HEL 8

The Rise of Middle English

1066:

William the Bastard of Normandy, 28 Sept 1066

Who are the Normans?

14 Oct 1066 Hastings

'Domesday Book' — reckoning, account

**Written Records of ME**

5 Major Dialects: Directional

Northern

West Midland

East Midland

South(western)

Kentish (Southeast)

The North is the Craziest

--most innovative: Scandinavian/Scots influence

The South(west) is the most conservative

East Midland/Kentish gives us the London dialect > Standard English

[ME dialect map](http://www.waycross.edu/faculty/selby/2120/midlengl.jpg)

[another](http://media-2.web.britannica.com/eb-media/13/50213-050-DADDA731.gif)

Literature:

Loss of continuity with Old English traditions

English poetry ceases to be Germanic?

Layamon’s *Brut* (c. 1215)

Romance--French influence (often trans from French)

1350-1400: the flourishing

Chaucer, Gower, Langland

*Gawain* Poet

15th Century

Malory, Caxton

**Orthographic Changes**

**\*SPELLING\*** CHANGES

West Saxon Old English spelling conventions were fairly consistent and generally represented the (conservative) pronunciation of Old English

-- - - - -but- - - - -

After 1066, Wessex (=West Saxons) is significantly less important, and Frenchies are in charge of the monasteries, which even affects the spelling of English

**OE > ME**

**Consonants**

**wynn** > uu or w

**ð / þ** > th

(þ sticks around much longer, 15th c., even: “YE olde”)

**hw** > wh / w /

qu in North

**c**

/č/ > ch *cese > cheese*

/k/ > k *cynn > kin*

**plus** c begins to be used for /s/ “*circle*”

**cw** > qu *cwen > queen*

**cg** > gg > dg *edge*

**sc** > sh *ship*, *shoe*, *shadow*

**f**

[f] > f fox, five

[v] > v oven, over

ʒogh appears as a distinct letter, separate from g

**h**

[x] or [ç] > ʒ *riht* > *riʒt* (later > silent “gh”)

**g**

[g] > g *good*

[j] > ʒ *gear* > *ʒeer* (later > “y” *year*)

[ɣ] > ʒ *boga* > *boʒa* (later > “w” *bow*)

**VOWELS**

æ > e

long vowels > ee, oo, (u >) ou, ow

For visual clarity:

o replaces u: *wulf > wolf, sum > some, luf > love*

y replaces i: life, nice

i /j and u/v distinctions did not exist yet

two forms of the same letter

Like s and long s ( ʃ )

**Sound Changes**

**Consonants**

Consonant sounds become unpredictable

because of overlapping Old English, French, and Latin pronunciation and orthographic rules

Phonemicization

Allophones become phonemic

/f/ and /v/ : vase vs. face

/s/ and /z/ : zeal vs. seal

/θ/ and /ð/: bath vs. bathe

Simplification of consonant clusters

hr, hn, hl > r, n, l

(loss of d): andswaru, godspell > answer, gospel

(loss of w): andswaru, sword, two

(loss of /č/ in unstressed position): -lic / lice > ly

Metathesis:

wæps > wasp

bridd > bird

ðridda > third

ðurh > through

Metathesis of Juncture

a næddre > an adder

a naperon > an apron

an eacanama > a nickname

a noumpere > an umpire

cf. nuncle

**Vowels**

“y” merges with ‘i’

diphthongs are reduced to e

**Middle English Lexicon**

Massive influx of **French Loan words** at (almost) every level of the language

Borrowed from both dialects of French (Central French later--less assimilated):

Norman and Central

/k/ vs / č /

Norman: *carry, carriage, cauldron*

Central: *charity, chair, charge*

/w/ vs /g/

Norman: *waste, warren*

Central: *garment, garrison*

Doublets

*cattle / chattel*

*warranty / guarantee*

*reward / regard  
convey / convoy*

*wile / guile  
Wawain / Gawain*

Sound changes reflect when a word was borrowed

Assimilation more likely in older words

Which sound “more English?”

*champion chandelier*

*chestnut chevron*

*gentle genre*

*germ rouge*

*chief chef*

Shift in Stress accent up the word

*pilgramAge > PILgramage*

*courAGE > COURage*

Doublets

*moral : morale*

*gentle : genteel*

*liquor : liqueur*

Variable:

*fillet, garage, ballet*

Influence of Latin

Still Church Language (in many ways more so than it had been in Late OE)

Fourth Period of Latin Borrowing

**Least** assimilation of Forms

take oblique form of word, drop inflectional ending:

*informatio, information-is > information*

*consecratio > consecration*

Often difficult to tell if a word is a French of Latin borrowing

*nature (>* F *nature* or L *natura*?)

*scripture*

Results of all this Lexical Influx: Synonyms!

Modern English has a massive vocabulary

**ENGLISH FRENCH LATIN**

rise mount ascend

fire flame conflagration

kingly royal regal

hearty courageous cordial

ENGLISH: cow, sow, calf, sheep, deer

cf.

FRENCH: beef, pork, veal, mutton, venison