



HISTORY COURSE

# The Story of Old English Appendix

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2 Chapters

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# The Story of Old English

## Appendix · Timeline

Every date used in the chapters, in order, with the chapter that explains it and the Wikipedia article it came from. Dates are given as the sources give them: "c." means the source says about, and where sources disagree both are listed. Nothing here is new: if a date is not in a chapter, it is not on this page.

### How to use this page

Read it down once to see the shape of the story: the Roman withdrawal, the settlements, the mission, Alfred, the Vikings, the reform, 1066, and the rediscovery. Then use the Chapter column to go back to the explanation. The Map page shows where the places are.

## Before English and the settlements (to about 600)

| Date       | Event                                                                                                                 | Ch. | Source                                             |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------------|
| AD 43      | Roman Britain begins                                                                                                  | 1   | <i>Roman Britain</i>                               |
| 383        | Magnus Maximus takes troops from northern and western Britain                                                         | 1   | <i>End of Roman rule in Britain</i>                |
| c. 400     | Roman material culture collapses                                                                                      | 2   | <i>Anglo-Saxon settlement of Britain</i>           |
| 407        | Constantine III takes the remaining mobile soldiers to Gaul                                                           | 1   | <i>End of Roman rule in Britain</i>                |
| 409 to 410 | Romano-Britons expel Constantine's magistrates                                                                        | 1   | <i>End of Roman rule in Britain</i>                |
| c. 410     | Honorius's rescript tells British communities to look to their own defence; the end of Roman rule is often dated here | 1   | <i>End of Roman rule in Britain; Roman Britain</i> |

| Date                         | Event                                                                                                                                                                                   | Ch. | Source                                    |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------|
| 411                          | The date the traditional account gives for the start of the single coordinated invasion                                                                                                 | 2   | <i>Anglo-Saxon settlement of Britain</i>  |
| 428 / 441 / 449 / 450 to 455 | Competing dates for the invitation or arrival: <i>Historia Brittonum</i> 428, <i>Chronica Gallica</i> 441, the Chronicle's traditional 449, Bede 450 to 455; archaeology points earlier | 2   | <i>Anglo-Saxons</i>                       |
| 597                          | The Christian mission; the Latin alphabet returns to Britain                                                                                                                            | 4   | article on the Old English Latin alphabet |

## Writing and the early texts (600 to 800)

| Date                 | Event                                                                                                                  | Ch. | Source                                    |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------|
| 616                  | Law of Æthelberht, among the earliest Latin-script Old English                                                         | 4   | article on the Old English Latin alphabet |
| 658 to 680           | Cædmon's Hymn composed, if Bede is right                                                                               | 5   | <i>Cædmon's Hymn</i>                      |
| c. 672 or 673 to 735 | Bede's life                                                                                                            | 5   | <i>Bede</i>                               |
| 698                  | St Cuthbert's coffin, with runic inscriptions                                                                          | 4   | <i>Anglo-Saxon runes</i>                  |
| c. 731               | Bede completes the <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>                                                                       | 5   | <i>Bede</i>                               |
| 8th century          | The Latin alphabet overtakes the runes (the <i>Old English</i> article dates the change from about the eighth century) | 4   | <i>Anglo-Saxon runes; Old English</i>     |

