda (third)

brunnan – burnan (burn)

hros – hors (horse)

Metathesis of sounds is observed also with other sounds:

ascian – axian (ask)

wascan – waxan (wash)

6. West Germanic gemination of consonants

In the process of palatal mutation, when *j* was lost and the preceding vowel was short, the consonant after it was doubled (geminated):

fulian – *fyllan* (fill)

sætjan – *settan* (set)

salian – *sellan* (sell, originally give)

talian – *tellan* (tell)

Questions for Self- Control

1. Name the main historic events of the period.
2. What was the main tendency of the changes of stressed long vowels?
3. What was the main tendency of the changes of stressed short vowels?
4. What vowel change is called “breaking”?
5. What vowel change is called “diphthongization”? What vowel change is called “palatal mutation”? What vowel change is called “velar mutation”?
6. What are the principal features of the OE vowels?
7. What peculiar features did the consonants have in OE?
8. What change is called “rhotacism”? What change is called “gemination”?