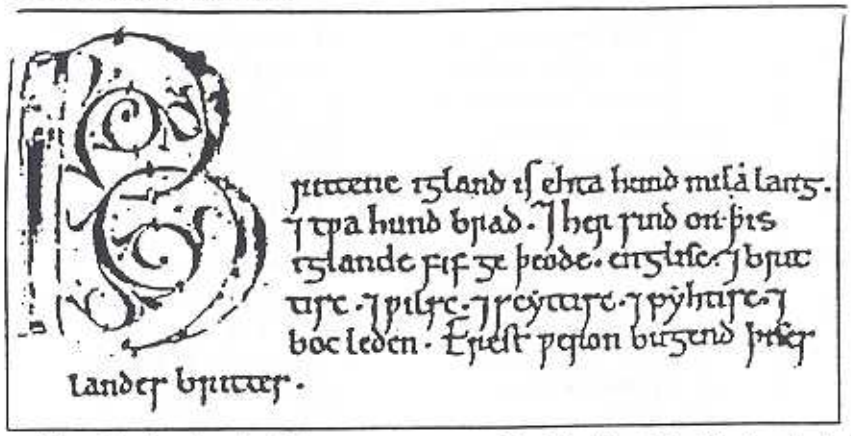
The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, AD *47*

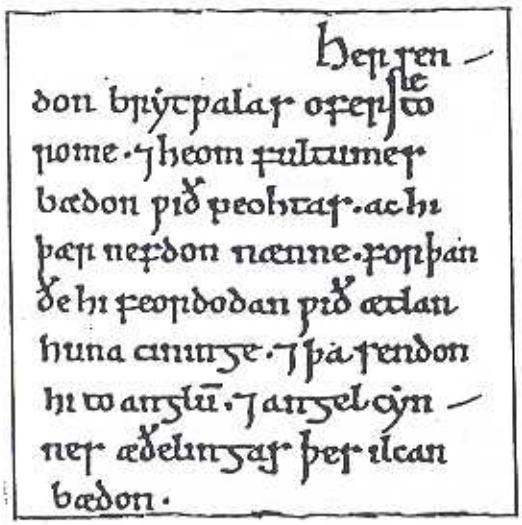


Brittene igland is ehta hund mila lang. 7 twa hund brad. 7 her sind on þis iglande fif geþeode. englisc. 7 brittisc. 7 wilsc. 7 scyttisc. 7 pyhtisc. 7 boc leden. Erest weron bugend þises landes brittes.

of-Britain island is eight hundred miles long. & two hundred wide. & here are in this island five peoples. english. & british. & welsh. & scottish. & pictish. & book latin. first were inhabitants of-this land britons.

The island of Britain is eight hundred miles long and two hundred wide; and there are in this island five languages: English, Britons, Welsh, Scottish, Pictish, and book-Latin. The first inhabitants of this land were Britons.

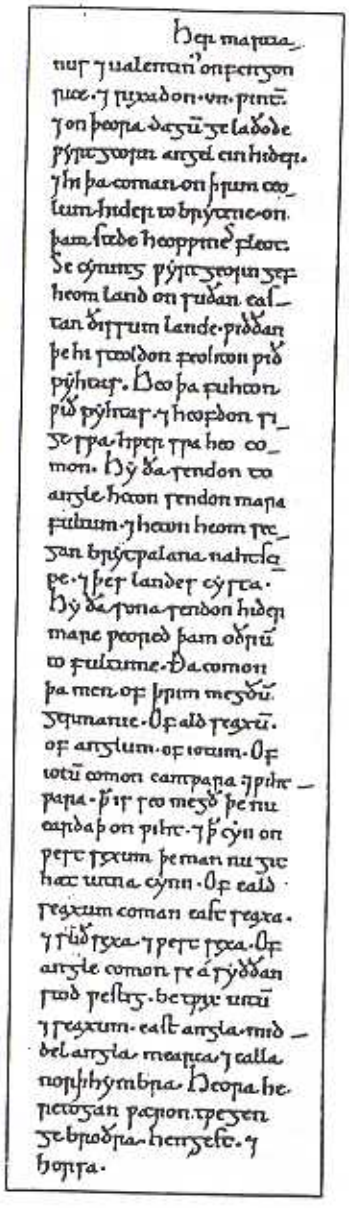
The Peterborough Chronicle AD *443*



cccc.xliii. Her sendon brytwalas ofer sæ to rome. 7 heom fultomes bædon wiþ peohtas. ac hi þær nefdon nænne. forþan þe hi feordodan wiþ ætlan huna cininge. 7 þa sendon hi to anglum. 7 angel cynnes æðelingas ðes ilcan bædon.

443. Here sent britons over sea to rome. & them troops asked against picts. but they there had-not none. because they fought against attila huns king. & then sent they to angles. & angle -peoples princes the same asked.

443. In this year the Britons sent overseas to Rome and asked the Romans for forces against the Picts; but they had none there because they were at war with Attila, king of the Huns. Then the Britons sent to the Angles and made the same request to the princes of the Angles.



Her martianus ⁊ ualentinus onfengon rice. ⁊ rixadon .vii. wintra. ⁊ on þeora dagum gelaðode wyrgeorn angel cin hider. ⁊ hi þa coman on þrim ceolum hider to brytene. on þam stede heopwines fleot. Se cyning wyrtgeorn gef heom land on suðan eastan ðissum lande. wiððan þe hi sceoldon feohton wið pyhtas. Heo þa fuhton wið pyhtas. ⁊ heofdon sige swa hwer swa heo comon. Hy ða sendon to angle heton sendon mara fultum. ⁊ heton heom secgan brytwalana nahtscipe. ⁊ þes landes cysta. Hy ða sona sendon hider mare weored þam oðrum to fultume. þa comon þa men of þrim megðum germanie. Of ald seaxum. of anglum. of iotum. Of iotum comon cantwara. ⁊ wihtwara. þæt is seo megð þe nu eardaþ on wiht. ⁊ þæt cyn on west sexum þe man nu git hæt iutna cyn. Of eald seaxum coman east seaxa. ⁊ suð sexa. ⁊ west sexa. Of angle comon se a syððan stod westig. betwix iutum ⁊ seaxum. east angla. middel angla. mearca. ⁊ ealla norþhymbra. Heora heretogan wæron twegen gebroðra. hengest. ⁊ horsa.

cccc. xlix. Her martianus ⁊ ualentinus onfengon rice. ⁊ rixadon .vii. wintra. ⁊ on þeora dagum gelaðode wyrgeorn angel cin hider. ⁊ hi þa coman on þrim ceolum hider to brytene. on þam stede heopwines fleot. Se cyning wyrtgeorn gef heom land on suðan eastan ðissum lande. wiððan þe hi sceoldon feohton wið pyhtas. Heo þa fuhton wið pyhtas. ⁊ heofdon sige swa hwer swa heo comon. Hy ða sendon to angle heton sendon mara fultum. ⁊ heton heom secgan brytwalana nahtscipe. ⁊ þes landes cysta. Hy ða sona sendon hider mare weored þam oðrum to fultume. þa comon þa men of þrim megðum germanie. Of ald seaxum. of anglum. of iotum. Of iotum comon cantwara. ⁊ wihtwara. þæt is seo megð þe nu eardaþ on wiht. ⁊ þæt cyn on west sexum þe man nu git hæt iutna cyn. Of eald seaxum coman east seaxa. ⁊ suð sexa. ⁊ west sexa. Of angle comon se a syððan stod westig. betwix iutum ⁊ seaxum. east angla. middel angla. mearca. ⁊ ealla norþhymbra. Heora heretogan wæron twegen gebroðra. hengest. ⁊ horsa.

449. Here martianus & valentinus took kingdom. & reigned 7 winters. & in thier days invited vortigern angle people hither. & they then came in three ships hither to britain. at the place heopwinesfleet. The king vortigern gave them land in south east of-this land. provided that they should fight against picts. They then fought against picts. & had victory wherever they came. They then sent to anglen ordered send more help. & ordered them say britons' cowardice. & this land's goodness. They then at-once sent hither more troops the others to help. Then came the men from three nations of-germany. Of old saxons. of angles. of jutes. From jutes came kent-people. & Wight-people. that is the race which now dwells on Wight. & the race amongst west saxons which one now still calls jutes' race. From old saxons came east saxons. & south saxons. & west saxons. From Anglen came which ever since stood waste. between jutes & saxons. east angles. middle angles. mercians. & all northumbrians. Their army-leaders were two brothers. hengest. & horsa.