## Vikings and Alfred (800 to 1000)

| Date            | Event                                                                                                    | Ch.  | Source                                      |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------|
| 865             | The Great Heathen Army lands in East Anglia                                                              | 7    | <i>Great Heathen Army</i>                   |
| late 866 to 867 | The Vikings take York                                                                                    | 7    | <i>Great Heathen Army</i>                   |
| 869 to 870      | King Edmund of East Anglia killed                                                                        | 7    | <i>Great Heathen Army</i>                   |
| 871             | Alfred rules Wessex from this year; Battle of Ashdown                                                    | 6, 7 | <i>Alfred the Great; Great Heathen Army</i> |
| 878             | Alfred wins at Edington; Guthrum agrees to baptism                                                       | 6, 7 | <i>Alfred the Great; Great Heathen Army</i> |
| 886             | Alfred takes London; he rules Wessex from 871 to about 886, then styles himself King of the Anglo-Saxons | 6    | <i>Alfred the Great</i>                     |
| c. 886 to 890   | Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum sets the boundaries of the Danelaw                                          | 7    | <i>Danelaw</i>                              |
| c. 893          | The shared core of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the "Common Stock"                                         | 6    | <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i>                |
| 899             | Alfred dies                                                                                              | 6    | <i>Alfred the Great</i>                     |
| 910s            | Edward the Elder's campaigns against the Danish territories                                              | 7    | <i>Danelaw</i>                              |
| 954             | Eric Bloodaxe driven from Northumbria (not the end of the Danelaw)                                       | 7    | <i>Danelaw</i>                              |
| 959 to 975      | King Edgar backs the Benedictine reform                                                                  | 8    | <i>English Benedictine Reform</i>           |
| 963             | Æthelwold becomes Bishop of Winchester                                                                   | 8    | <i>English Benedictine Reform</i>           |
| c. 970          | The <i>Regularis Concordia</i> adopted (possibly the 960s)                                               | 8    | <i>English Benedictine Reform</i>           |

| Date           | Event                                        | Ch. | Source                   |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| c. 975 to 1025 | The <i>Beowulf</i> manuscript copied         | 8   | <i>Beowulf</i>           |
| 960 to 990     | Proposed dates for the Exeter Book           | 8   | <i>Exeter Book</i>       |
| 987            | Ælfric sent to teach at Cerne Abbey          | 8   | <i>Ælfric of Eynsham</i> |
| 996 to 997     | Ælfric writes the <i>Lives of the Saints</i> | 8   | <i>Ælfric of Eynsham</i> |

## The end of the English kingdom and Middle English (1000 to 1500)

| Date        | Event                                                                | Ch. | Source                            |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 1005        | Ælfric becomes first abbot of Eynsham                                | 8   | <i>Ælfric of Eynsham</i>          |
| 1014        | Wulfstan's <i>Sermo Lupi ad Anglos</i>                               | 8   | Wulfstan (died 1023) article      |
| 1023        | Wulfstan dies                                                        | 8   | Wulfstan (died 1023) article      |
| 14 Oct 1066 | Battle of Hastings                                                   | 9   | <i>Norman conquest of England</i> |
| 25 Dec 1066 | William crowned at Westminster Abbey                                 | 9   | <i>Norman conquest of England</i> |
| 1066        | End of the Danelaw as a legal region                                 | 7   | <i>Danelaw</i>                    |
| 1072        | Bishop Leofric of Exeter leaves a large English verse book to Exeter | 8   | <i>Exeter Book</i>                |
| 1086        | Domesday Book completed                                              | 9   | <i>Norman conquest of England</i> |

| Date            | Event                                                                 | Ch. | Source                            |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 1095            | No Englishman holds a bishopric after Wulfstan of Worcester's death   | 9   | <i>Norman conquest of England</i> |
| 4 Aug 1116      | Fire at Peterborough destroys the library; the Chronicle is re-copied | 9   | <i>Peterborough Chronicle</i>     |
| 1122 to 1154    | The Peterborough Chronicle's own continuations; it ends in 1154       | 9   | <i>Peterborough Chronicle</i>     |
| c. 1150 to 1350 | Early Middle English                                                  | 9   | <i>Middle English</i>             |
| Aug 1417        | Henry V begins issuing Signet letters in English                      | 9   | <i>Middle English</i>             |
| c. 1430         | The Chancery Standard emerges                                         | 9   | <i>Middle English</i>             |

