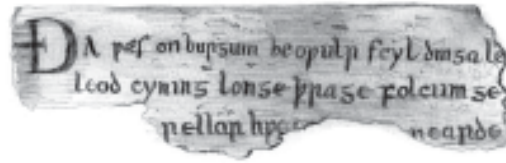




Olde English

The beginnings of the English language can be traced to two significant events. The first of these was the invasion of England by the barbaric Germanic tribes, namely the Angles, Saxons and Jutes in the third and fourth centuries. They were heathens. They settled down in the island country and became tillers of the soil. Secondly, around AD 597, St Augustine came from Rome and began to convert the Jutes in Kent. Monks from Ireland also set up monasteries. This period of the first flowering of the language is called the Anglo-Saxon or the Old English period. At this time in the already Roman-occupied England, Latin was used by the upper classes and the army. The introduction of Christianity brought in many new words such as abbot, altar, angel, priest, candle and hymn. The Anglo-Saxon tribes, however, were hunters and fierce sea-rovers by force of circumstance. Thus, the language contained a curious mix of Christian and pagan sentiments.

Beowulf, an epic poem written during this period, tells the story of a powerful hero of the same name, who defeats evil monsters through courage and physical strength. The poem contains a pagan story with many passages of a distinctly Christian character. The court of Hrothgar, King of Denmark, is plagued by the dreadful monster Grendel, who comes out of the marshes to devour a warrior every night. Beowulf fights the monster, slays him and brings peace to the land.



Anglo-Saxon Period

The term 'English' is derived from the Old English 'Englisc', which in turn is derived from the Old English name of the Angles - Engle. The name England stands for the land of Angles.

In the Old English period, the English language in its earliest form flourished in the poetry composed by various poets.

Deor's Lament is a song of the poet's own misfortunes.

It has a constant refrain 'That was lived through, so can this be'.

Widsith or the *Wide Wanderer* tells the tale of a wanderer who sang at feudal halls and received gifts from men who loved his songs.

Old English poetry uses persistent alliteration and rhyme is absent. Use of riddles, word-play and compound words is a characteristic of the language. The sea is thus 'the swan's road' and the body is 'the bone house'. Virtues such as heroism, endurance and unflinching courage are fused with the belief in the greatness of God in the poems. Caedmon rendered Old and New Testament stories into English verse. Cynewulf wrote many religious poems. One of the most imaginative religious poems written at this time is the *Dream of the Rood*. The cross appears to the poet in a dream and describes the unwilling part it played in the Crucifixion.

Venerable Bede wrote the *Ecclesiastical History of the English Race*. King Alfred of Wessex (849-99) translated Bede's famous history.



The Age of Chaucer

The Norman Conquest of England in 1066 had a far-reaching effect on the English language. After the Conquest, English remained the language of the country but Norman French became the language of the government, church and law courts. As a result a lot of French words were assimilated into the English language. Legal terms such as plaintiff, privilege and defendant; religious terms such as grace, service and miracle; and many other terms used in day-to-day life such as lamp, basin, castle and tower came into the language. The English language was immensely enriched by the absorption of these words. In the middle of the fourteenth century many French words that had been used only by the upper classes became an integral part of the English language.

Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1342–1400) symbolizes the Middle Ages. Some of his prominent works are *The Legend of Good Women*, *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Canterbury Tales*. A number of French words are found in Chaucer's vocabulary. In Chaucer's age the English language was divided into dialects, though the language spoken in London was usually accepted as a literary standard. *The Canterbury Tales* places the reader in the heart of London. Chaucer uses the French method of regular metre and end-rhymes. As some pilgrims make their way from Southwark to Canterbury, each of them tell a tale to pass the time. The stories are as diverse as the narrators.



