

The Story of English Study Guide

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Plot Summary

The Story of English is a brief history of the English language from its inception to a study of its variations all across the contemporary world. English is the most widely used language in the world. It is the language of world politics, commerce, science, and popular culture. English has the unique ability to grow and adapt in response to challenges and new situations, which the authors display with examples drawn from a wide range of media sources throughout the book. Voice recordings have made knowledge of spoken English easier in the last century or so but before that much had to be reconstructed. It is also unclear to the authors how to separate English into accents, types, dialects, and so on. Along the way, the authors undermine a number of important myths.

The Story of English is composed of an introduction, nine chapters, and an epilogue. The introduction explains what the authors intend to accomplish in the book and explain some of the animating problems that the author observes. Chapter 1, An English-Speaking World explains how the world came to be dominated by English in recent decades. The book is particularly focused on the United Kingdom and so starts its history from this location. Many regional dialects of English existed until the BBC and Received Pronunciation became widespread. While regional dialects did not disappear, they were substantially diminished. The United States continued the spread of English after the decline of the British Empire. However, global English is not limited to American or Standard English.

Chapter 2, The Mother Tongue, tells the story of the origin of English. The development of English began when the Celtic British were conquered by Julius Caesar in 55 B.C. which led to their partial Romanization. The Romans left England in the early fifth century AD and soon thereafter three Germanic tribes, the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes, migrated to English. When Christianity came to the British Isles in the late sixth century, a large range of Roman and Greek words were imported. Scandinavian invasions between the 8th and 11th centuries were another important influence and the Norman Conquest revolutionized the English language, transitioning English from Old to Middle English.

Chapter 3, A Muse of Fire, shows how Middle English started to evolve into Modern English during the Elizabethan Age through the flourishing of English culture and the beginning of the British Empire. Chapter 4, The Guid Scots Tongue, tells the history of the Scottish dialect and accent. Chapter 5, The Irish Question, tells the same story for the Irish. Chapter 6, Black on White, explains the formation of black dialects across the Western Hemisphere. Chapter 7, Pioneers! O Pioneers! Focuses on American English and the alterations made from Standard British English.

Chapter 8, The Echoes of an English Voice, focuses largely on the Australian and New Zealand variants of English. Chapter 9, The New Englishes, quickly reviews the many variants of English that have developed in countries that the British controlled in Africa, the Caribbean, and the East like South Africa, Jamaica, and Singapore. In the epilogue

titled fittingly *Next Year's Words*, the authors make predictions about the future evolutions of the English language.



Introduction, Speaking of English

Introduction, Speaking of English Summary and Analysis

The authors note that the English language brings together many influences in one place. In their record of the language, they rely upon literature, news, voice recordings, songs, and the like in order to tell a general story about the history of the English language. They try to tell the whole story in a book which they admit is difficult. In fact, the story of the English language is more the story of English languages. The English language is in constant flux and is always adding and losing terms, pronunciations, and the like.

It has been hard to know how the language sounded in its various forms until voice recording but its genius is still available. English speakers have a natural way of knowing what words go where even with fewer concrete rules about grammar than some other languages. This implicit sense of appropriateness gives English its own ebb and flow that can be aided by lexicographers but not stopped.

The English language is hard to write about, particularly because it is not clear how to divide up accents, dialects, and the like. So they will speak about varieties of the language. They apologize for the somewhat journalistic quality of the narrative, which they think is inevitable given the ground they have to cover. They will expose a number of myths about the language though the myths often give the language a mystique. The introduction ends as the authors thank those who helped them.



Chapter 1, An English-Speaking World

Chapter 1, An English-Speaking World Summary and Analysis

English has an impressive history of success. English did not exist two thousand years ago and five hundred years later the precursor tongue, Englisc, was spoken by as many people as Cherokee is today. A thousand years later, Shakespeare was in his prime and English was spoken by five to seven million. Four hundred years later, English is spoken by 750 million although only half of them speak it as their first language. English is undoubtedly the language of the planet. It has the richest vocabulary at about five hundred thousand words. English has few rivals such as Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, German, and Japanese, but no equals. English has become a vital alternative language in many countries, and in some cases like in India, often unifying them.

The story of English contains a conflict between localization and standardization of itself. It has high and low elements, such as the highest being "The Queen's English." Received Pronunciation became the language of the middle class. In England, the Education Act establishing public schools managed to significantly diminish English dialects. RP came to spread from South England outward and into the English army and civil authorities and became identical with power, education and material success though it came to acquire an air of snobbery. RP undermines Cockney when the telephone became wide spread.

The establishment of the BBC was an important moment for English as word choices had to be made for standard broadcasting. A commission, the Advisory Committee on Spoken English (ACSE) was formed to make these decisions. When the BBC began, RP was spoken by only 3% of the population. Although even RP came to have its varieties, unmarked RP and marked RP which separated classes.

Accents denote information about a speaker's life and career and explain community values. For instance, in Britain, RP is associated with having a number of good qualities. Within a lifetime however, a significant change can occur. RP has changed particularly through social changes that made the working-class more popular.

When the British Empire declined, the use of English did not thanks to the United States. After World War II, the relatively unscathed American economy sent multinational corporations across the world, and into NATO and the UN. The administration of the conquered nations was held by Americans as well. During the Cold War, American English became the voice of democracy. But the influence of movies and Hollywood was enormous. American broadcasting also had its effects and without class connotations. There is no "President's English." California is a particularly prominent influence through ethnic groups, cultural leaders, and high-tech industry like Silicon Valley.



Global English is either British or American. The reach of the language extends first into former English colonies, such as India where it is vital for science and industry. Economics is a vast pressure to learn English. Even many Japanese multinationals write international memos in English. The Chinese have recently developed a fanatical desire to learn English and English is vital in many developing countries. Many countries borrow words from English and in effect create hybrid languages, which threatens many regional language varieties. Canadian English is being destroyed by American English and Quebec has felt threatened to the breaking point. English is particularly open to "pidginization" or the creation of hybrid languages, due to the fact that it seems to have arisen as a pidgin.

