

## ENGLISH GRAMMAR

PROLEGOMENA

### WHAT IS "GRAMMAR"

- Grammar is concerned particularly with morphology and syntax
- It is part of the broader study of linguistics
- Linguistics also includes:
  - Etymology,
  - Graphetics
  - Phonetics
  - Semantics
  - Pragmatics

### WHAT IS GRAMMAR?

A good definition, like O'Conner's good man , is hard to find;

**"the whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology (including inflections) and sometimes also phonology and semantics."**

- The OED

### WHAT IS GRAMMAR?

- For our purposes I want you to think of Grammar from several directions
  - It deals with taxonomy (naming words)
  - It deals with word formation
  - It deals with non-word indicators / punctuation marks (about 15)
  - It deals with sentence structures

## BEFORE WE START...

### Synthetic Language Inflected Language

βλέπ-ω	I see	λέγ-ω	I say
βλέπ-εις	you see	λέγ-εις	you say
βλέπ-ει	he/she/it sees	λέγ-ει	he/she/it says
βλέπ-ομεν	we see	λέγ-ομεν	we say
βλέπ-ετε	you all see	λέγ-ετε	you all say
βλέπ-ουσιν	they see	λέγ-ουσιν	they say

- Analytic / non-inflected language (note that in the English there is no change) By 1200 English can be considered an analytic language.

## BEFORE WE START...

### Lexeme

- A Lexeme is the root or dictionary form of a word.
- (Note that a prefix will create a new lexeme)
- It is the word sans suffixes, conjugations, and declension.
- The root plus any changes is called an inflectional form.

## BEFORE WE START...

### Grammar Wars

**Prescriptive Grammar** – this is the approach to grammar that treats grammar a lot like natural law  
You do not split infinitive because that is just not done  
“You must never .... Doing so is wrong,” said the grammarian

**Descriptive Grammar** – takes a much lighter approach. It is based on observations. “This is what people do” or “This is how language functions.” “A double negative is a non-standard for of assertion.” observed the linguist.

## BEFORE WE START...

### “The Great Gulf Fixed”

Declarative Knowledge

Procedural Knowledge

## HISTORY OF ENGLISH

A BACKGROUND FOR A HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING OF  
THE FLEXIBLE NATURE OF GRAMMAR

## BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLISH

**You have five major periods of the English Language.**

**I. Proto-English** – Refers to time prior to the Roman retreat from the British Isles

**II. Old English** – from the mid-5th century to the mid-11th century

**III. Middle English** – from the late 11th to the late 15th century

**IV. Early Modern English** – from the late 15th to the late 17th century

**V. Modern English** – from the late 17th century to the present

*\*overview from Wikipedia*

## I. PROTO-ENGLISH

- The British Isles were originally settled by Celts, people who spoke languages that were part of the great Celtic branch of the Indo-European family tree\*

*\*much of the wording in this section and most of the ideas are from Dr. Michael Drouit's recoded lectures with The Modern Scholar Series entitle "The History of the English Language." This is a source I can not recommend highly enough.*

## I. PROTO-ENGLISH

- In 55 BC, Julius Caesar invaded Britain and made it part of the Roman Empire. Latin became the language of the military and the aristocracy in Roman Britain, where it dominated for approximately four hundred years.
- The original Britons have little to do with our language. Indigenous Brythonic languages were largely wiped away, though parts of England spoke Welsh, Cornish, and other forms of Celtic locally.

## I. PROTO-ENGLISH

- Latin loan words such as *wine*, *cup*, and *bishop* entered the vocabulary of these Germanic peoples before their arrival.
- They fought and traded with the Picts, Franks and Romans.
- It was the world of Hadrian's Wall and missing 9th Legion.

## II. OLD ENGLISH

- Once the Romans left the people of southern England felt threatened by the Celts.
- Around 449 Germanic tribes began migrating to England and rapidly took over the island. According to Bede, and to tradition, there were three tribes, the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes

## II. OLD ENGLISH

- Most Angles, Saxons and Jutes arrived in Britain in the 6th century as Germanic pagans.
- The original Celtic languages had surprisingly little influence on Old English.



## II. OLD-ENGLISH

- Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine to Canterbury in 597, and the last heathen kingdom, Sussex, was converted in the middle of the seventh century
- In 793, the Vikings, marauders from Scandinavia, sacked and burned the monastery of Lindisfarne, beginning a century of destruction and cultural collapse.
- Alfred, Edington, Guthrum, The Dane Law
- The influence of Scandinavian on English was enormous
- There were many, many words in common between Old English and the language of the Danes

## II. OLD ENGLISH

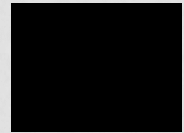
- English borrowed approximately two thousand words from Old Norse, including anger, bag, both, hit, law, leg, same, skill, sky, take, and many others.
- The influence of Norse Mythology is felt in the days of the week in English.
- Trade with the Norse (a branch of the same parent language) seemed to erode morphological distinction and cause the loss of the grammatical gender.

## II. OLD ENGLISH

- This English is the language of *Beowulf*.