The Renaissance

The period in Europe between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries when people became interested in the ideas and culture of ancient Greece and Rome was known as the Renaissance. This period was marked by many changes in the English language. William Caxton introduced the printing press in England around 1476. This led to the rapid spread of popular education. Latin became less and less the vehicle for learned discourse and the growth of specialized knowledge led to the need for a new vocabulary.

Means of communication improved and English travel in France and reading of French books led to English borrowing words from French such as bizarre, chocolate, entrance, vogue, genteel and moustache.

From Italy words such as granite, piazza, portico, stucco, volcano, violin, bankrupt, carat, gala and gazette came into the language. From Spanish and Portuguese, English adopted words such as apricot, armada, hurricane, hammock, mosquito, brocade, bravado, potato, tobacco, sombrero and canoe. Many of these words reflect the Spanish enterprise on sea and the colonization of the American continent. Thus the language was greatly enriched and a gradual growth of a standard literary language free from the variations of local dialects took place.

The spirit of exploration and the interest in the New World that was being discovered led to the growth of the language.



The Era of Shakespeare

England prospered in the sixteenth century during Queen Elizabeth's reign. The Queen had men such as Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh and Thomas Cavendish to open up the seas to English ships, to start new companies for trading with distant lands, to try to build English settlements in America and to make England the strongest country on the seas by defeating the Spanish. It was an age with the characteristics of youth - vigour, a willingness to venture into the unknown and a disposition to attempt the untried. This spirit can be found in the language and literature of the time.

William Shakespeare is considered to be the unparalleled literary genius of the Elizabethan Age. Shakespeare (1564-1616) wrote for the contemporary Elizabethan stage in simple, lyrical language which the court and the public could enjoy. Shakespeare was equally at home writing both tragedies such as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, and romantic comedies such as *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*. Shakespeare adeptly used the beauty and richness of the English language in his plays and sonnets.

Shakespeare had the largest vocabulary of any English writer. This was due to his readiness to accept new words or foreign borrowing of every kind. He used words such as agile, extract, modest, pell-mell, critical, assassination, frugal and submerged - all new to English in the latter half of the sixteenth century.



The Beginnings of Prose

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the emergence of a prose style which had lucidity, precision and sobriety. English as we know it today had begun to take form. At this time Galileo was using his newly constructed telescope. The barometer, the thermometer and the compound microscope came into being. Men of science like Robert Boyle felt the need to be able to write in clear and simple English. The scientific spirit greatly influenced the language of the time. The social and political powers of the middle classes were slowly increasing. The birth of the novel is thus significant from the literary and social points of view.

Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) wrote *Pamela* and *Clarissa Harlowe*. Henry Fielding (1707–54) wrote *The Adventures of Joseph Andrews* and Oliver Goldsmith wrote *The Vicar of Wakefield*. These novels give a vivid picture of English life of the eighteenth century. Daniel Defoe's (1659–1731) *Robinson Crusoe* was hailed as a novel of genius. Richard Steele and Joseph Addison gained eminence as essayists. The newspapers *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* were published by them for the large clientele of the coffee-houses. Each issue contained essays written on subjects such as good taste and courtesy. The language of the essays was lucid and had a wonderful colloquial style. John Dryden and Alexander Pope wrote verse satires attacking the social ills of the time.



Victorian English

Queen Victoria (1819–1901) ruled England for nearly 64 years. During her reign, the British Empire grew to a vast size making Britain the richest country in the world. Queen Victoria was Empress of India from 1876 to 1901. Contact with the colonies further enriched the English language. During this period Charles Dickens (1812–70) was the most eminent novelist. Dickens used the vast vocabulary of the English language to express various moods – comic, dramatic, ironic, tragic, tender and satiric. His novels give a vivid picture of the society and preoccupations of the Victorian world. In many of his later novels he attacked the social and political ills of his time. In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens highlighted the sordid reality of the London underworld. He also attacked the inhuman Poor Laws which existed at that time. Other prominent novels written by him are *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *A Christmas Carol* and *David Copperfield*.