The authors then dispel some myths associated with the language. English is not intrinsically easier to learn than French or Russian and it is not more lyrical or eloquent. Few such judgments are meaningful. In fact, pressures to learn English has led some to try and create simplified English spelling systems. However, English has the advantage of having the gender of words determined only by meaning. It also has a simple and flexible grammar and word-endings are easy. It is easy to "verb" nouns and "noun" verbs. 80 percent of English vocabulary is foreign-born. Due to its history, English is also a language of protest and dissent. Thus it is always democratic and never will be well controlled.



Chapter 2, The Mother Tongue

Chapter 2, The Mother Tongue Summary and Analysis

English was made through three invasions and a cultural revolution. Germanic tribes took it to Britain, followed soon after by the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. Latin and Greek influenced it when St. Augustine and others brought Christianity to England. The Danes added their own elements and then it was deeply transformed by the French. English was always a hybrid forged between war and peace. Only after a thousand years, however, did English become recognizable to the modern ear. It was not clear until the eighteenth century, however, how closely it was connected to European languages.

Linguists know that languages spoken by around one-third of humanity came from a common Indo-European source that consisted of tribes who had a half-settled existence and that no longer exist. It is unclear precisely where they lived. The horse and the wheel spread the language and caused its divergence. The chapter then reviews many of the movements away from the source. The Celts were among the first migrations to the west and their descendants live in Cornwall, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and Brittany. They spoke Gaelic and lived in Britain long before the English. The Welsh remain their most direct descendants.

However, the Celtic Britons lived on an island that was fertile and rich in minerals. Julius Caesar and his armies conquered it in 55 B.C. and the tribes were thereby kept largely in check. Many Celts became Romanized. The Roman legions withdrew in 410 AD and Germanic tribes started to threaten Britain's Celtic chiefs. Northern Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands produced their own language tree that divided into Norse and German, and then High and Low German. One of these Germanic tribes was the Anglii. Their speech was Germanic and they lived Denmark. The Frisii lived in Northern Germany and migrated as well. Frisian speakers today still show the Germanic roots of English.

The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes sailed from Denmark and the German Coast in AD 449. They were full of terror and violence. The Anglo-Saxons were unbeatable and this is reflected in the fact that Old English has barely a dozen Celtic words. The Angles were initially represented as Germanic but over the next five hundred years the English language came to be spoken in "Englaland" or the land of the Angles. Nearly all of the most basic English words are Anglo-Saxon, including 'the', 'is', and 'you.'

Old English was however far from uniform, containing Cornish, West Saxon, Kentish, Mercian, Welsh, and Northumbrian varieties.

However, Anglo-Saxon language received a major boost when Christianity brought an enormous Latin vocabulary starting in 597. Augustine and his followers were sent to Britain and must have thought that the tribes there were savages. They landed in Kent, an area which already had a few Christians. King Aethelbert of England received them



kindly. Augustine had a home in Canterbury. The conversation to Christianity was gradual and peaceful with no martyrs. Churches and monasteries were built and education started to be provided. A large church vocabulary came into English. Ideas and words from faraway places like India and China were introduced and the Anglo-Saxons were encouraged to apply words to new concepts. 'God,' 'heaven,' and 'hell' are all Old English words that acquired new significance.

The Scandinavian peoples engaged in mass movements between AD 750 and 1050 which started as plundering and ended in settlement. These were many peoples today called the Vikings. English raids started in AD 793 and started by sacking two monasteries, then turning their sights to King Alfred of Wessex. With the Viking conquest expanding, English might have been wiped out, but Alfred raised an army and pushed them back. The Saxon English-speakers survived in the South. To build his power base, Alfred used the English language to create national identity. He then started restoring his kingdom while building monasteries and schools. The authors then review the distinctions between Old Norse and Old English and how the two languages interacted.

In 1066 the English language had to adapt again when England was conquered by the Norman French at the Battle of Hastings. No event in English history changed English more. The Normans sought to culturally change England and colonize it. The English royal family had been destroyed and William established his own kingdom. The Christian clergy were gradually replaced with Normans. William never learned English but in 1066, English, Latin and French were all in play in England.

English survived among the lower classes for three reasons: (i) it was well-established, too vigorous with its fusion with the Scandinavian languages and too hardy, (ii) the Normans immediately began to intermarry, and (iii) in 1204, King John lost control of their French territory across the Channel. Norman nobility had to choose between France and England. In 1244 the King of France forced the nobility to choose a side. By the thirteenth century, English started making a comeback and common men knew no French at all. French seemed acquired and unnatural. English became more self-assertive. The Hundred Years War with France (1337-1454) sealed the deal. By the mid fourteenth century English was at every level of society.

English was forever different however, entering its period of Middle English or English spoken from 1150 to 1500, although the distinction is largely artificial. Old English writing collapses and so Middle English is mostly a record of writing of what had already happened to spoken Old English. Written Middle English was spoken long before. Spoken and written Standard English originated in the power and learning nexus of Oxford, Cambridge and London.

Geoffrey Chaucer's writing displays the triumph of London English. During the last 14th century, English surnames began to develop like Johnson, and Thomson, later producing Brooks, Washington, Driver, and Mason. By the death of King Henry V in 1422, English was adopted as the official written language of England. A huge number

of Latin words were introduced into English through the use of the printing press. By the 16th century, the stage is set for Elizabethan English.



Chapter 3, A Muse of Fire

Chapter 3, A Muse of Fire Summary and Analysis

The achievements of the English language during the Elizabethan Age were extraordinary. Elizabeth became queen in 1558 and Shakespeare was born in 1564. James I, who had the King James Version of the Bible translated, died in 1625. Over those seventy years, the English language reached an extraordinary level of vitality. England expanded due to great changes, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the rise of England as a Navel power. The Printing Press nearly doubled the number of books in England and by 1600 nearly half of the English were minimally literate. The classics were influential as well. The scientific revolution of the Renaissance took place in part in England and new terms were introduced, such as atmosphere and skeleton. The Renaissance added over ten thousand words to the English language.

