



A Chronology of English

History of English Language

Poziom trudności: Średni

1. Proto-Indo-European spoken in Baltic area.

- A - ca. 1000 B.C.
 - B - ca. 3000 B.C.
 - C - 43 A.D.
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2. After many migrations, the various branches of Indo-European have become distinct. Celtic becomes most widespread branch of I.E. in Europe; Celtic peoples inhabit what is now Spain, France, Germany and England.

- A - ca. 1000 B.C.
 - B - ca. 3000 B.C.
 - C - 55 B.C.
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3. Beginning of Roman raids on British Isles.

- A - 55 B.C.
 - B - ca. 1000 B.C.
 - C - 43 A.D.
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4. Roman occupation of Britain. Roman colony of "Britannia" established. Eventually, many Celtic Britons become Romanized. (Others continually rebel).

- A - 43 A.D.
 - B - 55 B.C.
 - C - ca. 1000 B.C.
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5. Germanic peoples move down from Scandinavia and spread over Central Europe in successive waves. Supplant Celts. Come into contact (at times antagonistic, at times commercial) with northward-expanding empire of Romans.

- A - 200 B.C.-200 A.D.
 - B - 43 A.D.
 - C - Early 5th century.
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6. Roman Empire collapses. Romans pull out of Britain and other colonies, attempting to shore up defense on the home front; but it's useless. Rome sacked by Goths. Germanic tribes on the continent continue migrations west and south; consolidate into ever larger units. Those taking over in Rome call themselves "Roman emperors", even though the imperial administration had relocated to Byzantium in the 300s. The new Germanic rulers soon adopt the Christianity of the late Roman state, and begin what later evolves into the not-very-Roman "Holy Roman Empire";

- A - Early 5th century.
 - B - 200 B.C.-200 A.D.
 - C - 43 A.D.
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7. First Germanic tribes arrive in England.

- A - ca. 410 A.D.
 - B - 600-800
 - C - 410-600
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8. Settlement of most of Britain by Germanic peoples (Angles, Saxons, Jutes, some Frisians) speaking West Germanic dialects descended from Proto-Germanic. These dialects are distantly related to Latin, but also have a sprinkling of Latin borrowings due to earlier cultural contact with the Romans on the continent. Celtic peoples, most of whom are Christianized due to the late Roman adoption of Christianity, are pushed increasingly (despite occasional violent uprisings) into the marginal areas of Britain: Ireland, Scotland, Wales. Anglo-Saxons, originally sea-farers, settle down as farmers, exploiting rich English farmland. By 600 A.D., the Germanic speech of England comprises dialects of a language distinct from the continental Germanic languages.

- A - 410-600
 - B - ca. 410 A.D.
 - C - Early 5th century.
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9. Rise of three great kingdoms politically unifying large areas: Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex. Supremacy passes from one kingdom to another in that order.

- A - 600-800
 - B - 793
 - C - 410-600
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10. Christianity introduced among Anglo-Saxons by St. Augustine, missionary from



Rome. At the same time, Irish missionaries bring the Celtic form of Christianity to mainland Britain from the northwest.

- A - ca. 600
 - B - 55 B.C.
 - C - 410-600
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11. First serious Viking incursions. Lindisfarne monastery sacked.

- A - 793
 - B - 600-800
 - C - 410-600
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12. Charlemagne, king of the Franks, crowned Holy Roman Emperor; height of Frankish power in Europe. Wessex kings aspire to similar glory; want to unite all England, and if possible the rest of mainland Britain, under one crown (theirs).

- A - 800
 - B - 600-800
 - C - 410-600
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13. Viking incursions grow worse and worse. Large organized groups set up permanent encampments on English soil. Slay kings of Northumbria and East Anglia, subjugate king of Mercia. Storm York (Anglo-Saxon Eoforwic) and set up a Viking kingdom (Jorvik). Wessex stands alone as the last Anglo-Saxon kingdom in Britain.

- A - 840s-870s
 - B - 600-800
 - C - 410-600
-

14. Vikings move against Wessex. In six pitched battles, the English hold their own, but fail to repel attackers decisively. In the last battle, the English king is mortally wounded. His young brother, Alfred, who had distinguished himself during the battles, is crowned king.

- A - 871
 - B - 840s-870s
 - C - 876
-



15. Alfred builds a navy. The kings of Denmark and Norway have come to view England as ripe for the plucking and begin to prepare an attack.

- A - 871-876
 - B - 600-800
 - C - 876
-

16. Three Danish kings attack Wessex. Alfred prevails, only to be attacked again a few months later. His cause looks hopeless.