Alfred Tennyson is considered to be the most representative poet of Victorian England. He had a deep knowledge of the musical value of the vowels and consonants of the English language. He wrote lyrical poems such as *The Lotos-Eaters*, *The Lady of Shalott*, *In Memoriam* and *Ulysses*. The English language became a tool in the hands of Robert Browning for writing dramatic poems. Some of his well-known works are *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* and *Dramatis Personae*.



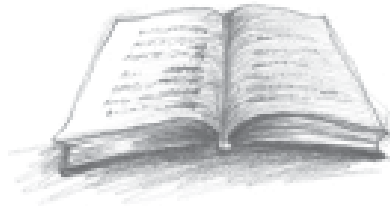
The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

The publication of affordable newspapers, availability of cheap postage, and improved means of travel and communication brought about by the railways, the steamboat and the telegraph had the effect of uniting the countries of the world. Great developments in science and progress in every field of intellectual activity are all reflected in the English vocabulary. The English language thus is a mirror of progress.

People have become familiar with words such as immunology, anaemia, hormones and cholesterol from the field of medicine. Physics has given words such as electron, ultraviolet rays and relativity. Chemistry has contributed many common words like radium, alkali and cyanide. The psychologist has taught people to speak of schizophrenia and defence mechanism. Exploration of space has given words such as astronaut, space shuttle and blast-off.

Developments in the automobile industry has contributed words such as windshield, chassis, spare and skid. The aviation industry has given words like nosedive, aircraft and hydroplane. The two world wars have also left their mark on the language by contributing words such as air raid, blitz, radar, blackout and barrage. The use of computers has made people familiar with words like hardware, software and download, and new meanings of old words such as read, write, mouse and virus.

This vocabulary continues to grow at a tremendous rate.



Latin Influence on English

Of all the languages of the world English probably has the most copious and heterogeneous vocabulary. Contact with the Roman Empire had introduced the Germanic tribes in the Anglo-Saxon period to a number of Latin words such as 'street' derived from the Latin 'strata'. The coming of Christianity to England brought words like bishop (Old English 'biscop') and monk (Old English 'munuc').

The Renaissance brought in a large number of purely technical, legal, scientific and ecclesiastical Latin terms which have become a permanent part of English. A few such words are legitimate, equivalent and proviso (from law), diocese and mediator (from the Church). Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton wrote their great books in Latin. It was thus natural that the vast expansion of all kinds of science and philosophy which characterized the modern period should find new words in Latin.

The vast influence of Latin has enriched the vocabulary of English immensely. Among the common Latin words which came into the language in the sixteenth century are species, fungus and circus. In the seventeenth century words such as pendulum, specimen and status joined the corpus. Latin words such as nucleus, alibi, insomnia and ultimatium were absorbed in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century words such as opus, ego, moratorium, referendum and bacillus came into the language.



English Travels to the Colonies

When the wealth of America and India began pouring into the Spanish and Portuguese coffers the ambitions of other countries were also aroused. The English settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth marked the beginning of the process of colonization of North America. Gradually England established control over much of this continent. The American Revolution deprived England of one of its colonies but the English language had come to stay.

In 1600 the East India Company was set-up to promote trade with India and it established settlements at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. By the middle of the eighteenth century the two main rivals in India were the English and the French. After a series of triumphs, in the course of another century, India became a part of the British Empire.

Acquisition of new territories meant new activities, new products, new experiences - all of which were reflected in the English language and literature. Trade routes have always been important avenues for the transmission of ideas and words. Contact with Native Americans resulted in the absorption of words such as caribou, moccasin, opossum, skunk and toboggan. From Cuba and the West Indies came words such as cannibal and barbecue; from Peru came words such as llama, pampas and quinine. From India words such as brahman, bungalow, calico and coolie entered the language.