English culture in the 16th century was bold, particularly with respect to exploration and new settlements. American settlements started up in this time. Shakespeare was wildly famous and he created many new words like assassination, dislocate, reliance, and submerge. The authors then discuss what little is known about his biography. He was from Warwick and his vocabulary reflected it; he probably spoke a version of Midlands English reflective of Stratford-on-Avon. He knew Classical and Renaissance rhetoric but knew all aspects of the English language.

The New World was a source of excitement for London. Charters were created and companies led by merchants left for Plymouth. The English language spread to the New World; Jamestown survived. Many Chesapeake Islands were settled towards the end of the 17th century. Some forms of fossilized English are still spoken there.

James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603. Under James English would be standardized and spread around the world. He was the most powerful Protestant king in Europe and created the title "Great Britain." In 1604 he led a council of bishops and Puritan divines to create the King James Bible. It would be a vernacular translation like John Wycliffe's from the 14th century but of course not repressed. Tyndale's translation from Greek in 1525 led to his death. But things changed in 1534 when the English Reformation began; Protestantism became legal. The KJV quickly became the most widely read book in the English language. After several teams of translators worked for six years, the translation was completed. It uses only eight thousand words so that the average Englishman could understand it. The leader of the translation, Bois, is often forgotten despite the fact that the KJV is still used across the world.

The Puritans were most highly concentrated in East Anglia and Oliver Cromwell had an estate there. Two-thirds of Massachusetts settlers came from there. Lincolnshire, Essex, Bedfordshire among others sent a stream of immigrants to the United States and the speech of East Anglia traveled with them. Thus begins the story of American English. The voyages to the New World included groups from many communities which



created a melting pot. In American nearly all languages were foreign and communication was difficult. The Indians learned English on occasion and spoke a broken version of English, creating a pidgin version of English. Through interaction with the Indians, the English settlers imported new "wigwam" words like totem, chipmunk, and pecan. New geographical terms were created also such as names for new flora and fauna. Americans preserved archaic features of English, using "gotten" instead of "got" for instance. The flat letter "a" was preserved in the United States in words like fast.

Leveling and mixing of accents occurred constantly. The Dutch, French, and German settlers added their own elements. The major American different was the flat "a" as opposed to the British "ah." Some emphases changes as well. The Spanish were a powerful influence in the West and in Florida, as the French-influenced Louisiana produced the Cajuns. New Amsterdam, a Dutch settlement, became New York City. The Amish and the Mennonite German settlers created Pennsylvania Dutch.



Chapter 4, The Guid Scots Tongue

Chapter 4, The Guid Scots Tongue Summary and Analysis

Scots is one of the oldest and most interesting varieties of English dating back to the sixth and seventh centuries. The Scots originated the "Mc" prefix. Their language was most dominant in the North and the South ultimately dominated it. Standard English was the greatest threat and the pressure to standardize English after the scientific revolution was strong. During this period, Samuel Johnson produced an English language dictionary. The language exploded with new terms that had to be tamed. Jonathan Swift came next and was particularly concerned about corruption of the English language. English spelling was too chaotic.

Johnson's dictionary contained over 40,000 definitions, illustrated with 114,000 quotations drawn from English writing. Johnson took on the established dictionaries of European language and decisively exceeded them through nine years of work. The dictionary produced the first bits of Standard English. Johnson was happy to learn that the Scottish accent was in decline. Johnson traveled through Scotland at the dawn of the Scottish Enlightenment of Hume, Smith, Burns, and Telford. Some Scottish survived among the Highlanders who isolated themselves from British life and maintained Gaelic speech, though their accent was somewhat different. They retreated from the south of Scotland and removed its Gaelic-speaking population. Many of them left and came to the United States.

The Scots of the Lowlands first spoke a form of English brought by the Angles of Northumbria mixed with four ethnic groups that invaded during the Dark Ages: Picts, Britons, the Scotti, and the Norse. The Scotti united the kingdom. Some Scots were able to achieve high positions among the Norman royalty and had an Anglo-Norman court themselves. They became connected to the French in race and form of life and speech. The royal burghs became the source of culture for the Lowland Scots and they fiercely resisted attempts to be annexed by England.

At the onset of the the 17th century, many Scots started to lose their distinctive accent, particularly when James VI moves to London to take the English Crown and adopted their accent. The Church of Scotland, the Kirk, required all Scots to learn the Bible and because they were Calvinists, they had a translation of the Geneva Bible. However, James I ordered that the KJV be used which again undermined the Scots language. In the 18th century, increasing vogue for English speech led to hostility towards the Scots. They ultimately capitulated to English.

Scotland's most famous poet, Robert Burns, helped to preserve Scottish for a time despite knowing Standard English, though he had a weaker Scottish accent. Sir Walter Scott, a famous storyteller and Robert Louis Stevenson also did what they could. They often did so out of nostalgia for an old Scottish culture.



To reduce the rule of Celtic chiefs in Ulster, James I granted territory in Northern Ireland to English and Scottish planters, and Scotland provided most of the tenants. Many Protestants hoped to find religious freedom there. 200000 Scots moved to Northern Ireland and the Scots-Irish transformed the province making it the most prosperous part of Ireland. The Scots brought to Ulster a distinct language. The settlement was also not peaceful. In fact, Protestant-Catholic conflicts continue to this day. The development of the Ulster-Scot became possible due to a disconnect with England and they preserved much Scottish vocabulary, including an ability to produce a strong "ch" as in "loch."

Many Scots immigrated to the United States in the 18th century. Ulsters were often invited by their countrymen to emigrate as well. However, they were not well-received there. They were discriminated against and so they headed South from New England to Pennsylvania. They also moved inland and sometimes mixed with the Pennsylvania Dutch. They pushed out to the Cumberland Gap and the hills of Appalachia. Davy Crockett was a Scots-Irish frontiersman. They also had a rich oral culture full of aphorisms as in "axe to grind."