449. In this year Marcian (*Eastern Roman Emperor*) and Valentinian (*Western Roman Emperor*) came to power and reigned seven years. In their days Vortigern invited the Angles here and they then came hither to Britain in three ships, at a place called Ebbsfleet (*in Kent*). King Vortigern gave them land in the southeast of this country, on condition that they fight against the Picts. They fought the Picts and were victorious wherever they fought. Then they sent to Anglen and ordered the Angles to send more help and report the cowardice of the Britons and the goodness of the land. so the Angles at once sent a larger force to help the others. These men came from three Germanic nations: the Old Saxons, the Angles, and the Jutes. From the Jutes came the people of Kent and the Isle of Wight (that is, the people who now live in the Isle of Wight and the race amongst the West Saxons who are still called the Jutes). From the Old Saxons came the men of Essex, Sussex, and Wessex. From Anglen (which has stood waste ever since, between the Jutes and the Saxons) came the men of East Anglia, Middle Anglia, Mercia, and the whole of Northumbria. Their leaders were two brothers, Hengest and Horsa.

The Peterborough Chronicle AD 455

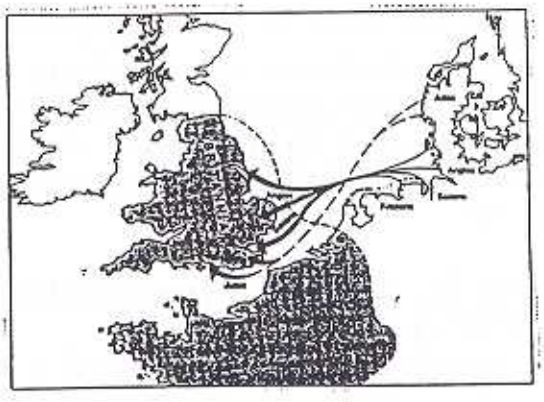
Her hen
gest ⁊ horsa fuhton wiþ
wyrtgerne þā cininge
on þære stowe þe is cwe_
den ægeles þrep. ⁊ his bro_
ðor horsan man ofsloh.
⁊ æfter þonn feng to
rice hengest. ⁊ æsc his
sunu.

cccc.lv. Her hen-
gest ⁊ horsa fuhton wiþ
wyrtgerne þam cininge
on þære stowe þe is cwe-
den ægeles þrep. ⁊ his bro-
þor horsan man ofsloh.
⁊ æfter þonn feng to
rice hengest. ⁊ æsc his
sunu.

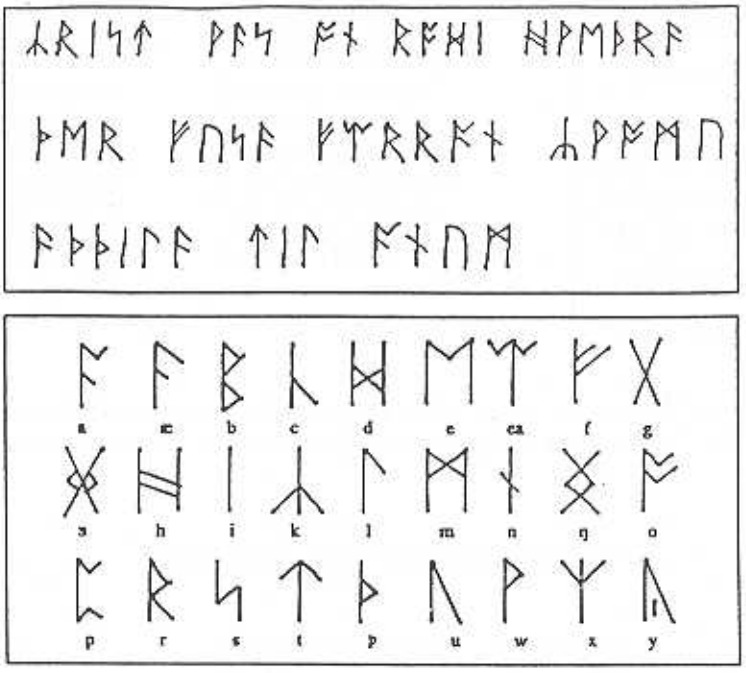
455. Here hen-
gest and horsa fought against
vortigern the king
in the place which is called
aylesford. & his bro-
ther horsa one slew.
& after that came to
kingdom hengest. & æsc his
son.

455. In this year Hengest and Horsa fought against Vortigern the king in the place which is called Aylesford, and his brother Horsa was slain. And after that Hengest came to the throne, and [was succeeded by] his son Æsc.

The Anglo-Saxon Settlement, the Heptarchy, and the Dialects of Old English



Anglo-Saxon Runes



Anglo-Saxon manuscripts are hard to decipher at first because some of the letters look different from the shapes familiar to us. Modern editors use modern forms of the Roman alphabet to print Old English, but with the addition of three letters which the Anglo-Saxons devised for writing Old English. These were necessary because some sounds in Old English did not have an equivalent in Latin, so no Roman letter was available. They were:

<æ> called *ash*, this letter was derived from Latin <ae> and represented the sound in MnE *cat*. The sound is popularly called 'short a'.

<þ> called *thorn*, this letter was derived from a rune of the same name. It is now replaced by <th>.

<ð> called *eth*, this letter was derived from Irish writing and is now replaced by <th>

Eth and *thorn* were used interchangeably to represent both the [þ] and the [ð] sounds. A few OE graphs are replaced by modern ones in printed editions today:

<ƿ> called *wynn*, this letter was derived from a rune of the same name. It represented the sound [w]. OE possessed no <w>. In early OE <u> or <uu> was often used to represent this sound, but *wynn* became more frequent later on. Modern editions replace *wynn* with <w>.

<ȝ> called *yogh*, this letter represented the sounds of [g], [j], or [ɣ], depending upon the sounds that preceded or followed it (see below). By the Middle English period the *yogh* had come to be written <3>. Modern editions of Old English text normally replace *yogh* with <g>.

Old English Orthography

Here is a list of the letters of the OE alphabet with a brief indication of the pronunciation. Some letters in OE represented more than one sound, but pronunciation and spelling were much closer in OE than in MnE. OE spelling did not distinguish long and short vowels; however, modern editors sometimes place a macron (e.g. *ē*) over long vowels to help students.

OE Spelling	**OE Word and MnE Translation**	**OE Sound (IPA Symbol)**	**MnE Word with Similar Sound to OE**
Vowels			
<i>	bringan *bring*	/i/	br**i**ng
	biddan *bid*	/ɪ/	b**i**d
	rīdan *ride*	/i:/	mach**i**ne
<y>	hyll *hill*	/y/	French *t**u***
	hȳf *hive*	/y:/	French *l**u**ne*
<e>	Dene *Danes*	/e/	d**a**te
	elm *elm*	/ɛ/	**e**lm
	fēdan *feed*	/e:/	w**a**de
	brocen *broken*	/ə/	brok**e**n
<æ>	æsc *ash*	/æ/	c**a**t
	clǣne *clean*	/æ:/	b**a**d
<a>	sacc *sack*	/a/	American English s**o**ck
	gāt *goat*	/a:/	American English c**o**d
<o>	ofer *over*	/o/	g**oa**t
	fox *fox*	/ɔ/	f**o**r
	gōs *goose*	/o:/	g**oa**d
<u>	duguþ *retainers*	/u/	h**oo**p
	ful *full*	/ʊ/	f**u**ll
	fūl *foul*	/u:/	fool
<ea>	earnian *earn*	/ɛə/	no equivalent
	east *east*	/ɛə:/	no equivalent
<eo>	eorþ *earth*	/eə/	no equivalent
	prēost *priest*	/eə:/	no equivalent

Notes:

1. The short vowels *i*, *u*, *e*, and *o* probably varied between tense and lax pronunciations depending upon the surrounding consonants, just as they do in MnE. Since we don't know precisely what the rules were, it is safe to follow MnE principles most of the time, as indicated in the examples.
2. In unaccented syllables <e> was pronounced /ə/.

