



# ***History of England: Nation***

History of England

Its ethnic groups

Translations of Bible



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# English people: A composite Race


- Celts
  - Anglo-Saxons
  - Danes
  - Normans
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- Anglo-Saxons, Danes and Normans were the Teutonic stock.
  - The Celts were displaced by the Teutonics


# The Celts

- Indo-Europeans
- Settled in Western Europe in 6-7 BC- Italy, France, Spain.
- The Celts of Gaul (France) called *Galli* were conquered by Roman Julius Caesar.
- The Romanized Galli were then conquered by a Germanic tribe- Franks.


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- Clovis I, the first king of the United Franks adopted Christianity.
  - He is regarded as the founder of the French nation.
  - Hence, France is both German and Roman, but predominantly Roman.


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- The Celts of Ireland- *Gaels*.
  - First occupants of England.
  - Later driven west into Ireland and north into Scotland by another group of Celts- *Brythons* or *Britons*, who probably came from France.
  - The Gaels in Ireland were attacked by Scandinavian Vikings or Norsemen in 9 and 10 AD but were they were defeated in 1014.

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- The Irish were converted into Christianity in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century by **St. Patrick, a Christian Briton**.
  - He became the patron saint of Ireland.
  - His missionaries carried Irish Christianity to England.
  - Irish poetry dates back to the times of St. Patrick.

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- In 1182 Ireland was conquered by Henry II and all the literary activity came to an end.
  - It was then only in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that Celtic Revival brought a revival of Irish literature by such poets as W.B. Yeats.
  - Ireland became independent of England in 1937.





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- The Celts of England- *Brythons or Britons*.
  - Drove the Gaels out and occupied the Southern half of the island.
  - When Julius Caesar was conquering the Gaul, the *Britons* of England sent help to their cousins, *Galli* of Gaul.
  - After conquering Gaul, Caesar, as a punishment, invaded England in B.C. 55.


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- In B.C. 54 he made another exploratory expedition to England but both the times he could not conquer it.
  - It was King Claudius who ultimately conquered England in 43 A.D.
  - The Romans built the Hadrian's wall (named after emperor Hadrian) in the northern frontier of England to protect it from the Scots. Parts of the wall still exist.






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- Under the Roman rule, Britain was Romanized and converted into Christianity.
  - Romans developed Britain with new cities, roads, baths etc.
  - However, when the German Barbarians threatened the frontiers of the Roman empire, they left Britain defenseless (410 A.D.).

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- It is also interesting to note that while Roman empire left a lasting impact on France and Spain in terms of their language and culture, a 4 centuries long Roman rule did not leave any permanent mark of Latin civilization on Britain.
  - It was only after centuries that Latin language had an impact on Britain through the Norman conquest.

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- Long years of peaceful reign of the Roman empire on Britain made its people very soft and unwarlike.
  - Hence, invasions after invasions for so many years exterminated a majority of the Britons.
  - Many were forced to emigrate into neighboring countries.

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- The Britons of Welsh had a distinctive language and culture.
  - Its influence on the English literature is little, besides the tale of King Arthur.
  - King Arthur is believed to be the last king of Britain before the invasions of the Anglo-Saxons.

# The invaders- Angles, Saxons and Jutes

- From Northern Germany.
- Barbarians; worshipped heathen gods.
- Spoke Low German dialect- branch of West Germanic language.



# Major Tribes

By the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the most important kingdoms were-

## Angles-


- 3 kingdoms
- From south of Denmark
- Ruled East Anglia, Mercia (center of political activities) and Northumbria (northern area famous for its literary activities).

## Saxons-

- 3 Kingdoms
- Ruled Essex, Sussex and Wessex (East, West and South).
- Most important dialect- West-Saxons dialect

## Jutes-


- 1 kingdom
- Ruled the Kentish empire.

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- They were converted to Christianity in 7<sup>th</sup> century by Roman and Irish missionaries.
  - Important: St. Augustine in Kent in 597.
  - These missionaries also introduced the Roman alphabets, which replaced runes (cuts and scratches on wood and stone).

This was a very important step for the development of English literature.

# Danes

- England was invaded by Norsemen or Scandinavians.
- In the last years of 8<sup>th</sup> century.
- They belonged to Norway, Sweden and Denmark.
- They were pirates and plunderers; destroyed schools, churches, monasteries.


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- They were defeated by King Alfred, the Great King of Wessex in 878 A.D.
  - South and West- Alfred
  - North and East- Danes (called as Danelaw).

# Anglo-Norman conquest

- King Harold of Britain was not of royal blood.
- His armies were defeated by William, Duke of Normandy.
- The famous battle of Hastings was fought on October 14, 1066.
- William became the king of England.

# Effects of Anglo-Norman conquest

- Political consolidation of the country.
- Feudal system was introduced in the middle ages in England.
- Feudal system- system of land tenure based on military service.
- King>Nobles>Knights>Squires>Peasants or Serfs.
- Now, Saxons were reduced to Serfs or slavery.


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- All the high posts of church and government were occupied by the Normans.
  - **French**- language of court and upper class.
  - **Latin**- language of the clergy and the learned.
  - **English**- only by poor.

Hence for 200 years no literature is produced in English; only in French or Latin.



# English as a language

- Re-emerged as the dominant language of the united Norman-Saxon nation in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.
- Had adopted rules and vocabulary from French language.
- Government, rank, honor, chivalry, cooking, dressing, architecture, religion etc. borrowed words from French.


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- It opened England's association with the romantic French literature of chivalry.
  - Famous translations from Latin started to happen- Langland's Piers Plowman (1362) and Wycliff's Bible (1388).
  - A national consciousness had developed among the Norman-Saxons.
  - Time was ripe for Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.


# Translations of Bible

- Hebrew/Jewish Bible- 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> BC

It is also called *Tanakh* or *Mikra*.

- Old Testament- Based on teachings of Hebrew Bible; followed by Roman Catholic Church; In Hebrew/Jewish.
- New Testament- Based on teachings of Jesus Christ; written in Greek dialect.

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- St. Jerome's Vulgate(vernacular)- 4<sup>th</sup>-382 A.D.; accepted standard biblical text by the Western canon; Latin translation of Hebrew Bible; **First authorized bible.**
  - John Wycliff's Bible- earliest Bible in English but unauthorized.
  - German New Testament- by Martin Luther; influenced King Jame's Bible.

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- Coverdale's Bible(1535)- **First complete printed Bible in English.**
  - Matthew's Bible(1537)- Second complete printed Bible in English.
  - King James' Bible- **Authorized version;** Influenced by the Latin Bible, Hebrew Bible and Greek New Testament.



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