

Timeline of the English Language

3 rd M BCE	Indo-European speakers move to central Europe - later migrate to the Mediterranean and to N. Europe.
5 th - 7 th C CE	Romans leave. Angles, Saxons, and Jutes raid and settle in the British Isles, dispersing the Celts.
7 th C	Age of Bede, and growth of Northumbrian monasteries and culture.
9 th C	Viking Invasions. Alfred, King of Anglo-Saxon England founded schools and scriptoria for Old English.
10/11 th C	Benedictine monastic revival. Anglo-Saxon schools taught in English and Latin.
~1000	Beowulf manuscript, the oldest significant and long poem in English.
1066	Norman invasion led by William the Conqueror; defeat of the Anglo-Saxons.
1087	Death of William the Conqueror.
1154	Last entry in the Peterborough Chronicle.
~1200	Probable composition of earliest poetry in Middle English: The Owl and the Nightingale, etc.
1258	Translation of a French proclamation of Henry III - First official text in English since the Conquest.
1337	Start of the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) against the French.
1345	Birth of Geoffrey Chaucer.
1346	Battle of Crécy.
1348	Black Death.
1356	Battle of Poitiers: The Black Prince defeated the French King John in Western France.
~1360	Sir Thomas Mallory's Morte Darthur, one of the last Arthurian romances in English.
1362	First address to English Parliament in English.
~1370	Chaucer's first important work, The Book of the Duchess.
1376	Death of the Black Prince, eldest son of Edward III.
1385	Peasant's Revolt.
~1385	Wycliffe Bible appears.
1385-99	Chaucer's longest and most important narrative poem, Troilus and Criseyde.
~1395	Chaucer composed Canterbury Tales.
~1400	Death of Chaucer.
1417	Royal clerks use English for official writing.
1423	Parliament records almost all kept in English.
1440s	Approximate start of the Great Vowel Shift (1440s-1550s).
1453	End of the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) against the French.
1475	William Caxton begins printing books in English.
1490	William Caxton's Eneados. He reflects on language change and dialect variations (in his preface).
1526	William Tyndale's translation of the Bible into English published in Geneva (Switzerland).
1550s	Approximate end of the bulk of the Great Vowel Shift (1440s-1550s).
1607	America: Jamestown Colony established in North America.
1611	Publication of the King James Bible.
1616	Death of Shakespeare.
1607	America: Jamestown Colony established in Virginia.
1620	America: Pilgrims land at Plymouth.
1624	First Folio edition of Shakespeare's works.
1644	America: English seize New Amsterdam and rename it New York.
1755	Samuel Johnson publishes the first edition of his two-volume Dictionary.
1761	Joseph Priestly publishes the first edition of his Rudiments of English Grammar.
1762	Robert Lowth publishes the first edition of his Principles of English Grammar.
1776	America: Thos. Jefferson publishes the Declaration of Independence.
1781	John Witherspoon coins the term "Americanism".
1783	Noah Webster published his first edition of Grammatical Institute of the English Language.
1799	Sir William Jones announces similarities among Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Germanic, and Celtic languages.
1828	America: Publication of first edition of Noah Webster's American Dictionary.
1863	America: Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.
1888	Publication of the New English Dictionary later called the Oxford English Dictionary.
1881	America: Publication of first volume of Uncle Remus stories by Joel Chandler Harris.
1883	America: Publication of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain.
1919	America: First edition of H.L. Mencken's The American Language.
1957	America: Publication of Syntactic Structures by Noam Chomsky.