Consonants

<c>	col *coal*	/k/	**c**oal, **k**ing
	or		
	ċiriċe *church*	/tʃ/	**ch**ur**ch**
<f>	fisċ, ġif	/f/	**f**ishm i**f**
	or		
<f>	heofon	/v/	hea**v**en
<g>	gat *goat*	/g/	**g**oat
	or		
	ġeong *young*	/j/	**y**oung
	or		
	bog *bough*	/ɣ/	no equivalent
<cg>	heċġ *hedge*	/dʒ/	he**dg**e
<þ> and <ð>	þæc or ðæc *thatch*	/ɵ/	**th**atch
	or		
	feþer or feðer *feather*	/ð/	fea**th**er
<s>	sendan *send*	always /s, never /z/	**s**end
<sc>	sċip *ship*	/ʃ/	**sh**ip
<h>	her *here*	/h/	**h**ere
	or (before dental sounds)		
	sihþ *sight*	/x/	Scottish *loc**h***, German *Bac**h***

The letter <f> was pronounced /f/ at the beginnings and ends of words; elsewhere it was pronounced /v/. The letters <b, d, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, t, w, x, z> have the same values as MnE. <k, q, z> were rarely used. Modern editions sometimes use <ċ> and <ġ> to indicate the palatal pronunciations /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ which in OE occur when the letters come before and after <i, e, æ>.

We have already seen that OE was more heavily inflected than MnE. Grammatical function was signalled by endings. For nouns, pronouns, and adjectives these endings conformed to four categories called ***cases***. The main functions of the four cases are demonstrated below. Translations are word for word, rather than MnE word order.

Nominative Case:

Subject:	Sēo *stōw* is ġehāten 'Heofenfeld' on Englisc. That place is called 'Heavenfield' in English.
Subject Complement:	*Bēowulf* is mīn *nama*. Beowulf is my name.
Direct Address:	*Cedmon*, sing mē hwætwugu. Cædmon, sing me something.

Accusative Case:

Direct Object:	Hē *þone fēond* ofercwōm. He that enemy overcame.
Object of a Preposition: (Indicating Motion)	Ða mec sǣ oþbær on Finna *land*. Then me (the) sea bore into (the) Finns' land.

Genitive Case:

Possessive:	Godes mildheornys us forestæpð. God's mercy us precedes.
Genitive of Measure:	Þǣr wearþ Cīrus ofslæġen ond twā þūsend *monna* mid him. Then was Cyrus slain and two thousand men with him.

Dative Case:

Object of a Preposition:	Crīst was on *rōde*. Christ was on cross.
Indirect Object:	Se kyng þa ġēaf gryð *Ōlāfe*. The king then gave truce [to] Olaf.

The cases have other uses, but they are less common than the ones listed above. As the Old English period progressed, the distinction between the use of the accusative and the dative after prepositions began to break down, and the forms were increasingly confused.

Exercise 1

The passage on the next page is a fairly literal translation from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, about half the entry for the year 894. The noun phrases and pronouns that appear in parentheses are listed below the text with the cases used in the original OE text. Explain the choice of case for each by naming the function of the noun or pronoun of the sentence as listed above.

> 894. And then immediately after that, in this year, the Viking army (*se here*) marched from Wirral in on the Welsh, because they were not able to stay there: that was because they were deprived of both cattle (*þæs ċeapes*) and the grain (*þæs cornes*) which they [the English] had captured. When they (*hīe*) turned back out from the Welsh with the plunder (*þǣre herehȳðe*) which they had seized there, they then marched over the Northumbrians' (Norðhymbra) land (*lond*) and also the East Anglians', so that the [English] army (*sēo fird*) could not reach them (*hīe*) – until they came on the eastern part of the East Saxons' land onto an island (*an īġland*) that is out on the sea (*þǣre sǣ*), which (*þæt*) is called Mersea.

1.	se here	nominative	subject
2.	þæs ċeapes	genitive	
3.	þæs cornes	genitive	
4.	hīe	nominative	
5.	þǣre herehȳðe	dative	
6.	Norðhymbra	genitive	
7.	lond	accusative	
8.	sēo fird	nominative	
9.	hīe	accusative	
10.	an īġland	accusative	
11.	þǣre sǣ	dative	
12.	þæt	nominative	

The form of every noun can be ***parsed*** (interpreted) according to three criteria: ***case***, ***number*** (singular or plural), and ***gender*** (masculine, feminine, or neuter). In MnE we have to select the correct pronoun, *he*, *she*, or *it* according to the sex, or lack of sex of the referent. This is called ***natural gender***. In OE, nouns for things that today are all neuter, and nouns for a male or female person, might be masculine, feminine, or neuter. For example, *sunne* (sun) was feminine, *mona* (moon) was masculine, and *wif* (woman) and *ċild* (child) were neuter. This is called ***grammatical gender***. The importance of gender can be seen if we place the nominative singular form of the word for 'the' before these nouns: *se mona*, *sēo sunne*, *þæt wif*, *þæt ċild*. Definite articles ('the', in Modern English) and adjectives agree in gender, as well as case and number, with the nouns to which they refer.

Nouns

The different forms of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives can be organised into ***paradigms*** called ***declensions***. There are two main categories of nouns, ***strong*** and ***weak***. There are several declensions of ***strong nouns*** (some with sub-declensions). Theoretically, you should be able to identify which declension a noun belongs to by its endings. But in OE many declensions have some of the same endings, so, if you were to try and learn OE, you would just have to memorise which nouns belong to which declensions. In fact, linguistic reconstruction reveals that membership is determined by what the stem of the word in PrGmc, although the stem has often disappeared before the beginning of the OE period. Declensions are named after the original stem. Some declensions do not contain nouns of all three genders.

Strong Nouns

<u>*a*-stems</u>

Masculine	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	dæġ 'day'	dagas	stān 'stone'	stānas
Acc.	dæġ	dagas	stān	stānas
Gen.	dæġes	daga	stānes	stāna
Dat.	dæġe	dagum	stāne	stānum

Neuter	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	scip 'ship'	scipu	scēap 'sheep'	scēap
Acc.	scip	scipu	scēap	scēap
Gen.	scipes	scipa	scēapes	scēapa
Dat.	scipe	scipum	scēape	scēapum

When a word is inflected, the length of its ***root-syllable*** can often affect the final form by causing the loss of an unstressed vowel (known as ***syncope*** or ***apocope***). This can be spectacular in cases, such as the nom.pl. of *scēap*, which is the same as the nom.sg. form. Disyllabic words with long root-syllables, often lose the middle vowel: e.g. *engel* 'angel', gen.sg. *engles*, etc. Disyllabic neuter nouns with short root-syllables lose the final ending: *werod* 'troop', nom.pl. *werod*, etc. This change affects many declensions, not just the *a*-stems.

Many *a*-stem nouns had a *-j-* or a *-w-* in between the root and the stem. These are so-called *ja-* and *wa*-stem nouns. *wa*-stems take the same endings, preceded by *-w-*, except in the nom. and acc. sg., which end in *-u*: *bearu* 'barrow, grave', *bearu*, *bearwes*, *bearwe*, etc. *ja*-stem nouns vary depending on whether the root is long or short:

ja-stems

Masculine	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	here ‘army’	herġas	ende	endas
Acc.	here	herġas	ende	endas
Gen.	herġes	herġa	endes	enda
Dat.	herġe	herġum	ende	endum

Neuter	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	cynn ‘kin’	cynn	wīte ‘torture’	wītu
Acc.	cynn	cynn	wīte	wītu
Gen.	cynnes	cynna	wītes	wīta
Dat.	cynne	cynnum	wīte	wītum

ō-stems

Feminine	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	ġiefu ‘gift’	ġiefa, -e (nonWest Saxon)	lār ‘lore’	lāra, -e (nonWS)
Acc.	ġiefe	ġiefa, -e (nonWS)	lāre	lāra, -e (nonWS)
Gen.	ġiefe	ġiefa, -ena (nonWS)	lāre	lāra
Dat.	ġiefe	ġiefum	lāre	lārum

jō- and *wō*-stem forms also existed; e.g. *synn* ‘sin’, *synne*, *synne*, *synne*, *synna* (*-e*), *synna* (*-e*), *synna*, *synnum* and *sinu* ‘muscle’, *sinwe*, *sinwe*, *sinwe*, *sinwa* (*-e*), *sinwa* (*-e*), *sinwa*, *sinwum*.

i-stems

Masculine	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	wine ‘friend’	wine, -as	ġiest ‘guest’	ġiestas
Acc.	wine	wine, -as	ġiest	ġiestas
Gen.	wines	wina	ġiestes	ġiesta
Dat.	wine	winum	ġieste	ġiestum

Feminine	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	dǣd ‘deed’	dǣda, -e (nonWS)
Acc.	dǣd, dǣde	dǣda, -e (nonWS)
Gen.	dǣde	dǣda
Dat.	dǣde	dǣdum

Neuter	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	spere ‘spear’	speru	ġeswinċ ‘toil’	ġeswinċ
Acc.	spere	speru	ġeswinċ	ġeswinċ
Gen.	speres	spera	ġeswinċes	ġeswinca
Dat.	spere	sperum	ġeswinċe	ġeswincum

u-stems

Masculine	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	sunu 'son'	suna	feld 'field'	felda
Acc.	sunu	suna	feld	felda
Gen.	suna	suna	felda	felda
Dat.	suna	sunum	felda	feldum

Feminine	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	duru 'door'	dura	hand	handa
Acc.	duru	dura	hand	handa
Gen.	dura	dura	handa	handa
Dat.	dura	durum	handa	handum

Athematic Nouns are characterised by a change in the root vowel by *i*-mutation. Most athematic nouns are masculine. The feminine athematic nouns sometimes have the same forms as the masculine nouns, but they often have endings from the *ō*-stem declension.