Much Scots-Irish distinctiveness survives in the Appalachians. Country music was also the invention of the Scots-Irish and this distinctive bluegrass style has been taken across the world by singers like Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers. The Scots-Irish contributed up to half of the American Army against the British. Nine American presidents were of Scot-Irish descent. Today, 10 percent of the entire population of the United States has Scots-Irish ancestry.



Chapter 5, The Irish Question

Chapter 5, The Irish Question Summary and Analysis

English is not Ireland's native language and most unique Irish writers have been assimilated into the English writing tradition. In America, forty million people claim to be of Irish descent. Irish remains one of the most recognizable English tongues. Ireland has had a traumatic history where the English have conquered them for eight hundred years. Irish culture is a strange mixture of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic.

The Gaelic tradition is a source of the inspiration of Irish literature. Old Ireland spoke the language and exerted major influence in England in the eighth and ninth centuries. The culture of Ireland rose to a high point in the tenth century. From the late 12th century onwards, England began their domination. The English tried to crush the Irish but by the turn of the 16th century, English had almost died out.

For two hundred years afterwards, the Protestant English and the Ulster Scots opposed the Catholic ruling families. Irish Gaelic became associated with Roman Catholicism and English with Protestant supremacy. English became dominant in the eighteenth century in urban areas and the socially ambitious classes. The Irish anglicized their society so as to influence their English rulers.

However, the largest influence on Irish English is Gaelic. Storytelling was a common form of passing language down from one generation to the next. Gaelic and English combined to form a fascinating Hiberno-English that sounds quite unlike Standard English. The absence of Standard English in Ireland led to different stress syllables and a habit of selecting words that are slightly and even sometimes ludicrously inappropriate. Centuries of isolation has helped Ireland to maintain these unique features. English in Ireland is still Elizabethan and non-standardized. In fact, Ireland would often "fossilize" aspects of English from previous centuries. Jonathan Swift often attacked these uses.

The Irish has engaged in massive emigration from their home when the English and Scots came to Ulster. The Irish have spread across the Anglo-American world and their language is almost completely preserved in Newfoundland, which was the first English-speaking official colony in North America founded in 1588. An Irish community still exists in Barbados. They also helped to settle Australia. However, in the latter two cases, they often emigrated as prisoners or involuntary exiles.

By 1900, the English language in Ireland became so natural that it seemed indigenous and Gaelic was almost entirely submerged. The Act of Union in 1803 brought Ireland in the United Kingdom and English administrators started to impose English aided by the great social crises in Ireland in the nineteenth century like the potato famine. The Irish left their homeland in masse devastating the countryside. However, Irish writers such as

W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, and most of all, James Joyce, helped to spur interest in Irish English again.

The Irish looked to the United States, "the Land of Youth" for centuries and were among to spread into the colonies. In fact, the indentured Irish servant was familiar in the American South. The Irish were the largest non-English community in the United States in 1790. 4.7 million emigrated to the United States during the nineteenth century. It is hard to find Irish influence on American given their similarities. The Irish were unusually literate immigrants as well. However, the Irish in the United States were largely laborers, servants, or soldiers at first although they provided much of the Roman Catholic Church's leadership in the United States.



Chapter 6, Black on White

Chapter 6, Black on White Summary and Analysis

Linguists are beginning to discover that Black English is not simply lazy or ungrammatical English but something much more than simply a variation of English. This form of English has been widely hated and was the product of the slave trade. Many Black English variants exist, including African pidgins, Caribbean Creole, and the English of the American south, among others. The blacks that were imported across the English-speaking world three hundred and fifty years ago spoke several hundred local languages that merged in transit and when blacks began to mix and intermarry.

The slave trade in Britain was centered in Bristol. Many blacks came together and were distributed there. The English blacks spoke was initially unstable and variable, taking English and African words and mixing them, employing a set of grammar rules derived from one language or another. The black pidgins clearly date back to the mid-sixteenth century. Pidgins arose quickly because tribes were mixed among owners so as to prevent rebellion so blacks immediately needed a way to communicate. The conditions on slave ships were nightmarish and pressured blacks to communicate. West African Pidgin English was probably the first one.

Slave ships that went to the Caribbean with the first whites changed the language of the area entirely creating the Caribbean Creole. Given that the land in the Caribbean consists of all islands, language use varied significantly. Even more diversity was created by the fact that the different European imperial powers owned different islands. Today Caribbean Creole has developed far beyond its roots. In order to find early Black American English, one must travel to the American South, especially South Carolina and Charlestown. Gullah, a dialect still spoken by a quarter of a million blacks, still survives on islands off of South Carolina's coast.

However, the primary form of Black English was formed on Southern plantations. Words and phrases passed from West African to American speech, as four million blacks were in the United States when the Civil War began. Around the time of the Civil war, Black English began to enter into American literature, like in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Huckleberry Finn and the Brer Rabbit stories. When American Blacks were freed, they largely stayed on or near plantations until the North industrialized. It started to change the accent and vocabulary of White Southerners.

While Southern whites early on would not admit it, blacks substantially influenced their modes of speech. In fact, Charles Dickens noted that Southern women often sounded like their black slaves. Southern accents would certainly be different without black influence.

Between the Civil War and the First World War, American Blacks achieved legal equality but returned to a state of poverty almost as bad as slavery. White Southerners wore



down the North who had fought for black liberation. Jim Crow laws significantly restricted blacks and were solidified when the Supreme Court declared "separate, but equal" legal. Blacks then migrated to the North. Black languages and culture started to deeply influence White American speech and life, particularly in music from the jazz and the blues to rock 'n' roll. They produced dances like the cakewalk, jitterbug and break dancing, the modes of speech like cool, heavy and doing your own thing.