Hwæt! Wē Gār-Dena in geārdagum,  
 þēodcýninga þrym gefrúnon,

- The Old English Period ended with the Norman invasion of 1066. Norman was an older dialect of French.



## BETWEEN TIMES

- Olaf, Svein, and the Dane Geld
- William's claim and subsequent invasion of England led to a 150 years of French influence. (1066)
- 1204, when King John fell in love with the incredibly beautiful Isabel of Angoulême and married her He fell afoul of King Phillip
- Phillip of France then reclaimed Normandy and severed political ties England. (1204)
- Middle English gains literary recognition under the work of Geoffrey Chaucer.

## III. MIDDLE ENGLISH

- The Anglo –Norman period was the start of Middle English.
- The Norman invasion began a polarity in English where the more practical language remain more Germanic while the language of the upper class and the intelligentsia was more Norman.
- For example, most modern English speakers consider a "cordial reception" (from French) to be more formal than a "hearty welcome" (from Germanic).

### III. MIDDLE ENGLISH

- The Norman borrow words were normally associated with government, church, law, the military, fashion, and food.
- English spelling was also influenced by Norman in this period, with the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds being spelled th rather than with the Old English letters þ (thorn) and ð (eth), which did not exist in Norman.

	Case	Old English	Middle English	Modern English
Singular	Nominative	ic	I / ich / ik	I
	Accusative	mē / mec	me	me
	Dative	mē	me	me
	Genitive	min	min / mi	my, mine

### III. MIDDLE ENGLISH

From [The Canterbury Tales](#) by Geoffrey Chaucer, 14th century:



Whan that Aprille 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;  
 Whan Zepirus eek with his sweete breeth  
 Inspired hath in every holt and heeth  
 The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne  
 Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,  
 And smale foweles maken melodye,  
 That slepen al the nyght with open yē  
 (So priketh hem Nature in hir corages);  
 Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages

### IV. EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

- Early Modern English is dated typically from what is called the “Great Vowel Shift” (Around 1500)  
 No one really knows why the shift occurred, and it is fairly complicated. You would need to spend considerable time studying phonetics to understand the distinctions, but just to give us an idea of the kind o things that happened look below:

fiif	.....(pronounced "feef")	.....	.five
mede	.....(pronounced "maid – eh")	.....	.meed
breke	.....(pronounced "bray – keh")	.....	.break
name	.....(pronounced "nahm – eh")	.....	.name
goot	.....(pronounced "gawt")	.....	.goat
roote	.....(pronounced "row – teh")	.....	.root
mus	.....(pronounced "moose")	.....	.mouse

### IV. EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

- In this time language began to normalize do to the wider distribution of printed material.
- Also Shakespeare and the King James Bible had massive effects on the English language.

## V. MODERN ENGLISH

THREE QUARTERS OF A MILLION STRONG

- Modern English came of Age with the publication of the first full English dictionary by Samuel Johnson (1775)
- The British Empire ensure the popularity of the English Language with it world exploits.
- This wide though unwelcome presence guaranteed the languages posterity, but also contributed to its diversity.

## V. MODERN ENGLISH

THREE QUARTERS OF A MILLION STRONG

- The Second Edition of the 20-volume *Oxford English Dictionary* contains full entries for 171,476 words in current use, and 47,156 obsolete words.
- To this may be added around 9,500 derivative words included as subentries.
- Over half of these words are nouns, about a quarter adjectives, and about a seventh verbs; the rest is made up of exclamations, conjunctions, prepositions, suffixes, etc. And these figures don't take account of entries with senses for different word classes (such as noun and adjective).

## KEY POINTS

1. Celtic Settlers
2. Roman Invasion (55 B.C.)
3. Angles, Saxon, and Jutes
4. Augustine (597)
5. Vikings (793)
6. Beowulf
7. William (1066)
8. French Heart Break (1204)
9. Chaucer
10. The Great Vowel Shift (c. 1500)
11. Shakespeare (c. 1600) KJV (1611)
12. Dictionary (1775)

## SUMMARY

*English grammar is the product of history, this makes it very hard understand in a superficial way, but rich and thrilling to study on a deeper level.*

If you remember that the reason we have a separate word for a live animal that we do for when it is baked stuffed and dressed is because in the economic of middle English the people raising the animals spoke a different language from the wealthy people who ate the animals it get interesting.

Term	Explanation	Example
Bilabial	Sound made using both lips.	/p/ as in <b>pat</b> /b/ as in <b>bat</b>
Labiodental	Sound made using the lower lip and upper teeth.	/f/ as in <b>fat</b> /v/ as in <b>vase</b>
Alveolar	Sound made where the tongue touches the alveolar ridge.	/d/ as in <b>dad</b> /s/ as in <b>sat</b>
Dental	Sound made using the teeth and tongue.	/θ/ as in <b>the</b> /ð/ as in <b>thing</b>
Velar	Sound made using the back part of the tongue and the soft palate (velum).	/k/ as in <b>cat</b> /g/ as in <b>gate</b>
Glottal	Sound made using the glottis.	Glottal stops: /ʔ/