Masculine	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	bōc 'book'	bēċ	mann	menn
Acc.	bōc	bēċ	mann	menn
Gen.	bōċes	bōca	mannes	manna
Dat.	bēċ	bōcum	menn	mannum

-ru Plurals follow the *a*-stem declension, but note their distinctive plural forms.

Masculine	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	ǣġ 'egg'	ǣġ(e)ru	ċild	ċildru
Acc.	ǣġ	ǣġ(e)ru	ċild	ċildru
Gen.	ǣġes	ǣġ(e)ra	ċildes	ċildra
Dat.	ǣġe	ǣġ(e)ru m	ċilde	ċildrum

Weak Nouns

There is only one declension of ***weak nouns***, although there is a slight variation according to gender. Weak nouns are distinguished by the fact that most of their forms end in *-an*. Masculine nouns end in *-a* in the nominative singular; feminine and neuter nouns end in *-e* in the nominative singular.

Masculine	*Singular*	*Plural*	*Neuter*	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	nama 'name'	naman	Nom.	ēaġe 'eye'	ēagan
Acc.	naman	naman	Acc.	ēagan	ēagan
Gen.	naman	namena	Gen.	ēagan	ēagena
Dat.	naman	namum	Dat.	ēagan	ēagum

Feminine	*Singular*	*Plural*
Nom.	sunne 'sun'	sunnan
Acc.	sunnan	sunnan
Gen.	sunnan	sunna
Dat.	sunnan	sunnum

Exercise

Examine the italicised OE nouns for case, number, and function.

1. Ond þā ġefeaht *sē cyning* Æþerēd wiþ *þāra cyninga* ġetruman.
   And then fought the king Æthelred against the kings' troops.
   sē cyning: Case__N___ Number__Sg___ Function_Subject_
   þāra cyninga: Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

2. Norþhymbre ond Ēastengle hæfdon Ælfrēde *cyninge* āþas ġeseald.
   Northumbrians and East-Angles had Alfred king oaths given.

   Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

3. Hē mid gāre stang wlancne wīċing þe him *þā wunde* forġeaf.
   He with spear stabbed bold viking who him the wound gave.

   Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

4. Wīġend crungon *wundum* wērġe.
   Warriors fell (by) wounds exhausted.

   Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

5. Iċ bōhte ān ġetȳme *oxena*.
   I bought a team (of) oxen.

   Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

6. Đā ġenam Abimelech *oxan* and *scēp*.
   Then took Abimelech oxen and sheep.

oxan: Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

scep (= sceap): Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

7. And *þā scēap* ġehȳrað his stefne.
   And the sheep hear his voice.

   Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

8. Ġē ne synt of mīnum *scēapum*.
   You not are among my sheep.

   Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

9. Hwylċ man is of ēow þe hæfð hund *scēapa*?
   Which one is among you who has a hundred sheep?

   Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

10. And on *scyp* stīgende hī fōron onsundran on wēste stōwe.
    And on ship moving they went privately to barren place.

    Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

11. þā men of Lundenbyriġ ġefetodon *þā scipu*.
    The men of London-town fetched the ships.

    Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

12. Ond þǽr forwearþ cxx *scipa* æt Swānawīċ.
    And there perished 120 ships at Swanage.

    Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

13. Ċealde ġeþrungen wǽron mīne *fēt*.
    (By) cold pinched were my feet.

    Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

14. Stincende āttor singāllīċe of ðām tōswollenum *fōtum* flēow.
    Stinking poison continuously from the swollen feet flowed.

    Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

15. Oððe ġyf hē bit *ǣġ*, segst þū rǣcð hē him scorpionem?
    Or if he requests egg, say'st thou he gives him scorpion?

    Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

16. Selle mon uuēġe cǣsa, ond fisces, ond butran, ond *ǣġera*.
    Give one (a) weight (of) cheeses, and fish, and butter, and eggs.

    Case_____ Number_____ Function_____

Adjectives

Adjectives may also be ***strong*** or ***weak***. The weak forms are the same as the endings of weak nouns, characterised by *-an*. They only occur immediately following the definite article or a demonstrative pronoun (e.g. *se* 'the, that' or *þes* 'this') and immediately after possessives such as *mīn* 'mine': *se ealda mann* 'the old man, that old man', *mīn ealda frēond* 'my old friend'. Elsewhere the strong forms occur: *se mann is eald* 'the man is old', *ealde menn* 'old men'. The strong declension is given below:

Singular	*Masculine*	*Feminine*	*Neuter*
Nom.	blind	blind	blind
Acc.	blindne	blinde	blind
Gen.	blindes	blindre	blindes
Dat.	blindum	blindre	blindum

Plural	*Masculine*	*Feminine*	*Neuter*
Nom.	blinde	blinde, -a	blind
Acc.	blinde	blinde, -a	blind
Gen.	blindra	blindra blindra	
Dat.	blindum	blindum	blindum

Adjectives with short roots end in *-u* in the fem.nom.sg., the neut.nom.pl., and the acc.nom.pl., e.g. *tilu* 'good' (compare the *a*-stem and *ō*-stem noun endings).

Demonstrative Pronouns and the Definite Article

		'The, That'		*'Those'*
	Masculine	*Feminine*	*Neuter*	*All Genders*
Nom.	se	sēo, sīo	þæt	þā
Acc.	þone	þā	þæt	þā
Gen.	þæs	þǣre	þæs	þāra, þǣra
Dat.	þǣm, þām	þǣre	þǣm, þām	þǣm, þām

		'This'		*'These'*
	Masculine	*Feminine*	*Neuter*	*All Genders*
Nom.	þes	þēos	þis	þās
Acc.	þisne	þās	þis	þās
Gen.	þisses	þisse	þisses	þissa
Dat.	þissum	þisse	þissum	þissum

Personal Pronouns

First Person	*Singular ('I')*	*Plural ('We')*
Nom.	iċ	wē
Acc.	mē	ūs
Gen.	mīn	ūre
Dat.	mē	ūs

Second Person	*Singular ('Thou')*	*Plural ('You')*
Nom.	þū	ġē
Acc.	þē	ēow
Gen.	þīn	ēower
Dat.	þē	ēow

Third Person	*Singular*			*Plural*
	Masc. ('He')	*Fem. ('She')*	*Neut. ('It')*	*All Genders ('They')*
Nom.	hē	hēo, hīo	hit	hī(e)
Acc.	hine	hī(e)	hit	hī(e)
Gen.	his	hire	his	hi(e)ra, heora, hiora
Dat.	him	hire	him	him

Verbs

Verbs in Old English have infinitive and finite forms. The infinitive forms end in *-an* and can be translated 'to go', 'to do', 'to speak', etc. The finite forms indicated the tense of the verb (past, present, future). Verb inflexions have ***first person*** ('I, we') ***second person***
('thou, you'), and ***third person*** ('he, she, it, they') forms, both singular and plural. The paradigm for these personal inflexions is called a conjugation. ***Do not forget that verbs have conjugations (are conjugated) whilst nouns, pronouns, and adjectives have declensions are declined.***

Verbs have both ***strong*** and ***weak*** categories, although the basis for these terms is not the same as for nouns and adjectives. ***Strong Verbs*** can be identified by their ***principal parts***: ***infinitive***, ***preterite (past)***

singular, ***preterite plural***, and ***past participle***. For instance, the principal parts of a Modern English verb are: *to write*, *(he) wrote*, *(they) wrote*, *written*. In Old English, each of the principal parts has a different root vowel: the origin of Modern English *sing*, *sang*, *sung*.