In the 1920s and 30s blacks started to live mainly in cities and rose up through providing entertainment. In New York City, a black middle class started to flourish. Black rhythm produced spirituals, ragtime, boogie woogie, jive, rhythm and blues, soul music, and hip hop. A rebellious side of black liberation came together in the 1870s in New Orleans.

Black slang became regular usage in many waves like, "cat," "groovy," "hip," "mellow," "out of this world," "riff," and so on. White musicians would often imitate black words to be "cool," starting with jazz musicians, then rock and roll musicians, and finally, down through white hippies and folk music. British whites were similar. Black English also contained a rhyming quality that can be seen in speeches given by Martin Luther King, Jr. and Muhammad Ali. The authors then discuss the struggle over the debate to recognize Black English.



Chapter 7, Pioneers! O Pioneers!

Chapter 7, Pioneers! O Pioneers! Summary and Analysis

Americans and British people have generally thought that each other's form of English was somehow inferior to their own. This is particularly true of the English. The American Revolution led to a gradual divergence between American and Standard English and Americans deliberately changed some of their language to distinguish themselves. Many of the American Founders invented their own words. Americans were already a polyglot society and had to acknowledge that they would not have a single language although English would be the first language.

In 1828, Daniel Webster produced his famous Webster's dictionary, which was a landmark in separated American English from Standard English. His elementary Blue-Backed American Speller sold eighty million copies during his lifetime. Webster was deeply and explicitly committed to separating American and Standard English. Due to Webster, Americans use "color" instead of "colour" and "defense" instead of "defence." The United States has far fewer regional dialects despite being thirty times the size of the United Kingdom. The North-Easterners tends to elide the "r" sound whereas Southerners often drop "g"s. The US voice is often nasal and possesses a drawl.

Canadians reacted to the Americans as Americans reacted to the English. Many of the Canadians were exiled from American because they were loyalists. The Ontario Loyalists largely defined General Canadian but it ultimately a variant of North American English. Canadians also have widely homogenous accents. Canadians do not have a different grammar but mostly differ in pronunciation and the addition of "eh?" to many sentences. Many Canadians use "zed" instead of the American "zee."

Western Americans first adopted a number of new words, some of which were French due to French influences in the Louisiana Purchase area. They also engaged in a lot of word-making with words like "discombobulate" and "lollapalooza." The Gold Rush also helped to create the West and acquired a number of new words like "pan out" and "bonanza." Cowboy culture, however, developed something of a distinct accent and brought in many Spanish words like "stampede" and "bronco" along with phrases like "long time no see." The Transcontinental Railroad was built out of the the desire to harmonize American speech arose. The railroads also introduced their own phrases and words like "make the grade" and "have the right of way."

The authors next explain how powerful Mark Twain's influence was on American English particularly in his recordings of American English dialects; Abraham Lincoln was also a major influence. Walt Whitman had his own impact through *Leaves of Grass*.

New York City was a locus of new words as it was the place of arrival for most immigrants to the United States. The Irish came in the mid-19th century as did Germans



and Italians who left after the 1848 revolutions and the European Jews who left in the 1880s. Many immigrants did not impact the language as much as they might have as they were eager to integrate. The most distinctive were the seven million Germans who have emigrated since 1776. They lived mostly in the Midwest and brought words like "bummer," "check," and "fresh" to American English. Before the First World War, Germans were popular in American society for their universities, science, and philosophy. However, they quickly became "Huns" after WWI began.

Italians followed the Germans and were originally discriminated against but they had their own influence which was largely limited to food terms like "pizza" and "spaghetti." The Mafia had an inordinate impact due to Hollywood's love affair with it. However, the real power over language came from the three million East and Central European Jews who emigrated between 1880 and 1910 bringing "kosher," "schmooze," and many others. English and Yiddish combined to produce "Get lost!" and "I'm telling you."

World War I brought the English and Americans together and imported words like "barrage" and "convoy," meeting each other despite differing vocabularies. American English became a world language by the end of the war.



Chapter 8, The Echoes of an English Voice

Chapter 8, The Echoes of an English Voice Summary and Analysis

The English, Scots, and Irish took their mother tongue across the globe to Rhodesia, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Falklands, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

The London language called Cockney was often a sign of being low class. It was the speech of a worker in London, although it was not always that way. The "polite pronunciation" became the language of the southern English middle class, whose most distinctive feature is the long "a." The Education Acts of the late-Victorian years stressed "correct English" and isolated the speech of the London working class. Those in poverty in the East End were not much affected which led to the caricature. Cockney therefore began to attract the attention of English writers interested in the working classes. In Cockney, "w" is often exchanged for "v." Cockney speakers tend to love nuance, rhythm, and word play in speech. The authors review a number of other distinctive of Cockney as well.

Cockney survives but has diminished particularly since the East End was largely flattened during World War II. Cockney also borrowed from immigrants in London, such as Jews and Gypsies. The World Wars added words as well. Some Cockney words migrated to Australia as it was a penal colony originally; one distinctive Cockney word the Australians maintain is "mate."

Australian English begins with James Cook sailing the Endeavor to Queensland in 1770. The Aborigines had hundreds of languages and a sophisticated culture but Cook did not realize this initially. A pidgin English started to arise between English settlers and the Aborigine, though most Aborigines steered clear of White settlers and few Aboriginal words entered the English vocabulary.

Australia was nearly empty when the English arrived save for three hundred thousand Aborigines. The flora and fauna of Australia was so different that Australians had to innovate. And initially 87% of Australians were English convicts which had its own effects. The impoverished English in large cities overpopulated cities in England created pressures to engage in crime, and so they were often shipped off to Australia. Thus Australian English preserves many regional words from England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from areas like Wessex and Northumbria.

Australians began to be influenced by American vogue words after awhile and Australian English therefore started to be torn between Standard and American English. Improvisation expanded.