- A - 876
 - B - 600-800
 - C - 410-600
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17. Decisive battle at Edington; Alfred and a large contingent of desperate Anglo-Saxons make a last stand (they know what awaits them if they fail). Alfred leads the Anglo-Saxons to decisive victory; blockades a large Viking camp nearby, starving them into submission; and exacts homage from the kings of Denmark and an oath that the Danes will leave Wessex forever. Under Alfred's terms of victory, England is partitioned into a part governed by the Anglo-Saxons (under the house of Wessex) and a part governed by the Scandinavians (some of whom become underlords of Alfred), divided by Watling Street. 15 years of peace follow; Alfred reigns over peaceful and prosperous kingdom. First called "Alfred the Great".

- A - 878
 - B - 600-800
 - C - 876
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18. Athelstan crowned king. Height of Anglo-Saxon power. Athelstan reconquers York from the Vikings, and even conquers Scotland and Wales, heretofore ruled by Celts. Continues Alfred's mission of making improvements in government, education, defense, and other social institutions.

- A - 925
 - B - 840s-870s
 - C - 876
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19. Danes and English continue to mix peacefully, and ultimately become indistinguishable. Many Scandinavian loanwords enter the language; English even borrows pronouns like them, their they.



- A - 10th century
 - B - Early 5th century.
 - C - ca. 1000 B.C.
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20. Aethelred "the Unready" becomes king at 11 years of age.

- A - 978
 - B - 793
 - C - 876
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21. Aethelred has proved to be a weak king, who does not repel minor Viking attacks. Vikings experiment with a major incursion at Maldon in Essex. After losing battle, Aethelred bribes them to depart with 10,000 pounds of silver. Mistake. Sveinn, king of Denmark, takes note.

- A - 991
 - B - 793
 - C - 876
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22. After 20 years of continuous battles and bribings, and incompetent and cowardly military leadership and governance, the English capitulate to king Sveinn of Denmark (later also of Norway). Aethelred flees to Normandy, across the channel.

- A - 994-1014
 - B - 840s-870s
 - C - 876
-

23. Sveinn's young son Cnut (or Canute) crowned king of England. Cnut decides to follow in Alfred's footsteps, aiming for a peaceful and prosperous kingdom. Encourages Anglo-Saxon culture and literature. Even marries Aethelred's widow Emma, brought over from Normandy. After Cnut's death his sons bicker over the kingdom. When they die without issue, the kingdom passes back to the house of Wessex, to young Edward, son of Aethelred and Emma, who had been raised in exile in Normandy. Edward is a pious, monkish man called "The Confessor". Edward has strong partiality for his birthplace, Normandy, a duchy populated by the descendents of Romanized Vikings. Especially fond of young Duke William of Normandy. Edward is dominated by his Anglo-Saxon earls, especially powerful earl Godwin. Godwin's son, Harold Godwinson, becomes de facto ruler as Edward takes less and less interest in governing.

- A - 1014
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- B - 1066
 - C - 1204
-

24. January. Edward dies childless, apparently recommending Harold Godwinson as successor. Harold duly chosen by Wessex earls, as nearest of kin to the crown is only an infant. Mercian and Northumbrian earls are hesitant to go along with choice of Harold. William of Normandy claims that Harold once promised to support HIM as successor to Edward. Harold denies it. William prepares to mount an invasion. Ready by summer, but the winds are unfavorable for sailing. September. Harald Hardradi of Norway decides this is a good time to attack England. Harold Godwinson rushes north and crushes Hardradi's army at Stamford Bridge. The winds change, and William puts to sea. Harold rushes back down to the south coast to try to repel William's attack. Mercians and Northumbrians are supposed to march down to help him, but never do. They don't realize what's in store for them. October. Harold is defeated and killed at the battle of Hastings. December. William of Normandy crowned king of England in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day.

- A - 1066
 - B - 793
 - C - 876
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25. William crushes uprisings of Anglo-Saxon earls and peasants with a brutal hand; in Mercia and Northumberland, uses (literal) scorched earth policy, decimating population and laying waste the countryside. Anglo-Saxon earls and freemen deprived of property; many enslaved. William distributes property and titles to Normans (and some English) who supported him. Many of the English hereditary titles of nobility date from this period. English becomes the language of the lower classes (peasants and slaves). Norman French becomes the language of the court and propertied classes. The legal system is redrawn along Norman lines and conducted in French. Churches, monasteries gradually filled with French-speaking functionaries, who use French for record-keeping. After a while, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is no longer kept up. Authors write literature in French, not English. For all practical purposes English is no longer a written language. Bilingualism gradually becomes more common, especially among those who deal with both upper and lower classes. Growth of London as a commercial center draws many from the countryside who can fill this socially intermediate role.