English in America

The end of the eighteenth century saw the flowering of English in America. Many interesting accounts were written about the lives of pioneers and Indians. Washington Irving wrote interesting stories of the Dutch settlers in the Hudson valley. Walt Whitman wrote poems on the Civil War.

The classics *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe were written in the nineteenth century. With the opening up of the West after the Civil War, a new type of realistic writing began with Mark Twain. He wrote *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* based on his own experiences in the rapidly growing new country. Then came a succession of great novelists like Henry James, Ernest Hemingway, F Scott Fitzgerald and Norman Mailer.

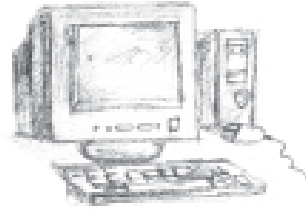
America's leading position in commerce, films and finance has invigorated the English language with many new terms such as the phrase 'to get down to brass tacks' and the verb 'to fix' as used in the sentence 'I'll fix it for you'. Certain distinctions can be found in the use of British English and American English. American spellings such as program, disk, color, meter and center are becoming increasingly popular. The rhythm and intonation of speech in American English is significantly different from British English. Archaisms such as the preservation of 'gotten' as the past participle of 'get' or the term 'fall' for 'autumn' are used in American English.



English Travels Far and Wide

The beginnings of the English occupation of Australia started in the eighteenth century. In 1768, the Royal Society sent Captain James Cook to make some astronomical observations in the region. He was also ordered to explore the surrounding lands. In this way he reached both Australia and New Zealand. In both places he hoisted the British flag. A few years later England discovered a use for these newly acquired territories. The prisons in England were overcrowded, and in 1787 it was decided to send several shiploads of convicts to Australia. The discovery that sheep-raising could be profitably carried on in the country led to considerable immigration, which later became a stampede when gold was discovered in the continent in 1851. Australia later contributed new terms to the language. Boomerang and kangaroo are interesting examples of native words that have passed into universal use.

The colonization of Africa began in 1795 when England seized the Dutch settlement at Cape Town. From this small beginning sprang the control of England over a large part of South Africa. The efforts of missionaries also helped to expand the Empire. Later, Britain's acquisition of control over the Suez Canal led to its control over the region of the Nile. From Africa, either directly from the Africans or from Dutch and Portuguese traders words such as banana, boorish, chimpanzee, gorilla, guinea, voodoo and zebra were assimilated into English.



A World Language

The movement of English around the world began with the pioneering voyages to the Americas, Asia and the Antipodes. It continued with the nineteenth-century colonial developments in Africa and the South Pacific, and took a significant step further when it was adopted in the twentieth century as an official or semi-official language by many newly independent countries. It is this spread of representation which makes the application of the term ‘world language’ a reality.

The present-day world status of English is primarily the result of two factors: the expansion of British colonial power, which peaked towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the emergence of the United States as an economic power of the twentieth century.

The spread of English across the world can be visualized as three concentric circles. The inner circle refers to the countries where it is the primary language. It includes the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The outer circle involves countries where the language has become part of a country’s chief institutions and plays an important ‘second-language’ role in a multilingual setting. It includes Singapore, India and many other countries. The outermost circle involves nations such as China and Japan, which recognize the importance of English though they do not have a history of colonization. Here English is taught as a foreign language.



English Arrives on Indian Shores

English reached India through the officers of the English East India Company, other traders and also through the missionaries. A beginning was made in 1813 when the Charter Act incorporated the principle of encouraging educated Indians and promoting the knowledge of the sciences. There was a debate whether English or Indian languages, called vernaculars, should be made the medium of instruction. Lord Macaulay argued for the use of English and the spread of European learning in his famous Minute in 1835.