Strong verbs come in seven classes based on the changes in the root vowel and the form of the infinitive. Here are some examples of each class.

Class	*Infinitive*	*Pret. Sg.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Participle*
I	*scīnan* 'to shine'	scān	scinon	scinen
	wrēon 'to cover'	wrāh	wrigon	wrigen
II	*crēopan* 'to creep'	crēap	crupon	cropen
	brūcan 'to use'	brēac	brucon	brocen
	ċēosan 'to choose'	ċēas	curon	coren
III	*breġdan* 'to weave'	bræġd	brugdon	brogden
	drincan 'to drink'	dranc	druncon	droncen
IV	*beran* 'to bear'	bær	bǣron	boren
V	*tredan* 'to tread'	træd	trǣdon	treden
	sēon 'to see'	seah	sāwon	sewen
VI	*faran* 'to go'	fōr	fōron	faren
VII	*healdan* 'to hold'	hēold	hēoldon	healden
	hātan 'to command'	hēt	hēton	hāten

The failure of ***Grimm's Law*** as a result of ***Verner's Law*** resulted in consonant alternations in some strong verbs, e.g. *ċēosan*, *wrēon*, and *sēon*.

Strong verbs are conjugated as follows:

		Present	*Preterite*
1st sg.	iċ	singe	sang
2nd sg.	þu	singest	sunge
3rd sg.	hē, hēo, hit	singeþ	sang
3rd pl.	hīe	singaþ	sungon

There are three classes of ***weak verbs***, which are characterised by a dental sound, normally *-t-* or *-d-* in the ***preterite*** tense. Weak verbs come in three classes.

Class I: *fremman* 'to perform', *nerian* 'to approach', *hīeran* 'to hear'

Present Tense

1st sg.	iċ	fremme	nerie	hīere
2nd sg.	þu	fremest	nerest	hīerst
3rd sg.	hē, hēo, hit	fremmaþ	neriaþ	hīeraþ
3rd pl.	hīe	fremmaþ	neriaþ	hīeraþ

Preterite

1st sg.	iċ	fremede	nerede	hīerde
2nd sg.	þu	fremedest	neredest	hīerdest
3rd sg.	hē, hēo, hit	fremede	nerede	hīerde
3rd pl.	hīe	fremedon	neredon	hīerdon

Some weak verbs of Class I have different vowels in their past tense forms, just as they do in Modern English. Examples are *sēċan* 'to seek', *sōhte* 'sought', *sellan* 'to give', *solde* 'given', *þenċan* 'to think', *þōhte*, *brengan* 'to bring', *brōhte* 'brought'.

Class II: *lufian* 'to love', *lōcian* 'to look'

		Present	*Preterite*
1st sg.	iċ	lufie	lufode
2nd sg.	þu	lufiast	lufode
3rd sg.	hē, hēo, hit	lufiaþ	lufode
3rd pl.	hīe	lufiaþ	lufode

		Present	*Preterite*
1st sg.	iċ	lōcie	lōcode
2nd sg.	þu	lōciast	lōcode
3rd sg.	hē, hēo, hit	lōciaþ	lōcode
3rd pl.	hīe	lōciaþ	lōcode

Class III: habban ‘to have’

		Present	*Preterite*
1st sg.	iċ	hæbbe	hæfde
2nd sg.	þu	hæfst, hafast	hæfde
3rd sg.	hē, hēo, hit	hæfþ, hafaþ	hæfde
3rd pl.	hīe	habbaþ	hæfdon

There are some anamolous verbs, such as *dōn* ‘to do’ (preterite *dyde*) and *willan* ‘to wish, to will’ (preterite *wolde*). There were two forms of the verb meaning ‘to be’. The forms in the second column are only used for the future ‘will be’ and for statements of eternal truth (e.g. *wyrd biþ ful aræd* ‘fate is fully determined’).

Bēon ‘to be’

		Present	*Present*	*Preterite*
1st sg.	iċ	eom	bēo	wæs
2nd sg.	þu	eart	bist	wǣre
3rd sg.	hē, hēo, hit	is	biþ	wæs
3rd pl.	hīe	sind(on), sint	bēoþ	wǣron

Exercise

1. From the table of strong verbs, write the vowels and diphthongs that occur in the roots.

Class	*Infinitive*	*Pret. Sg.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Participle*
I	ī	ā	i	i
II				
III				
IV				
V				
VI				
VII				

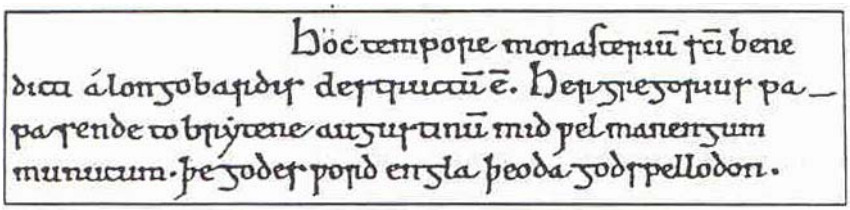
2. Complete the principal parts of the following strong verbs. The infinitive ending is *-an*, as given; the preterite singular has no ending; the preterite plural ending is *-on*; and the past participle ending is *-en*. Below the Old English forms give the Modern English past tense and past participle forms.

Class	*Infinitive*	*Pret. Sg.*	*Pret. Pl.*	*Past Participle*
I	*bītan* 'bite'	bāt	biton	biten
		bit		bitten or bit
VII	*healdan* 'hold'			
IV	*teran* 'tear'			
III	*meltan* 'melt'			
IV	*stelan* 'steal'			
V	*tredan* 'tread'			
I	*rīdan* 'ride'			
VI	*dragan* 'draw'			
II	*scēotan* 'shoot'			
III	*swellan* 'swell'			
V	*wefan* 'weave'			

Foreign Influences on Old English

Latin

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry for AD 595



Transcription

d.xcv. *Hoc tempore monasterium sancti bene.*
dicti a longobardis destructum est. Her Gregorius papa sende to brytene augustinum mid wel manengum munucum. þe godes word engla þeoda godspellodon.
(The first sentence is in Latin)

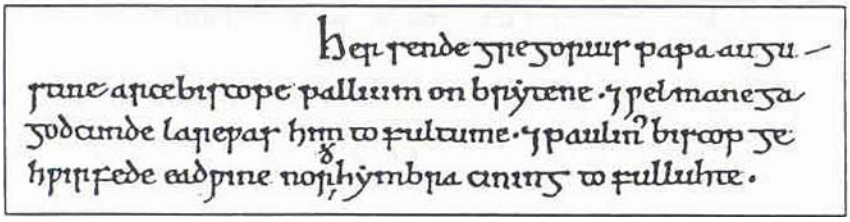
Word-for-Word Translation

595. At-this time monastery of-Saint Benedict by Langobards destroyed was. Here Gregory pope sent to Britain Augustine with very many monks who God's word to-English nation preached.

Translation

595. At this time the monastery of St Benedict was destroyed by the Lombards. In this year Pope Gregory sent Augustine to Britain with very many monks who preached God's word to the English nation.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry for AD 601



Transcription

dci. Her sende gregorius papa augustine arcebiscope pallium on brytene. ⁊ wel manege godcunde larewas him to fultume. ⁊ paulinus biscop gehwirfede eadwine norðhymbra cining to fulluhte.

Word-for-Word Translation

601. Here sent Gregory pope Augustine archbishop pallium in Britain. & very-many religious teachers him for help. & Paulinus bishop converted Edwin Northumbrians' king to baptism.

Translation

601. In this year Pope Gregory sent the *pallium* (= bishop's mantle) to archbishop Augustine in Britain and very many religious teachers to help him; and bishop Paulinus converted Edwin King of Northumbria and baptised him.

Parker Chronicle Version

dci. Her sende gregorius papa Augustino. ærce biscepe pallium in bretene. ⁊ welmonige godcunde lareowas him to fultome. ⁊ paulinus biscop gehwerfde edwine norþhymbra cyning to fulwihte.

dxcv. Her Gregorius papa sende to brytene Augustinum. mid wel manegum munecum. þe godes word engla ðeoda godspelledon.

