Some more challenges for you…

1. Why did warn and worn become homophones?

In the 15th century, /a/ becomes /ɒ/ following /w/ (velar semivowel). Assimilation; rounding. Rounding: because of assimilation of the consonants before.

Compensatory lengthening for the loss of the “r”.

2. In which dialect of BrE are luck and look homophones?

In the North of England.

/ʊ/ split into /ʊ/ and /ʌ/. It was unrounded, lowered and centralized. Not in the North! The rounded vowel continued to be pronounced in some words in contact with labial consonants (e.g. bull, bush, full, put, wolf), but not in others (but, fuss).

3. Why is bless you pronounced /ˈbleʃə/ in rapid speech?

S + semivowel. Palatalization. Type of assimilation.

Gmc velar plosives + front vowels. OE.

4. Transcribe PDE castle in (i) RP and (ii) Northern English. Why are they pronounced differently?

5. Why do PDE fir and fur sound the same?

6. Why do the adjective clean (OE clǣne > ME clēne) and the related verb cleanse (OE clǣnsian > ME clense) show different vowels in PDE?

7. Why is pronounced differently in busy, butcher and cut?

8. Which changes caused the homophony of knot/not and king/kin?

9. Why does the plural of leaf have a different consonant leaves?

10. Which sound change do these three words have in common? marble, night, balm.

Compensatory lenghthening.

And finally, fill in the blanks

Consonants cluster that

11. OE rūh [ru:x] > ME rough [ru:x] > EModE /ruf/ > PDE rough /rʌf/

12. OE \*dūfe [………] > ME /…………/ > EModE /…………/ > PDE dove /dʌv