

# (A) The Way We Were (1/4) [15 Points]

Languages are constantly changing. For example, when you talk to your friends, you probably use some words that did not exist ten years ago. Even the basic grammar of a language can change.

Over time, these changes accumulate until new languages are born. In this way, the English that is spoken today—known as Present Day English—is descended from a language called Old English, which was spoken approximately a thousand years ago. Since that time, the language has transformed so much that, if you wanted to understand Old English, you would need to study it as a foreign language. This problem focuses on some of the differences between Old English and Present Day English.

Study the table below, which contains some sentences in Old English along with their translations in Present Day English.<sup>1</sup> Then answer the questions on the next three pages.

	Old English	Present Day English
1.	Æþelwine and Wulfstan gesawon þas menn. Hi hi gretton.	Athelwine and Wulfstan saw these men. They greeted them.
2.	Nereþ hit us?	Does it save us?
3.	Se cyning and se bisceop and ic gesawon bone arcebisceop. We hine gretton.	The king and the bishop and I saw the archbishop. We greeted him.
4.	Hwæt cweþe we?	What do we say?
5.	Seo lar eow nereþ.	The teaching saves you.
6.	We cumaþ.	We come.
7.	Ne hiere we þas wifmen.	We do not hear these women.
8.	þas weras hieraþ þas wifmen. Ne gesawon hi hi.	These men hear these women. They did not see them.
9.	þu hierdest þas menn.	You heard these men.
10.	þa hierde we þe.	Then we heard you.
11.	þu þe hierdest, and we us hierdon.	You heard yourself, and we heard ourselves.
12.	Alfred cyning and se bisceop ridon into þære byrig. þa gesawe we hi.	King Alfred and the bishop rode into the town. Then we saw them.
13.	Eadweard hine geseah. Gesawe ge us?	Edward saw himself. Did you see us?
14.	Hwæt fremest þu?	What do you perform?
15.	Fremede we hit?	Did we perform it?

1. The pronunciation of the letters is not important for this problem, but see the end of the problem for pronunciation notes.



## (A) The Way We Were (2/4)

A1. Fill in the blank cells from the table below:

	Old English	Present Day English
16.	a.	archbishop
17.	b.	King Edward
18.	menn	c.
19.	weras	d.
20.	Ne hierde ge hi.	e.
21.	Ne gesawon hi þe.	f.
22.	Hi hit fremedon.	g.
23.	Ne nerede we þe.	h.

A2. Fill in the blanks from these Old English sentences. A blank can be filled in with one word or a sequence of multiple words. For some blanks, there may be more than one solution; you should only give one.

	Old English	Present Day English
24.	a. Ne grette ge _____ .	You did not greet them.
25.	b. Seo lar hi _____ .	The teaching saves them.
26.	c. þu _____ .	You heard it.
27.	d. þa _____ .	Then they heard us.



# (A) The Way We Were (3/4)

Here are some more Old English sentences:

	Old English	Present Day English
28.	Wit hieraþ þæt word and wit hit cweþaþ.	We hear the word and we say it.
29.	Se cyning and ic gesawon þas boceras, ac ne grette wit hi. þas boceras unc gretton.	The king and I saw these scribes but we did not approach them. These scribes greeted us.
30.	þonne cume wit to his rice.	Then we come to his kingdom.
31.	Æbelbald and ic eow gesawon, ac ne hierde wit eow. Wit eow gretton.	Athelbald and I saw you, but we didn't hear you. We greeted you.
32.	Edmund and Swiþun, ne hiere git þas wifmen, ac wit hi hieraþ. þas wifmen inc hieraþ.	Edmund and Swithun, you do not hear these women, but we hear them. These women hear you.

**A3.** Below on the left are six Old English sentences which can all be translated into Present Day English by the single sentence *We saw you*. At the bottom of this page, match each Old English sentence with the context (on the right) in which it might have been said.

	Old English
i.	Wit eow gesawon.
ii.	Wit inc gesawon.
iii.	We eow gesawon.
iv.	We inc gesawon.
v.	We þe gesawon.
vi.	Wit þe gesawon.

	Context
A.	I said “ <b>We saw you</b> ” to tell your people that my people and I had seen them.
B	Mother said “ <b>We saw you</b> ” to tell me that she and my father had seen me.
C.	One bishop said “ <b>We saw you</b> ” to tell the archbishop that all the bishops had seen him.
D.	I said “ <b>We saw you</b> ” to tell my sister and brother that my mother and I had seen them.
E.	Athelbald said “ <b>We saw you</b> ” to tell Swithun and Edmund that he and his men had seen them.
F.	The king said “ <b>We saw you</b> ” to tell the people that he and his queen had seen them all.

Use these spaces to write the letter of the context that corresponds to each Old English sentence:

i.

ii.

iii.

iv.

v.

vi.



## (A) The Way We Were (4/4)

**A4.** Six distinct words are used to translate the Present Day English word *you* into Old English. For each of the following sentences, write the correct *you* word that is missing.

	Old English	Present Day English
33.	a. Ne hierdest _____ hi.	(Speaking to Paul) You didn't hear them.
34.	b. Ne hierde _____ hi.	(Speaking to Alfred & Edmund) You didn't hear them.
35.	c. Æbelwine and Wulfstan, gesawon hi _____ ?	Athelwine and Wulfstan, did they see you?
36.	d. Hierde _____ hine?	(Addressing the crowd) Did you hear him?
37.	e. Paulus, gretton hi _____ ?	Paul, did they greet you?
38.	f. Gretton hi _____ ?	(Speaking to Alfred, Athelwine, and Paul) Did they greet you?

Some more information about Old English: If someone referred to Old English, would you think of the language of Shakespeare, who was active at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, or possibly of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, written circa 1385? In the standard historical division of English, Shakespeare's language is actually Early Modern English, while Chaucer was writing late Middle English. English was brought to England from Germany and northern Denmark in the early fifth century, and before the conversion of the English to Christianity, was occasionally written in inscriptions using the Germanic runic alphabet. A small number of English writings in the Latin alphabet appear circa 700, but it is only in the ninth century that we find a substantial body of texts. The Old English (also known as Anglo-Saxon) period extended to circa 1100, when enough changes to the language had happened that it would be unintelligible to the people who brought the language to England. If Old English would have been incomprehensible to the speakers of the Middle English period, this is even more true for Present Day English speakers.

### Additional notes:

- For the most part, Latin letters were used to represent similar sounds in Old English. The letter *<æ>* (which is capitalized as *<Æ>*) represented a vowel similar to that in Present Day English *hat*. The symbol *<þ>*, called *thorn*, comes from the runic alphabet and was used to represent sounds not found in Latin, the two sounds of *<th>* in Present Day English *this* and *thigh*.
- Word order in Old English was flexible. In your answers for this problem, you should only use the word orders illustrated in the example sentences.