A number of Cockney customs and behaviors survive in Australian and the Irish had an influence as well. But within a generation of colonization's inception, a distinct Australian accent began to emerge. This was due to h-less Londoners and south-easterners and h-ful Irish and Scottish speakers. Many English found Australian particularly beautiful. Due to the lower class nature of most Australians, "good speech" was often held in disrepute and so more distinctions developed.

Australia, despite being the size of Europe, has almost no regional variation of accent. The major distinctions are between Broad Australian, General Australian and Cultivated Australian though the classifications are independent of class and occupation. Often distinctions divide up across the sexes.

Initially, Australian accents were discouraged on radio and television but as the 20th century progressed, this prejudice died down. Recognition of Australian began in the Second World War. National pride came to be reflected in language as was its love of metaphors. In the 1980s Australian English has come to be of interest in other English speaking countries.

New Zealand English is similar to Australian but differs in the way that Canadian and American English differ. Many New Zealanders believe they speak better English. New Zealand English is distinct. It is also a younger country and has always been a free colony. Most settlers were Scots or urban working-class English. The accents of New Zealanders are slightly closer to the British and they are still attached to British English in a way that Australian English is not.

The denial of Afrikaans in South Africa sparked an explosive riot in June 1976. Afrikaner authorities had decided to force schoolchildren to learn some subjects in Afrikaans rather than English. Blacks saw this as an outrageous imposition. The political reality that developed out of the strong legal segregation in South Africa gave us the word "apartheid." English-speaking South Africans have coexisted with Afrikaner Dutch since the seventeenth century and much cross fertilization has occurred. English in today's South Africa is spoken by a minority and is somewhat out of fashion though it was not so a hundred years ago when imperial rule throughout Africa made English a widely spoken language particularly when Afrikaners were briefly forced to speak it. Despite this, English is associated with freedom and rebellion today.



Chapter 9, The New Englishes

Chapter 9, The New Englishes Summary and Analysis

All the English dialects still have an admiration for the "highest" British accents. Languages always break up and evolve but English has been somewhat well-maintained. However, the most significant pressure for English to evolve is in areas where English is spoken as a majority second language. Jamaica offers the distinctly different English accent of all.

Jamaican English is almost unintelligible to other English speakers but the authors believe it is a harbinger of Englishes to come in other parts of the world. Many famous Jamaicans have made great achievements for the language, however, such as Bob Marley. The international power of English keeps Jamaican from deviating too much however. Standard English is still associated with money and success. Jamaican has also spread to areas in Toronto, New York, and London where many Jamaicans live.

English plays a different role in Africa with its hundreds of competing languages. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania speak Ki-Swahili as the lingua franca but English is the main language of secondary education. English has official status in Sierra Leone, Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria though a pidgin English is effectively the lingua franca. In Sierra Leone, a Creole has become Krio, a language in itself which includes elements of Portuguese, French and Yoruba, though 80 percent of it comes from English.

Seventy million people speak English in India than in Britain and the accents range from "Oxbridge" pronunciations to obscure pidgins in the streets. English is the de facto language of official life in virtually every sphere. It continues to have substantial power. In some states it is taught as a second language at every stage of education. The English have controlled at least part of India since 1600 when the East India Company established outposts there. English missionaries helped the language to spread but bilingualism began in earnest in 1835. A new policy of English education was proposed by historian Thomas Macaulay and imposed. English-speaking universities were set up across England. India gave many words back such as guru and cummerbund.

The Raj created a largely bilingual society and every level of gradation between the most educated English to the least exists. Indian English has some distinctive features however where unique words are added and new combinations of words are introduced. Idioms are often literally translated and there are distinctive stylistic elements. Many third world students who find studying in the United States or Britain too expensive will learn Indian English at school in India.

The Far East in the Pacific has been learning English steadily and in part their economic miracle is based on the American English of high-tech industries and for automobile and scientific research. Singapore has developed a preference for Standard English

although it now has a recognizable accent of its own called "Singlish." However, the use of Singlish has divided Singapore.

The authors believe that English will continue to flourish at two levels where there is an International Standard level and a localized alternative. The first will change as a whole but local alternatives will engage in rapid flux. Spanish and Chinese will probably increasingly influence English as well.

Epilogue, Next Year's Words

Epilogue, Next Year's Words Summary and Analysis

The future of Standard and American English is unclear. Many British people are concerned that English is degenerating and becoming more long-winded. Some blame this on the vast number of new people using the language and an increasing philosophy of relativism. Some fear jargon in particular. Arguments are often made to standardize English but they do not always have the best motives. Grammar gurus are becoming increasingly authoritarian particularly with respect to bilingualism. Linguistic conservatives and radicals will always battle one another.

English at the end of the 20th century is much like it was in the sixteenth century. New words and uses are being created very quickly to describe new inventions and experiences. Often in-groups modify English to create their own codes. Many sub-genres are being deliberately created as a result such as surf-speak or Valley Girl, Preppy Talk, and so on. School systems will make a big difference to subgroup evolution. Tourism will likely have an impact as well. Many English face the challenge of only knowing their own language.

The English language cannot be controlled by legislation or remade by committees. It has its own momentum and laws. Language is society's mirror and English is not an exception. English serves different purposes in different areas where it is spoken.

Characters

The English

The English people are the primary characters of importance in the history of the English language. The English people are thought to have originated as descendants of the Anglo-Saxons and related tribes that migrated to Great Britain after the Romans withdrew from Britain. They later mingled with migrants and conquerors like the Vikings between the 8th and 11th centuries and the Norman-French several centuries later.

The English people are only one of several populations that make up the United Kingdom, which includes three groups of Celtic origin. They are the Scots, the Welsh, and the Irish. The British people are also not the same as the English people, as British identity includes Irish, Welsh, and Scottish. The first people that could be called English were those united in the 10th century in 937 by Athelstan of Wessex.