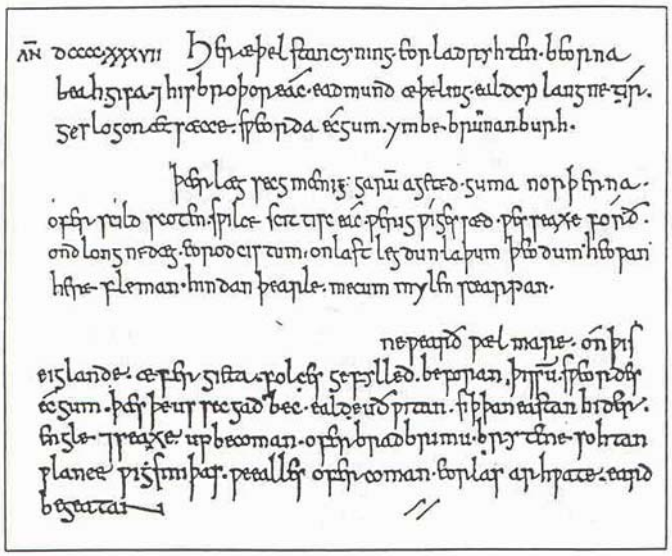
Three Versions of *Cædmon's Hymn*

Cædmon's Hymn occurs in a number of manuscripts, which vary in their spelling of the poem. The two earliest manuscripts, the 'Moore' and the 'Leningrad' versions date to the eighth century and give the poem in a Northumbrian dialect. The other versions occur in tenth-century manuscripts and give the poem in West Saxon. In the texts below, the macrons, capitalisation, and punctuation have all been added by modern editors. The translation is as literal as possible without violating the norms of Modern English syntax.

Northumbrian 'Moore' Version (CUL MS Kk 5.16, c. 737)	**Northumbrian 'Leningrad' Version (St Petersburg Public Library MS Q.v.I.18, c. 746)**
Nū scylun hergan hefaenrīces Uard,	Nū scilun herga hefenrīcæs Uard,
Metudæs maecti end his mōdgidanc,	Metudæs mehti end his mōdgithanc,
uerc Uuldurfadur, suē hē uundra gihuaes,	uerc Uuldurfadur, suē hē uundra gihuæs,
ēci dryctin, ōr āstelidæ.	ēci Dryctin, ōr āstelidæ.
Hē āērist scōp aelda barnum	Hē ærist scōp aeldu barnum
heben til hrōfe, hāleg Scepen.	heben tō hrōfæ, hālig Sceppend.
Thā middungeard moncynnæs Uard,	Thā middingard moncynnæs Uard,
ēci Dryctin, æfter tīadæ	ēci dryctin, æfter tīadæ
firum foldu, Frēa allmectig.	firum foldu, Frēa allmehtig.

West Saxon Version (Bodleian Library, Tanner MS 10, 10th century)	**Translation**
Nū sculon herigean heofonrīces Weard,	Now we must praise the Guardian of heaven,
Meotedes meahte ond his mōdgeþanc,	the Measurer's might, and the thought of his mind
weorc Wuldorfæder, swā he wundra gihwæs,	the Glory-father's work, as he for every wonder—
ēce Drihten, ōr onstealde.	the eternal Lord—established the beginning.
Hē ærest sceōp eorðan bearnum	He first made for the earth's children
heofon tō hrōfe, hālig Scyppend.	heaven as a roof, the holy Creator.
Þā middangeard moncynnes Weard,	Then middle-earth the Guardian of mankind—
ēce Drihten, æfter tēode	the eternal Lord—afterwards adorned,
firum foldan, Frēa ælmihtig.	the earth for men, the Lord almighty.

The Battle of Brunanburh (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry for AD 937)



Transcription

dccccxxxvii. Her æþelstan cyning. eorla dryhten. beorna
beahgifa. ⁊ his broþor eac. eadmund æþeling. ealdor langne tir.
geslogon æt sæcce. sweorda ecgum. ymbe brunnanburh.

þær læg secg mænig. garum ageted. guma norþerna.
ofer scild scoten. swilce scittisch eac. werig wiges sæd. wesseaxe forð.

ondlongne dæg. eorod cistum. on last legdun. laþum þeodum. heowan

here fleman. hindan þearle. mecum mylen scearpan.
millstones sharp.

ne wearð wæl mare. on þis
eiglande. æfer gieta. folces gefylled. beforen þissum. sweordes
ecgum. þæs þe us secgað bec. ealde uðwitan. siþþan eastan hider.

engle ⁊ seaxe. up becoman. ofer brad brimu. brytene sohtan.
wlance wig smiðas. weealles ofercoman. eorlas ar hwate. eard begeatan
country conquered

Word-for-Word Translation

937. Her Athelstan king. of-earls lord. of men
ring-giver. & his brother also. Edmund prince. life long honour.
won in battle. of-swords with-edges. by Brunanburh.
There lay man many-a. by-spears slain. man northern
over shield shot. also Scots too. weary of-battle sated. West
Saxons forth
throughout day. troops in-companies. on trail pursued. loathed
people. hacked
from-army fugitives. from-behind harshly. with-swords

not happened slaughter more. in this
island. ever yet. of-folk felled. before this. of-sword
with-edges. as to-us say books. ancient scholars. since from-east
hither.
Angles & Saxons. up came. over broad seas. Britain sought.
proud war smiths. Welshmen overcame. earls for-honour eager.

Translation

937. At this time King Athelstan, the lord of warriors, patron of heroes, and his brother too, Prince Edmund, won themselves eternal glory in battle with the edges of swords near Brunanburh.

There many men lay slain by spears, and northern warriors shot down despite their shields, and Scotsmen too, weary, sated with battle. The West Saxons throughout the whole long passing of the day pressed on in troops behind the hostile people, hewed fiercely from the rear the fleeting host with swords sharpened on the mill-stone.

There had not ever been so great a slaughter on this island of fallen folk, slain by the edges of swords, before this time, as books make known to us, as well as old and learned scholars, since the Angles and the Saxons came hither form the east, over the wide sea, sought the land of Britain, proud war-makers, victorious warriors; [they] conquered the Welsh and so obtained this land.

Although there are no written records of West Germanic, it is clear that contact with Romans introduced Latin loanwords even before the Angles and Saxons came from Britain. The evidence for this early adoption of Latin words lies in an analysis of known sound changes (see below).

Exercise

Below, only words that have survived into MnE have been listed. Use a dictionary with ***etymologies*** (word origins) to find the original OE and Latin forms of the following words. Divide the words into sets according to their meanings (e.g., domestic, household articles, etc.). Consider what these sets of adopted words might suggest about the relationship between the Germanic tribes and the Romans.

belt	inch	pan	purse
bin	kettle	pepper	Saturday
bishop	kiln	pillow	sickle
butter	kitchen	pin	street
chalk	line	pipe (musical)	tile
cheese	mile	pit	toll
cup	mill	pitch (tar)	-wick
dish	mint	plum	wine
fork	mule	pound	

Although Latin would have been spoken in Britain during the Roman occupation up to the fifth century by educated Britons, hardly any Latin words were passed on from this source to the Anglo-Saxon invaders. An exception was the *–caster/-chester* suffix for place names like *Doncaster* and *Manchester*, from Latin *castra*, meaning *camp*. Other Latin words were adopted into the language at different periods of the Anglo-Saxon settlement, many as a result of the conversion to Christianity and the establishment of the Church. Latin was the language of the Bible and church services, and of learning and scholarship.

Use a dictionary to find the original OE and Latin forms of the following words. Divide the words into sets according to their meanings (e.g. religion, education and learning, household and clothing, plants, foods, miscellaneous, etc.).

abbot	chest	lily	plant
alms	circle	lobster	pope
altar	cloister	martyr	priest
anchor	cook (noun)	mass (church)	psalm
angel	cowl	master	radish
apostle	creed	mat	sabbath
ark	crisp	minster	sack
beet	disciple	mussel	school
box	fan	myrrh	shrine
candle	fever	nun	silk
cap	fig	organ	sock
cedar	font	palm	temple
chalice	ginger	pine	verse

Many OE words derived from Latin have not survived, e.g. *cylle* from Latin *culleus* (leather bottle), *mese* from *mensa* (table), and *sigel* from *sigillum* (brooch).

