• CHALLENGE 1: Why did the words beat (OE bēatan /'bæ:ətan> ME beaten /'bɛ:tən/) and beet (OE bēte /'be:te/) become homophones?

beat and beet are homophones: sound the same but they are two different words, and they can have two different origins.

BEAT: in OE there was a diphthong, and it was monothonized.

ME /’be:tə/ → /be:t/ → /bi:t/

ME /bɛ:t/ → /be:t/ → /bi:t/

• CHALLENGE 2: Why are there two different vowels in PDE wise /waɪz/ (< OE wīs /wi:s/) and its derivative wisdom /ˈwɪzdəm/ (< OE wīsdōm /ˈwi:sdo:m/?

• CHALLENGE 3: Why are there two different vowels in bleed /bli:d/ (< OE blēdan) and its preterite and past participle bled /bled/ (< OE blēdde)

• CHALLENGE 4: How would you explain the different pronunciations of south /saʊθ/ (OE sūϸ [su:θ]) and its derivative southern /ˈsʌðən/ (OE sūϸerne [ˈsu:ðerne]? Note that the spelling is a French convention that was introduced in ME for /u:/.

Great Vowel Shift: From OE to Middle English, it just changed the orthography. From Middle English, the long “u”, affected by the raising, is split in a diphthong, becoming “-aʊ-”.

**OE /su:θ/ ME/su:θ/ GVS / saʊθ /**

/ˈsʌðən/ (OE sūϸerne [ˈsu:ðerne]

In Middle English, the was a shortening in trisyllabic words, becoming /ʊ/. Then, the /ʊ/, there was split into /ʌ/: unrounded, lowered and centralized.

Also, there is a lost of the a vowels and the other one become a schwa. And the /r/ is lost.

**Oe /’su:ðerne / > ME /’su: ðərnə/ > /’suð ərnə/ > /’suðərn/ > /’sʌðərn/ > /’sʌðən/**