

ENGLISH ETYMOLOGY
A SELECT GLOSSARY
SERVING AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY
OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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merge vb. adopted fr. LAT. *mergere* ‘plunge under water’.

merit ME. *merit* fr. FR. *mérite*.

mermaid ME. *mer-maide*; OE. *mere* ‘ocean’ ME. *mēre* agree with OHG. OSAX. *mēri*, GOTH. *marei* ‘ocean’; cp. *ma r s h*.

merry adj. ME. *mirie* OE. *myrge* from a Teut. base *murgi-* ‘short’ in OHG. *murgfâri* ‘of short life’, Swiss *murg* ‘mannikin’; cp. GOTH. *maúrgjan* ‘shorten’. The adj. TEUT. *murgu-* ‘short’ = IE. *mṛghu-* corresponds to GR. *βραχύς* ‘short’ (for **μπαχύς*).

mesh sb. ME. *mesche* OE. *mæscē* = ON. *mōskve*, OHG. *māscā* G. *masche*; the Teut. base **mēsgen* belongs to the IE. *mēzg* in LITH. *māzgas* ‘knot’ from the vb. *mezgù* (*mēgsti*) ‘knot, weave nets’; hence *m e s h* may be traced to a TEUT. √ *mēsq* (ARYAN *mēzg* ‘braid’).

mete vb. ME. *mēte* OE. *mētan* = OSAX. *mētan*, DU. *meten*, OHG. *mēzzan* G. *messen*, ON. *meta*, GOTH. *mitan* with which is allied GOTH. *mitôn* ‘think over’, OHG. *mēzzôn* ‘moderate’. The TEUT. √ *mēt* is based on the ARYAN √ *mēd* in GR. *μέδομαι*, ‘I devise’ — *μέδων* ‘counselor’ — *μέδιμνος* ‘a corn-measure’, LAT. *modus* ‘manner’ — *modius* ‘a corn-measure’, GOTH. *mitaps* ‘measure’.

mess sb. ME. *messe* borrowed fr. OFR. *mes* FR. *mets* (source LAT. *missus* fr. *mittere*) ‘send’ and in MED.-LAT. ‘put, place’).

message ME. *messáge* borrowed fr. FR. *message*: LAT. type *missatica* an extension of LAT. *missus*. — Hence **messenger** (with the insertion of *n* as in *p a s s e n g e r*) ME. *messaġér* formed fr. *m e s s a g e* with the suffix *-er* denoting ‘the agent’.

metal ME. *metal* borrowed fr. FR. *métal*.

mete vb. ‘measure’ ME. *mēte* OE. *metan* SW. vb. ‘measure’ = GOTH. *mitan*, G. *messen* OHG. *mēzzan*, DU. *meten*.

mettle ident. w. *metal* but meaning now ‘spirit, ardor’.

mew vb. onomatopoetic like DU. *maauwen*, G. *mauen*; imitative of a cat’s cry.

mew ME. *méw* OE. *máew*; cp. DU. *meeuw*, ON. *má-r*, G. *möwe*: TEUT. base *maiw-*.

mickle ME. *mikel michel mukel muchel*, OE. *mičel myčel* = GOTH. *mikils*, ON. *mikill mykill*, OSAX. *mikil*, OHG. *mihhil*; cp. *m u c h*.

mid- adj. ME. *mid* OE. *mid midd* = OSAX. *middi*, OHG. *mitti* G. *mit-*, ON. *miðr*, GOTH. *midjis*. In mod. E. and in mod. G., the adjectives E. *mid-* = G. *mit-* are only used in compounds as E. *midday*, *midlent*, *midsummer*, *midwinter*; G. *mittag*, *mitiernacht*, *mittwoch* (orig. dat. sing.). The TEUT. stem *midja-* answers to ARYAN *médhyo*; cp. GR. *μέδος*, (for **μεθjos*), SKR. *mádhya*, LAT. *medius*. — **middle** adj. and sb. ME. OE. *middel* = DU. *middel*, OHG. *mittil* G. *mittel*; with formative *-l* from the adj. *mid*.