It is often possible to determine when Latin loanwords entered English by phonological evidence. One important sound change known as ***i-mutation*** (sometimes *i-umlaut*) can give important clues. When *i*-mutation occurred (around the seventh century), a vowel in the accented syllable moved forward in the mouth, anticipating an /i/ or /j/ sound in the following syllable. *I*-mutation often caused morphological alternations in noun declensions. For instance, the primitive OE form **manni* 'men' became *menn*. The form *men* is not the only remnant of *i*-mutation in Modern English. We also say *goose*, *geese* and *mouse*, *mice*. Many examples have disappeared due to analogies with other, non-mutating words, e.g OE *bōc*, *bēċ*, MnE *book*, *book*s. The following changes resulted from *i*-mutation:

a > e	ā > ǣ
ō > ē	ū > ȳ
ea and eo > ie	ēa and ēo > īe

Words borrowed from Latin before the operation of *i*-mutation will be affected by it. Words borrowed after this sound change will not. Here are some examples. Were they borrowed before or after *i*-mutation?

balteus 'belt'	*belt*
cucīna 'kitchen'	*cyçene*
puteus 'pit'	*pytt*
strāta 'paved road'	*strǣt*
uncia 'twelfth part'	*ynċe* 'inch'

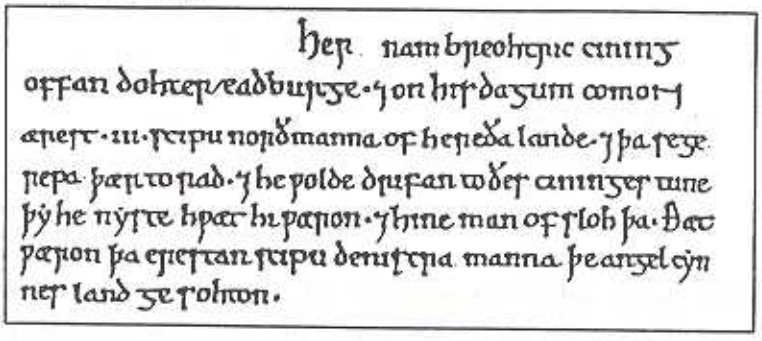
Two earlier sound changes called ***fronting*** and ***breaking*** also provide evidence. Fronting changed *a* > *æ*, and breaking changed *æ* > *ea* before *l* or *r* + consonant, and before *h*. For example, West Germanic **all-* > primitive OE *æll* > OE *eall*. Which of the forms below were borrowed before breaking and which after breaking?

altare 'high place'	*alter* 'altar'
arca 'chest'	*earc* 'ark'
cantor 'singer'	*cantere*
calcem 'lime'	*ċealc* 'chalk'
falsus 'false'	*fals*
martyr 'martyr'	*martyr*
palma 'palm'	*palm*
vallum 'wall'	*weall*

Starting in the eighth century, the Anglo-Saxons came under attack by Scandinavians from Denmark and Norway. They called these invaders *wicinga*, or *vikings*, but more often they referred to them as *Danes* (even if they were from Norway). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 787 gives a record of their first arrival on British shores. Facsimiles of both the *Peterborough Chronicle* and *Parker Chronicle* versions are given.

Chronicle for AD 787

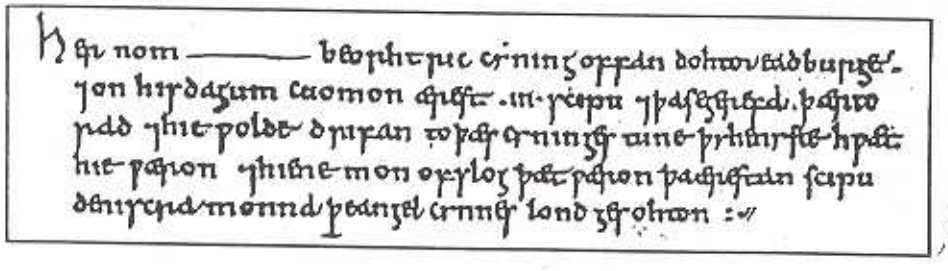
Peterborough Chronicle



dcclxxxvii. Her nam breohtric cining
offan dohter eadburge. 7 on his dagum comon
ærest .iii. scipu norðmanna of hereða lande. 7 þa se ge-
refa þær to rad. 7 he wolde drifan to ðes ciniges tune
þy he nyste hwæt hi wæron. 7 hine man ofsloh þa. Ðæt
wæron þa erestan scipu deniscra manna þe angel cyn-
nes land gesohton.
(*Peterborough Chronicle*)

787. Here took breohtric king
offa's daughter eadburh. & in his days came
first 3 ships of-northmen from hortha land. & then the reeve
there to rode. & he wished drive to the king's manor
because he knew-not what they were. & him one slew there. That
were the first ships danish men's that Angle-people's
land sought.

Parker Chronicle



The attacks increased in number, and their effect on the Anglo-Saxons' learned (and wealthy) communities is demonstrated by the entry for 793: 'And a little after that in the same year on 8th January God's church on the island of Lindisfarne was miserably plundered and destroyed by the heathen, with great slaughter'.

By the middle of the ninth century, large Danish armies regularly ravaged the land and began to occupy and to settle permanently in parts of the country. The most famous of the Anglo-Saxon kings, Alfred the Great, King of Wessex, after years of continuous war, negotiated treaties with the Danes. By the time of Alfred's death in 899 only Wessex remained independent. The rest of England north and east of the old Roman road called *Watling Street* (from London to Chester) was shared between the Anglo-Saxons and the Danes. This area became known as the *Danelaw*. The ravages of the Danish armies during Alfred's reign are described in the *Chronicle* entry for 878.

Chronicle for AD 878

dccclxxviii. Her hiene bestæl se here on midne winter ofer twelftan niht to cippanhamme. 7 geridan west seaxna land 7 gesetton. 7 mycel þæs folces ofer sæ adræfdon. 7 þæs oðres þone mæstan dæl hi geridon butan þam cynge ælfrede (. 7 he) litle werede yðelice æfter wudum for. 7 on morfestenum.

7 þæs on eastron wrohte ælfred cyning lytle werede geweorc æt æþelinga ige. 7 of þam geweorce wæs winnende wið þone here. 7 sumer setena se del þe þær nehst wæs. þa on ðere seofeðan wucan ofer eastron he gerad to ecgbrihtes stane be easton sealwudu. 7 him comon þær ongean sumorsæte ealle. 7 willsæte. 7 hamtun scyr se dæl þe hire beheonan sæ wæs. 7 his gefægene wæron. 7 he for ymb ane niht of þam wicum to æglea. 7 þæs ymb ane niht to eðan dune. 7 þær gefeaht wið ealne here 7 hiene geflymde. 7 him æfter rad oð þet geweorc. 7 þær sæt .xiiii. niht. 7 þa sealde se here him gislas. and mycele aðas. þet hi of his rice woldon. 7 him eac geheton þet heora cyng fulwihte onfon wolde.
(*Peterborough Chronicle*)

878. Here it(self) stole-away the host in mid winter after twelfth night to chippenham. & overran west saxons' land & occupied. & much of-the folk over sea drove. & of-the other the most part they subdued except the king alfred (. & he) with-small band with-difficulty through woods went. & in moor-fastnesses

& after at easter built alfred king with-little company fortress at athel-ney. & from that fortress was fighting against the host* . & of-somerset the part that there nearest was. then in the seventh week after easter he rode to egbertstone by east of-selwood. & to-him came there back of-somerset-men all. & wiltshire. & hampshire the part that of-it on-this-side-of sea was. & of-him glad they-were. & he went after one night from those camps to iley. & later after one night to edington. & there fought against all the host & it put-to-flight. & it after rode up-to the fortress. & there sat 14 nights. & then gave the host him hostages. and great oaths. that they from his kingdom wished. & him also promised that their king baptism receive would.

*The OE word *here* (*host*) was always used for the Viking armies.

England after The Treaty of Wedmore (878).

