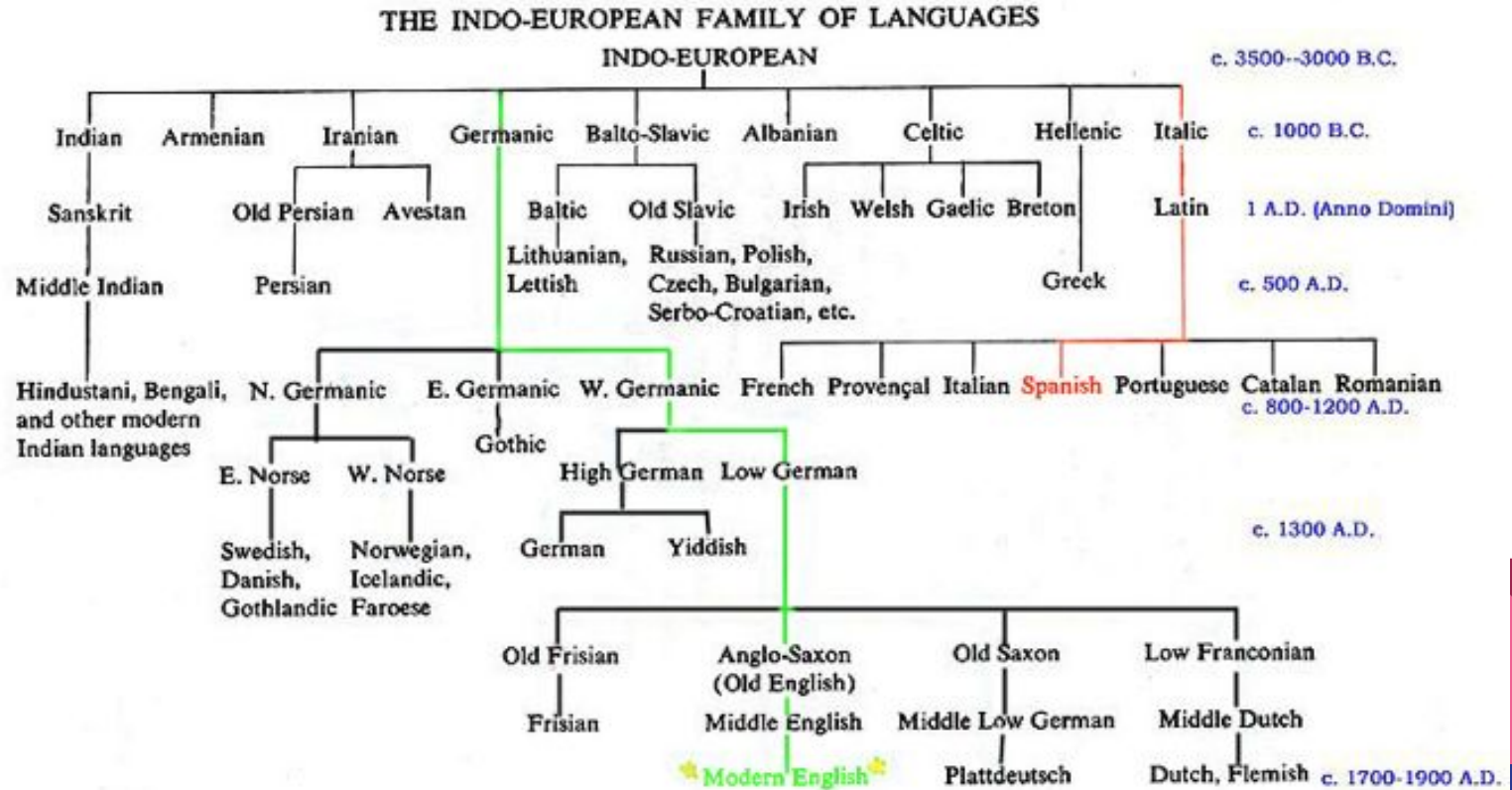




The History of The English Language

7th Grade

Where does English come from?



Different Stages of English

Old English

→ Me man sægde, þæt þu ðe for sunu wolde hererinc habban. -Beowulf

Middle English

→ Whan that the Knyght had thus his tale ytoold... -The Canterbury Tales

Early Modern English

→ Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed. -Romeo and Juliet

Modern English

→ Old Marley was as dead as a doornail. **-A Christmas Carol**

Some Extinct Letters

Thorn → **þ**

- This makes the “th” sound in the word “that” (notice you use your vocal chords)

Eth → **ð**

- The “th” sound in the words “thin” (notice you don’t use your vocal chords)

Yogh → **ȝ**

-This makes the guttural “k” sound (like in “Bach”).



Can words change meaning over time? Yes!

Example: NICE

A long time ago → “Nice” originally meant accurate.



Now → “Nice” can mean good, fashionable, pleasant, etc...

Has pronunciation changed over time? Yes!

Example: Let's look at the word "child" over centuries...

Old English → **Chee - Id**

Middle English → **Choy - Id**

Modern English → **Chai - Id**

This was part of something called THE GREAT VOWEL SHIFT.



Other changes!

Over time, people stopped pronouncing the letter “L” before “M” and “K”!

Calm

Folk



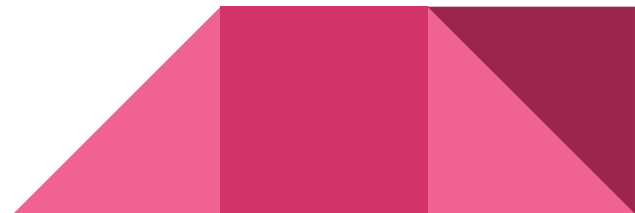
Was spelling always standardized? Nope!

Before the printing press was popular, people could spell words all sorts of ways:

The dog **barked**.

The dog **barkd**.

The dog **barckd**.



Why do we invent words? To express ideas!

We invent words to help us convey ideas. Let's try:

Example:

If you give a dog food, you feed him.

If you give a dog water, you _____?_____ him.

Notice that there is no verb in the English language for this action. Looks like we need some wordsmiths to help us out! Invent a word!