Enlightened Indians like Raja Rammohun Roy advocated the study of Western knowledge to combat superstition and fear. The Government of India acted quickly and opened a few English schools and colleges. The stress was on higher education. In 1854 Sir Charles Wood's Despatch suggested that education in the mother tongue should continue at the primary level but English should be the medium of instruction at the higher levels. As a result of the directions given by the Despatch, Departments of Education were instituted in all provinces and affiliating universities were set up in 1857 at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

An official announcement was made in 1844 stating that applicants for government employment should possess a knowledge of English. Thus, English-medium schools were set up and a lot of students began to study English.



English Gets Acceptance

Rammohun Roy was one of the first Indian writers of English prose. He mastered the English language and started the tradition of writing autobiographies which was followed later by many Indian leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Mahatma Gandhi and others. Other Indian writers of prose and verse include Kashiprosad Ghose, Mohanlal, Hasan Ali, Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Henry Vivian Derozio.

Kashiprosad Ghose was one of the first Indians to publish a volume of English poetry. This was around the mid-nineteenth century. He also edited an English weekly. Michael Madhusudan Dutt wrote verse, prose and drama with equal ease. His narrative poem *The Captive Ladie* appeared in Madras in 1849. Around this time the Dutt - known as Indo-Anglian literature's 'first family' - came on the scene. To this family belonged the brilliant Toru Dutt, often referred to as India's Emily Bronte. She was creative, learned and a prolific poetess. Her tour de force is the classic *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*.

The number of Indians being educated in English increased rapidly between 1835 and 1855. Between 1834 and 1835, it is said, 32,000 books written in English were sold in India. Right till the end of the nineteenth century, English education tended to be the exclusive preserve of the rich and the aristocratic.



The Link Language of India

The latter part of the nineteenth century saw the quest for freedom surface in the writings of the stalwarts of the time such as Romesh Chunder Dutt, Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Rabindranath Tagore.

Newspapers like the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* and *The Bengali* reached out to the fast-growing, English-speaking intelligentsia and aroused patriotic fervour. Later newspapers like *The People*, *The Tribune* and *Searchlight* took up the cause of freedom. Leaders with a sound English education came to the forefront of the freedom movement. From Gopal Krishna Gokhale to Mahatma Gandhi, people from the four corners of the country could communicate with each other and understand each other. Freedom dawned with Jawaharlal Nehru's immortal speech delivered in impeccable English.

Today, fifty-five years after independence, English is the link language of our country. There are thousands of schools which impart education in English. For higher education the medium of instruction is mostly English. Hundreds of English newspapers and magazines are printed and read every day. Thousands of books in English are published and sold every year - an industry which is worth hundreds of crores.

Indian writing in English is a force to reckon with. R K Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Anita Desai, Vikram Seth and Ruskin Bond are names admired and read the world over.

चरखा

Common Indian Words in English

ashram	cheetah	karma	pranam
avatar	cheroot	khadi	pucca
ayurveda	chukker	kohl	pugri
babu	coolie	kurta	puja
bandanna	dharma	lakh	pundit
bandh	dhobi	loot	raj
bandicoot	durbar	mahatma	raja
bandobast	fakir	mantra	rupee
bazaar	ghats	maya	sahib
begum	gherao	mogul	sambhar
bhakti	gurudwara	moksha	sentry
calico	jaffery	nautch	sepoy
charas	jaggery	neem	swami
charkha	jodhpurs	nirvana	ustad
charpoy	juggernaut	pariah	yoga

post / mail

Differences in British and American English

BRITISH	AMERICAN	BRITISH	AMERICAN
aeroplane	airplane	ironmonger	hardware dealer
aluminium	aluminum	jug	pitcher
autumn	fall	lorry	truck
bill	check	pavement	sidewalk
biscuit	cookie	petrol	gasoline
bonnet	hood (car)	post	mail
boot	trunk (car)	pyjamas	pajamas
caretaker	janitor	shop	store
chemist	druggist	street vendor	peddler
cupboard	closet	sweets	candy
curtains	drapes	tin	can
dustbin	garbage can	van	delivery truck
flat	apartment	veranda	porch
hoarding	billboard	waistcoat	vest