- A - 1066-1075
 - B - 600-800
 - C - 410-600
-



26. The English kings lose the duchy of Normandy to French kings. England is now the only home of the Norman English.

- A - 1204
 - B - 1066
 - C - 876
-

27. First book in English appears since the conquest.

- A - 1205
 - B - 793
 - C - 1204
-

28. First royal proclamation issued in English since the conquest.

- A - 1258
 - B - 1205
 - C - 1204
-

29. Increasing feeling on the part of even noblemen that they are English, not French. Nobility begin to educate their children in English. French is taught to children as a foreign language rather than used as a medium of instruction.

- A - ca. 1300
 - B - ca. 1205
 - C - ca. 1258
-

30. Start of the Hundred Years' War between England and France.

- A - 1337
 - B - 1205
 - C - 876
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31. English becomes official language of the law courts. More and more authors are writing in English.

- A - 1362
 - B - 1205
 - C - 1258
-



32. Chaucer writes the Canterbury tales in Middle English. the language shows French influence in thousands of French borrowings. The London dialect, for the first time, begins to be recognized as the "Standard", or variety of English taken as the norm, for all England. Other dialects are relegated to a less prestigious position, even those that earlier served as standards (e.g. the Wessex dialect of southwest England).

- A - ca. 1380
 - B - ca. 1205
 - C - ca. 1258
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33. William Caxton brings a printing press to England from Germany. Publishes the first printed book in England. Beginning of the long process of standardization of spelling.

- A - 1474
 - B - 1362
 - C - 1258
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34. Early Modern English develops. The Great Vowel Shift gradually takes place. There is a large influx of Latin and Greek borrowings and neologisms.

- A - 1500-1650
 - B - 1066-1075
 - C - 600-800
-

35. Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, publishes the Book of Common Prayer, a translation of the church's liturgy into English.

- A - 1552
 - B - 1611
 - C - 1616
-

36. King James Bible published, which has influenced English writing down to the present day.

- A - 1611
 - B - 1552
 - C - 1616
-

37. Shakespeare dies. Recognized even then as a genius of the English language. Wove native and borrowed words together in amazing and pleasing combinations.



- A - 1616
 - B - 1611
 - C - 1552
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38. Classical period of English literature. The fashion for borrowing Latin and Greek words, and coining new words with Latin and Greek morphemes, rages unabated. Elaborate syntax matches elaborate vocabulary (e.g. writings of Samuel Johnson). The rise of English purists, e.g. Jonathan Swift, who decried the 'degeneration' of English and sought to 'purify' it and fix it forever in unchanging form.

- A - 1700s
 - B - 1600s
 - C - 1800s
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39. British imperialism. Borrowings from languages around the world. Development of American English. By 19th century, a standard variety of American English develops, based on the dialect of the Mid-Atlantic states. Establishment of English in Australia, South Africa, and India, among other British colonial outposts.

- A - 17th-19th centuries
 - B - 16th-19th centuries
 - C - 19th-20th centuries
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40. Recognition (and acceptance) by linguistic scholars of the ever-changing nature of language. Discovery of the Indo-European language family. Late in century: Recognition that all languages are fundamentally the same in nature; no 'primitive' or 'advanced' languages.

- A - 19th century
 - B - 17th century
 - C - 18th century
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41. Scientific and Industrial Revolutions. Development of technical vocabularies. Within a few centuries, English has gone from an island tongue to a world language, following the fortunes of those who speak it.

- A - 19th-20th centuries
 - B - 18th-20th centuries
 - C - 17th-19th centuries
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42. Communications revolution. Spread of a few languages at the expense of many. Languages of the world begin to die out on a large scale as mastery of certain world languages becomes necessary for survival. Classification and description of non-Indo-European languages by linguists continues, in many cases in a race against the clock.

- A - 20th century
 - B - 19th century
 - C - 18th century
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43. American political, economic, military supremacy. Borrowing patterns continue. English has greater impact than ever on other languages, even those with more native speakers. Becomes most widely studied second language, and a scientific lingua franca. By the 1990s, preferences begin to shift in many places from British to American English as the selected standard for second language acquisition. The twin influences of British and American broadcasting media make the language accessible to more and more people. Hollywood and the pop music industry help make English an irresistible medium for the transmission of popular culture. Even long-established European cultures begin to feel linguistically and culturally threatened, as English comes into use in more and more spheres and large numbers of English borrowings enter their languages. New waves of immigrants to the U.S. Linguistic diversity increases where the newcomers settle, but immigrants repeat the pattern of earlier settlers and lose their language within a generation or two. The culture at large remains resolutely monolingual (despite the fears of cultural purists). But as ever, the language continues to absorb loanwords, continually enriched by the many tongues of the newcomers to these shores.

- A - 1945-present
 - B - 1700-present
 - C - 1500-present
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Poziom trudności: Średni

Karta odpowiedzi

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