## Rediscovery (1500 onward)

| Date         | Event                                                          | Ch. | Source                |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| 1559 to 1575 | Matthew Parker is Archbishop of Canterbury                     | 10  | <i>Matthew Parker</i> |
| 1567         | Parker publishes an Ælfric homily on the Sacrament             | 10  | <i>Matthew Parker</i> |
| 1731         | Fire at Ashburnham House damages the <i>Beowulf</i> manuscript | 8   | <i>Beowulf</i>        |
| 1786         | Thorkelin's first transcriptions of <i>Beowulf</i>             | 8   | <i>Beowulf</i>        |
| 1838         | Bosworth's dictionary                                          | 10  | <i>Old English</i>    |

### Watch out

Several dates on this page are conventions or one source's view: 449 is traditional, 658 to 680 for Cædmon depends on trusting Bede, and the manuscript dates are of the copies, not of the poems.

### Note on sources

Every row was taken from the chapters of this course, which give the portion of each article read. I did not look up any date again for this page. The grouping into periods and the "Watch out" remark are mine. The 1066 end of the Danelaw is the article's statement that it persisted as a legal region until the Conquest.

**Next in the appendix:** the Map page, a sketch of Britain with the four dialect areas, the Danelaw and the main places.

# The Story of Old English

Appendix · Map

*A sketch of Britain showing where the four dialects of Chapter 3 were spoken, the rough area of the Danelaw (Chapter 7), and the places the chapters name. I drew it myself as a schematic.*

## This is a simplification

The coastline is a rough outline, not drawn to scale, and the borders are straight lines. The dialect boundaries follow the descriptions in the chapters (the Humber and the Thames), not a surveyed map, and they changed over time. The Danelaw area is approximate; the *Danelaw* article marks its southern boundary as needing a citation. Place positions are approximate. Wales and Scotland are outlined but not part of the four dialect areas.



## Key to the map

| Mark        | What it shows                              | Where the chapters say it |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Orange area | Northumbrian: north of the Humber          | Chapter 3                 |
| Blue area   | Mercian: between the Humber and the Thames | Chapter 3                 |

| Mark               | What it shows                                                                                                    | Where the chapters say it |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Green area         | West Saxon: south and south-west of the Thames                                                                   | Chapter 3                 |
| Purple area        | Kentish: a small area south-east of the Thames                                                                   | Chapter 3                 |
| Yellow dashed line | The Danelaw, roughly Yorkshire, the central and eastern Midlands and the East, north of a London to Chester line | Chapter 7                 |

## Places on the map

| Place          | Why it is here                                                           | Ch.  |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Jarrow         | Bede's monastery (with Monkwearmouth, which I did not mark)              | 5    |
| Whitby         | Where Caedmon lived, in Bede's story                                     | 5    |
| York           | Taken by the Vikings in 866 to 867; the archbishopric Wulfstan held      | 7, 8 |
| Worcester      | Oswald's and Wulfstan's bishopric                                        | 8    |
| Peterborough   | The Chronicle manuscript that runs to 1154                               | 6, 9 |
| London         | Taken by Alfred in 886; London English is the base of the later standard | 6, 9 |
| Winchester     | Old Minster, Æthelwold's see and the Chronicle's Version A               | 6, 8 |
| Canterbury     | Dunstan's archbishopric                                                  | 8    |
| Eynsham, Cerne | Ælfric's abbeys (Cerne from 987, Eynsham from 1005)                      | 8    |
| Exeter         | Where the Exeter Book came to rest                                       | 8    |
| Hastings       | The battle of 14 October 1066                                            | 9    |

### Note on sources

The map and its geography are mine, drawn from the dialect and Danelaw descriptions in Chapters 3 and 7 (Wikipedia's *Old English*, *Mercian dialect*, *Northumbrian Old English*, *Kentish dialect (Old English)* and *Danelaw* articles) and the places named in the chapters.

Positions of towns are from my general knowledge of where they lie and are approximate; I checked them against no map. The chapters' sources do not give coordinates. East Anglia, Kent's exact extent and the northern limit of Northumbria (the Forth) are simplified.