midge ME. *miġġe* OE. *myčġ* fr. a Teut. base *mugjô-* = OSAX. *muggia*, DU. *mug*, OHG. *mucka* G. *mücke*. From ON. *mý* it may be inferred that the West-Teut. guttural is secondary.

midst formed with excrescent *t* from ME. *in middes* equivalent to *a m i d*.

mien borrowed fr. FR. *mine* fr. IT. *mina* = OIT. *mena* ‘fashion, carriage of man’: source MED.-LAT. *minare* ‘conduct, lead’.

might ME. *might* OE. *miht meaht* = OSAX. OHG. *maht*, DU. *magt*, G. *macht*, ON. *máttr*, GOTH. *mahts*. The common TEUT. **mahti* is an old verbal abstract from GOTH. *magan* (like OSLOV. *moštĩ* from **mokti* from *mogq* ‘clean’). See *m a y*.

milch adj. ME. *milche* OE. **mylče*: deriv. of *m i l k*; cp. the equiv. adjs. ON. *milkr mjólkr*, OHG. *mēlch* G. *melk*, OE. *mēlc*.

mild adj. ME. OE. *milde* = OSAX. *mildi*, DU. G. *mild* OHG. *milti*, ON. *mildr*, GOTH. *mildeis*. Cogn. w. OIR. *meldach* ‘agreeable’ or *blaith* ‘soft, smooth’ (base *mlâti-*)? or OSLOV. *mladũ* ‘young, tender’, LITH. *mildũs* ‘pious’?

mildew ME. *mildēw* OE. *miledēaw* = DU. *meeldauw*, OHG. *mili-tou* G. *mehltau*; the first part is prob. fr. OE. *mele* = GOTH. *milip* ‘honey’; cp. ON. *milska* ‘a honeyed drink’; the second part see under *d e w*.

mile ME. *mīle* OE. *mīl* = DU. *mijl*, OHG. *mīla mīlla* (for **mīlja*) G. *meile*: borrowed fr. LAT. *mīlia* (passuum) lit. ‘thousand paces’, (whence also FR. *mille*, IT. *miglia*). The more frequent plur. *mīlia* was adopted in Rom. and G. as a fem. sing. (omitting *passuum*).

milfoil ME. *milfoil* fr. FR. *millefeuille* = LAT. *millefolium*.

milk ME. *milk* OE. *meoloc milc* = OSAX. *miluk*, DU. *melk*, OHG. *miluh* G. *milch*, ON. *mjólkr*, GOTH. *miluks*. It is remarkable that a common Aryan or at least a West-Aryan term for ‘milk’ is wanting, although the √ *melg* = TEUT. *mēlk* ‘to milk’ occurs in all the West-Aryan languages. From a common Indo-Eur. vb.: OE. *mēlcan*, DU. *melken*, OHG. *mēlchan* G. *melken*, GOTH. **milkan*. Cp. LAT. *mulgere*, GR. ἀμέλγειν, OSLOV. *mlěsti* (pres. *mlůzq*), LITH. *mĩlsti* (pres. *mélžu*) OIR. *mbligim* (*mlicht* and *melg* ‘milk’). — **milk** vb. ME. *milke* OE. *meolcian* (= OFRIS. *melka*, ON. *mjólka*) fr. OE. *meolc*.

mill ME. *mille* earlier *milne* OE. *myln* (whence ON. *mylna*) = DU. *molen meulen*, OHG. *mulî(n)* G. *mühle*; borrowed fr. late LAT. common ROM. *molîna* ‘mill’ (for class. LAT. *mola*), whence also IT. *mulino*, FR. *moulin*.

millet fr. FR. *millet*; source LAT. *milium* ‘millet’.

milt ME. OE. *milte* = DU. *milt*, OHG. *milzi* G. *milz*, ON. *milti*: from the TEUT. √ *melt* seen in *m a l t*. E. and DU. *milt* ‘soft roe of fishes’ is a corruption of *milk* (sw. *mjölke* ‘milt’ fr. *mjölkr* ‘milk’, DAN.