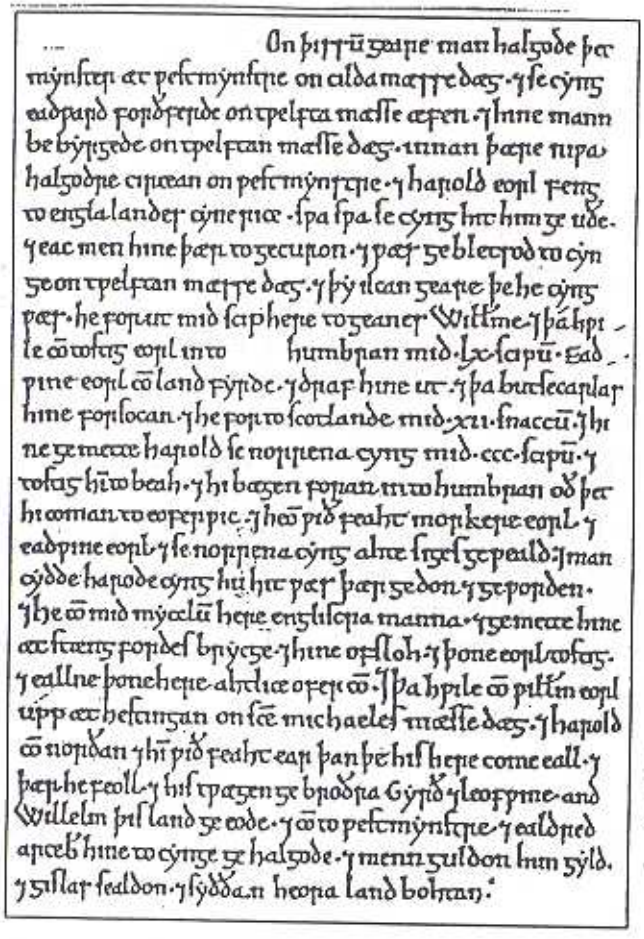
Late Old English

One of the important differences between OE and MnE is that MnE has lost most of the inflexions of OE. We can observe the beginnings of this loss of word suffixes from evidence in the manuscripts. If you compare the spellings of the same words in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* from earlier and later manuscripts, you will sometimes find differences in the vowel letters that mark case in nouns and tense in verbs. Here are some examples, where the text words are followed by the standard West Saxon form.

	Peterborough Chronicle	**Parker Chronicle**	**Standard form**
443	nefdon	næfdon	næfd**on** = ne hæfdon
	feordodan	fyrdedon	feordod**on** or fyrded**on**
	cininge	cyningæ	cyning**e**
	bædon	bædan	bǣd**on**
449	coman	comon	cōm**on**
	feohton	feohtan	fēoht**an** (infinitive)
	sendon	sendan	send**an** (infinitive)
455	broþor	broþur	brōþ**or**

Such spelling irregularities became frequent, so we can assume that the sound of these suffixes was no longer, for example, a clear /o/ or /a/, but was 'reduced' to the vowel /ə/. This is the commonest vowel in Present-Day English, the one we use in most ***unstressed*** (***unaccented***) syllables; but we have never used a separate letter for it. The scribes of OE therefore began to use vowel letters in these unstressed syllables at random. Eventually, the letter <e> came to be generally used.

So although in late OE the West Saxon dialect had become a standard for writing, and therefore did not reflect differences of pronunciation, scribes sometimes 'mis-spelt' because changes in pronunciation were not matched by changes in spelling. This is, however, important evidence for us about the changes that were taking place in OE. The reduction of vowels in unstressed syllables would prove to be extremely consequential in Middle English.



On þirrū geare man halgode þet
mynster æt westmynstre on cilda mærre dæg. ⁊ se cyng
eadward forðferde on twelfta mæsse æfen. ⁊ hine mann
bebyrgede on twelftan mæsse dæg. innan þære niwa
halgodre circean on westmynstre. ⁊ harold eorl feng
to englalandes cynerice. swa swa se cyng hit him geuðe.
⁊ eac men hine þærto gecuron. ⁊ wæs gebletsod to cyn-
ge on twelftan mæsse dæg. ⁊ þy ilcan geare þe he cyng
wæs. he for ut mid sciphere togeanes Willme. ⁊ þa hwi-
le cō tostig eorl into humbran mid .lx. scipu. Ead-
wine eorl cō landfyrde. ⁊ draf hine ut. ⁊ þa butsecarlas
hine forsocan. ⁊ he for to scotlande mid .xii. snaccū. ⁊ hi-
ne gemette harold se norrena cyng mid .ccc. scipū ⁊
tostig hī to beah. ⁊ hi bægen foran into humbran oð þet
hi coman to eoferwic. ⁊ heō wið feaht morkere eorl. ⁊
eadwine eorl. ⁊ se norrena cyng alne siges geweald. ⁊ man
cydde haro(l)de cyng hu hit wæs þær gedon ⁊ geworden.
⁊ he cō mid myccelū here engliscra manna. ⁊ gemette hine
æt stængfordes brycge. ⁊ hine ofsloh. ⁊ þone eorl tostig.
⁊ eallne þone here ahtlice ofercō. ⁊ þa hwile cō willm eorl
upp æt hestingan on sc̄e michaeles mæsse dæg. ⁊ harold
cō norþan ⁊ hī wið feahte ear þan þe his here come eall. ⁊
þær he feoll. ⁊ his twægen gebroðra Gyrð ⁊ leofwine. and
Willelm þis land ge eode. ⁊ cō to westmynstre. ⁊ ealdred
arceb̄ hine to cynge gehalgode. ⁊ menn guldon him gyld.
⁊ gislas sealdon. ⁊ syððan heora land bohtan.

Chronicle for 1066

M.lxvi. On þissum geare man halgode þet
mynster æt westmynstre on cilda mæsse dæg. ⁊ se cyng
eadward forðferde on twelfta mæsse æfen. ⁊ hine mann
bebyrgede on twelftan mæsse dæg. innan þære niwa
halgodre circean on westmynstre. ⁊ harold eorl feng
to englalandes cynerice. swa swa se cyng hit him geuðe.
⁊ eac men hine þærto gecuron. ⁊ wæs gebletsod to cyn-
ge on twelftan mæsse dæg. ⁊ þy ilcan geare þe he cyng
wæs. he for ut mid sciphere togeanes Willme. ⁊ þa hwi-
le cō tostig eorl into humbran mid .lx. scipu. Ead-
wine eorl cō landfyrde. ⁊ draf hine ut. ⁊ þa butsecarlas
hine forsocan. ⁊ he for to scotlande mid .xii. snaccū. ⁊ hi-
ne gemette harold se norrena cyng mid .ccc. scipū ⁊
tostig hī to beah. ⁊ hi bægen foran into humbran oð þet
hi coman to eoferwic. ⁊ heō wið feaht morkere eorl. ⁊
eadwine eorl. ⁊ se norrena cyng alne siges geweald. ⁊ man
cydde haro(l)de cyng hu hit wæs þær gedon ⁊ geworden.
⁊ he cō mid myccelū here engliscra manna. ⁊ gemette hine
æt stængfordes brycge. ⁊ hine ofsloh. ⁊ þone eorl tostig.
⁊ eallne þone here ahtlice ofercō. ⁊ þa hwile cō willm eorl
upp æt hestingan on sc̄e michaeles mæsse dæg. ⁊ harold
cō norþan ⁊ hī wið feahte ear þan þe his here come eall. ⁊
þær he feoll. ⁊ his twægen gebroðra Gyrð ⁊ leofwine. and
Willelm þis land ge eode. ⁊ cō to westmynstre. ⁊ ealdred
arceb̄ hine to cynge gehalgode. ⁊ menn guldon him gyld.
⁊ gislas sealdon. ⁊ syððan heora land bohtan.

1066. In this year one consecrated the
minster at westminster on children's mass day* & the king
edward died on twelfth mass eve* & him one
buried on twelfth mass day*. in the new
consecrated church at westminster. & harold earl succeeded
to england's kingdom. as the king it to-him granted.
& as men him thereto chose. & was blessed (= *consecrated*) as king
on twelfth mass day. & the same year that he king
was. he went out with ship-force against William. & meanwhile
came tostig earl into humber with 60 ships. Ed-
win earl came (with) lan-army. & drove him out. & the shipmen
him forsook. & he went to scotland with 12 vessels. & him
met harold the norwegian king with 300 ships. &
tostig him to submitted. & they both went into humber until
they came to york. & them against fought morcar earl. &
edwin earl. & the norwegian king all victory gained. & one
told harold king how it was there done & happened.
& he came with great army of-english men. & met him
at stamford bridge. & him slew. & the earl tostig.
& all the host manfully overcame. & meanwhile came william earl
up at hastings on st michael's mass day*. & harold
came from-north & him against fought before his army came all. &
there he fell. & his two brothers Gurth & leofwine. and
William this land conquered. & came to westminster. & ealdred
archbishop him to king consecrated. & men paid him tribute.
& hostages gave. & then their lands bought-back.

* children's mass day = Holy Innocent's Day, 28 December
* twelfth mass eve = Eve of Epiphany, 5 January
* twelfth mass day = Twelfth night, Epiphany, 6 January
* St Michael's mass day = St Michael's Day, 29 December