English identity developed significantly under Norman rule, when most elites were Norman and spoke French, whereas the people still spoke Old English that increasingly became Middle English. By the Elizabethan age, the English developed a nearly modern version of English. Around this same time, the English people began to migrate across the world as the British Empire was created and expanded. They ended up taking their language and culture to Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, although English people are scattered all over the world. It is estimated today that there are ninety million descendants of the original English people.

The Americans

The idea of an American is necessarily a pure construction. There were Native Americans who inhabited the United States prior to European immigration. While Americans are sometimes thought of as first English-speaking people with multiple nationalities always comprised the American identity. Most Americans have become a nationality separate from the particular ethnicity of Americans. The reason that the American people are the second major group of importance in The Story of English is because English is the national language of the United States and has been the overwhelmingly dominant language of all the many peoples that comprise the United States.

American English was indistinguishable from Standard English in the early colonial period as many immigrants were first-generation. However, American English quickly began to change for a number of reasons. The United States is geographically distant from Great Britain, which made linguistic deviation inevitable. Secondly, as an ethnically diverse nation, the United States developed a wide range of new vocabulary particularly from German, French, Irish, American Indian, African, Jewish, Italian, and Spanish immigrants.



Few regional variations in accent have developed in the United States, although there are distinctive Southern, New England, Northern, and Mid-Western accents. By and large, American English is distinguished from Standard English by a flat rather than a long a and a general brassier tone that is closer to the front of the mouth. While Americans differ in many ways from the English in their own version of English, the two languages still remain fairly close.

The Angles, Saxons and Jutes

These are the three Germanic tribes who migrated to the British Isles after the Romans withdrew. They formed the linguistic and ethnic basis of the English people and the English language.

Celts, Romans, Christians, Vikings, Normans

Besides the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, these groups all had important impacts on the English language but were not foundational factors in the formation of English, and were just responsible in altering and changing it.

The Scots

The Guid Scots were the peoples of Northern England with their own distinct variety of English that in many ways held over forms of English speech from previous ages. The Scottish accent was once very thick but has substantially diminished in the last several centuries.

The Irish

The Irish originally spoke Gaelic although after eight or so conquests by the English, the English and Gaelic languages began to merge. English became the dominant language in Ireland with some important changes.

Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson, Mark Twain, Daniel Webster

All of these men had huge impacts on the English language. Shakespeare added innumerable words, Johnson produced the first substantial English language dictionary, Mark Twain recorded many American dialects in writing for the first time, and Daniel Webster wrote the important American dictionary of the same name.



Black English Speakers

Black English speakers across the world have developed particularly unique accents and methods of speaking English. In the United States, blacks have driven linguistic change in American English particularly with respect to popular culture.

Australians

Once largely a group of prisoners, the Australians have developed their unique and often thought to be sonorous accent along with a number of new words partly driven by the need to describe Australia's unique flora and fauna.

Robert McCrum, William Cran and Robert MacNeil

The authors of *The Story of English*, they admire English greatly. They predict that in the future, world English will be dominated by an international standard English that combines American and English elements and includes a wide range of unstable and fluctuating localized English varieties, dialects, and pidgins.



Objects/Places

The English Language

The subject of the book, the English language formed around fifteen hundred years ago when the Romans left Celtic Briton followed by the arrival of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes.

England

This is the country of origin of the English language.

Scotland

This is the country north of England with its own unique vocabulary and dialect that has considerably waned over the last several centuries.

Ireland

This is the island to the west of England whose language and accent formed from the combination of Gaelic and English to form Irish English.

The United States

This is the set of former British colonies where an enormous number of accents, vocabularies, and languages merged to form the several varieties of American English.

Canada

This is the set of former British colonies north of the United States. Canadian English is similar to American English and displays little regional diversity.

Australia

This is the former British penal colony that deliberately formed its own dialect in response to being exiles from British society.



New Zealand

This is the country west of Australia that was not settled mostly by criminals with an accent distinct but often not distinguishably distinct from Australian.

London

This is the major English city and the center of much development of English. English accents are often stratified by class where Standard of The Queen's English was used for the upper class and Cockney was used by the lower classes.

The Slave Trade

The British slave trade brought blacks who spoke hundreds of languages to the United States and who then generated the distinctive elements of Black English.

The British Empire

The British Empire expanded each reach across the world between the 16th and 20th centuries and spread the use of English throughout the world.

Dictionaries

Dictionaries are an important element in expanded English usage and standardizing the speaking and learning of English.

Class Distinctions

Accents and dialects are often built around distinctions between classes and even races and religions. The authors give several examples of this in the book with respect to different English accents.

Pidgins

Proto-languages formed from the mixing of two linguistic cultures. There are numerous English pidgins around the world.

Cockney

This is the London accent associated with the working class.

Vocabulary

English has the largest vocabulary of any language in the world and shows a particularly adaptability to adopting words from any language or culture at any time.

Phonetics

The major varieties of English are largely distinguished by their phonetic elements, such as the distinction between the American flat-a and the Upper Class English long-a.

Writing

Important writers like Shakespeare and Mark Twain significant developed English.

Linguistic Evolution

The authors constantly emphasize that the evolution of languages is impossible to control.

Themes

The History of English

The most important group of people relevant to the making of English are the English themselves. The authors of the book focus most of their energies on the development of English in England not only from the inception of the language but in its contemporary manifestations. The authors buy into a particular theory of the development of the English language, which attributes its evolution to "three invasions and a cultural revolution" of life in the area known as present day English. Thus, the history of the English language and the English people are deeply tied.

Historically, the authors track English to the Celts, the first inhabitants of the British Isles and who spoke Gaelic before English even existed. Celtic culture continues to exist among the Welsh, some of whom even speak modern Celtic tongues. In 55 B.C. Julius Caesar conquered England and over the next four centuries, the Celtic language was somewhat Romanized.

When the Roman Empire collapsed, a series of Germanic tribes migrated to England, particularly the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. The Anglo-Saxons, as they came to be called, almost completely overwhelmed the native Britons. For several hundred years the culture and language of the Anglo-Saxons expanded and Old English developed. It was also heavily influenced by Viking conquerors in England between the 8th and 11th centuries. Christianity also came to England, which brought in a wide range of Latin and Greek words and modes of speech.

