The Influence of Norman French on English

Let's investigate the Norman Invasion of 1066 and how it changed the English Language.



The World of Languages and Languages of the World



Sunday Lunch at a Posh Hotel

Starter

Partridge Souvaroff

Main

Venison Wellington with Roast Parsnip and Red Cabbage Cote de Boeuf. Red Wine Onions and Bordelaise sauce

Dessert

Gateau Saint Honoré

Caramelised Pear William

Which words on the Ritz Sunday Lunch menu are from Norman French?



Anglo-Norman: The French of the Normans that came to England in 1066

In 1066 William the Conqueror invaded and conquered England. The new conquerors (called the Normans) brought with them a kind of French, which became the language of the Royal Court, and the ruling and business classes.

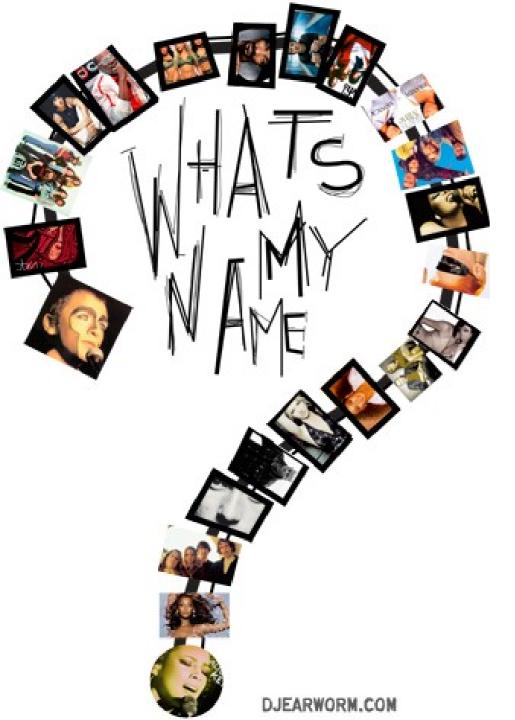
For a period, there was a kind of linguistic class division, where the lower classes spoke English and the upper classes spoke French.

Norman French was spoken in England as an everyday language for several centuries in England, by the Norman descendants but also by native people.

Anglo-Norman spread because the French nobles owned the land and they needed land stewards.

The middle layer of society were working between the French nobles and the workers. They were responsible for relaying messages from French into English and vice versa.





Within a generation...

We gave up our English names such as Alfgyfew and Berchtnoth.

Why? Because of the incredible glamour of the Normans! We adopted Anglo-Norman names like Alan, Alice and John.

Many Old-English names continued as surnames such as Cole, Elliot and Woolsey.

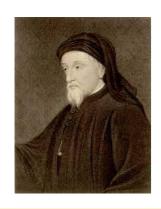
In your workbooks, which names are originally English and which are originally Norman French?



Middle English, Anglo-Norman and Latin

Many people in England were trilingual: they could switch between speaking Middle English, Latin and Norman French, depending on who they were talking to.





Middle English (1100-1500)



In the 14th century English became dominant in Britain again, but with many French words added. This language is called Middle English.

Middle English was the language of the great poet Chaucer (c1340-1400) and Julian of Norwich (C1342-1416). It would still be difficult for native English speakers to understand today.

Chaucer is the most famous writer of this period, and the English he writes became the more standard form of English used.



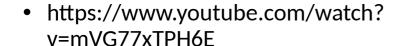
The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer

• The Canterbury Tales (Middle English: Tales of Caunterbury) is a collection of 24 stories that runs to over 17,000 lines written in Middle English by Geoffrey Chaucer between 1387 and 1400.

- Let's hear the opening 18 lines.
- Can you spot any links to modern English?
- Can you spot and sound/spelling links or rules in Middle English?

Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,

Then folk long to go on pilgrimages,





Middle English

Have a look at the excerpt from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

Try reading the extract aloud.

List 10 words that you can identify as the same or similar to modern English.

And whan I sawah he wolde never fine To reden on this cursed book af night, Al sodeinly three leves have I plight Out of his book right as he redde, and eke I with my fist so took him on the cheeke That in oure fir he fil bakward adown. And up he sterte as dooth a wood feon And with his fist he smoot me on the heed That in the floor I lay as I were beed. And whan he swagh how stille that I lay, he was agast, and wolde have fled his way, Till atte laste out of my swough I braide: "O hastou slain me, false thief?" I saide. "And for my land thus hastou morbred me? Er I be Seed pit wol I kisse thee."





The Law

To aid and abet, flotsam and jetsam.

Food

pork, mutton, beef, (as opposed to the English cow, sheep, pig) lettuce, grape, onion, mushroom, current, pea, almond, radish, cherries.

General speak (from Michael Rosen)

Pardon me but that is a charming petticoat and jacket combination you display there. May I present you with this flower, a dandelion. It is a beautiful blue colour. It resembles your delightful round stomach.

English and the French: Find the Pairs

English		
War		
Warrant		
William		
Wales		
Wafer		
Wage		
Wardrobe		
Castle		
Plank		
Pocket		
Wicket		

French

- a. chateau
- b. Gaul
- c. gichet
- d. poche
- e. Guillaume
- f. gage
- g. gauffre
- h. planche
- i. guerre
- j. garderobe
- k. garantie



English and the French: Find the Pairs

English	French
War	guerre
Warrant	garantie
William	Guillaume
Wales	Gaul
Wafer	gauffre
Wage	gage
Wardrobe	garderobe
Castle	chateau
Plank	planche
Pocket	poche
Wicket	gichet



A final thought...Food

With a partner, think of 10 French food words that we use in English today.



Acknowledgem ents

With thanks to BBC 4 Word of Mouth for inspiration.