Middle English developed starting with the Norman Conquest of England in 1066. Due to French rule, the English language was transformed, developing significantly closer to what can be understood as a modern English tongue. The Elizabethan Age brought Middle English to its more modern form, which the authors track in some detail.

From the Elizabethan Age onwards, the most familiar contours of modern English have been formed though subsequent technological developments.

The Varieties of English

Most of The Story of English is spent documented the many variants of English. The authors claim that there are difficulties dividing English into accents and dialects as many variants are more distinct than accents but less distinct than dialects. Many variants of English are easily intelligible to others although they have different vocabularies and idioms rather than merely distinct accents. Consequently, they build the varieties of English around the original English ethnic groups and then the areas that the British Empire colonized and finally, through the way that English is spoken around the world.



The first major tongue of English that the authors discuss is the Guid Scots Tongue or the variant of English spoken largely in Scotland. this variant has tapered off from an ancient Gaelic tongue. Next comes the analysis of Irish English, which is an explicit combination of English and Gaelic although Gaelic elements have diminished over the centuries. The following chapter discusses the many English variants spoken by blacks, particularly American and Caribbean blacks. American blacks have contributed in a major way to 19th and 20th century English, particularly in the South and Caribbean blacks employ some more distinctly English variations of the language.

Chapter 7 discusses the many variations of English in the United States but emphasize regional similarities. American English is distinguished from Standard English in a number of ways. Chapter 8 covers the development of Englishes in Australia and New Zealand and Chapter 9 reviews the various Englishes spoken in many of the post-British Empire nations like South Africa and India.

The Uniqueness and Adaptability of English

The authors begin The Story of English by marking out some of the features of English that distinguish it from other languages. First, English has far more vocabulary words than any other language in the world. It has shown an ability to acquire and maintain words from any number of languages from the most ancient, ranging from Celtic, Latin, and Greek to Medieval languages such as the Viking and Norman languages to American languages including German, French, African, and Spanish. It has had the most important dictionary makers in history, particularly Johnson in England and Webster in the United States. It has also shown a tendency to be standardized and streamlined overtime despite its constant flux and growth.

From the formation of the British Empire on, English has spread throughout the world. When it was true that "the sun never sets on the British Empire," English was already a global language and this has never ceased to be true since then. English has proven its ability to adapt and survive in from Canada to Belize, from Australia to South Africa and in Singapore, India and Jamaica.

English has also become the international language of diplomacy, as it is the primary language of the United States, the international language of commerce and multinational corporations as well as the international language of science. Furthermore, in the 20th century as the United States completely dominated international popular culture, English has become the language of world music, literature, and especially movies.

Style

Perspective

Robert McCrum, William Cran and Robert MacNeil, the authors of *The Story of English*, are professional journalists and writers who composed *The Story of English* to explain the current variations in English in their developments for popular consumption. *The Story of English* became an international best seller as a result. The authors apologize for not writing a more scholarly book at the outset, and in fact, the authors are not experts in the English language on the whole. Nonetheless, the perspective the authors bring to the book is one of deep admiration for the language.

The authors begin the book focused on generating a general outline of the variations in the English language. They explain how widespread and influential the English has become, how it is the international language of science, commerce, and diplomacy and how unique it is in containing the most words of any language in the world and having come together from such a wide range of influences. They express particular admiration for the ability of English to survive. Numerous periods of war such as the Viking conquests and the Norman Conquest could easily have made the language disappear. They also are clearly impressed by the great English lexicographers and writers who added so much to the language.

If the authors have any biases, it is their clearly bias toward English. Most of the focus in the book is on the history of England specifically and presents the story of English as having always been and currently the story of British English with substantially less focus on American or other forms of the English language.

Tone

The tone of *The Story of English* combines both the authors' best attempt at objectivity with a clear element of excitement and admiration. The authors begin the book with a general introductory chapter that has a strong tone of admiration. The explanation of English's power, adaptability, and influence show that the authors are impressed with their native language. The authors clearly admire the various peoples who gave rise to the various "Englishes."

The authors are also a bit apologetic in tone for their inability to go into the detail they would like and the fact that they have to split English into types rather than some more intuitive division like dialects or accents. The problem is that the variations of English are not distinct enough to qualify as dialects but too distinct to be characterized as mere accents or emphases.

The authors attempt a voice of objectivity however, and are successful. Almost the entire book consists of extremely detailed histories of English variants like Scottish and Australian. The authors introduce new vocabulary terms along the way. The authors



often discuss phonetic differences and influences from other cultures. The tone in these sections is busy, focused, and detailed, displaying how the authors are eager to list as much detail as they can.

There are also tones of pride littered throughout the book. The authors are not only excited and admiring but are proud of the language that they speak. This tone not only comes out at the beginning but at the end of the book as well.

Structure

The Story of English has an introduction, epilogue, and nine chapters. The structure of the book consists of a general introductory chapter, two historical chapters, and seven remaining chapters that review different English variants. The introduction explains the authors' goal in writing the book and explains what is so impressive about the English language in general.

Chapter 1 tells the story of English as it works today. They impress with the statement that the Voyager I spacecraft, which contains greetings to potential extraterrestrials, contains a plate written in English. The human race presents itself to other potential species primarily with the English language. They explain how English was standardized in England and the United States and how influential it has become.

Chapter 2 explains how English originated from the original Gaelic-speaking Celts and their conquest by the Romans to the migration of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, the Viking conquests, and the Norman conquest, all the way down to the present day. Chapter 3 explains how Elizabethan English was standardized and how it spread along with the British Empire.

Chapter 4 covers the history of the Scottish variant of English, the Guid Scots Tongue. Chapter 5, the Irish Question, covers the history of the Ireland and the Irish tongue. Chapter 6, Black on White covers the contributions of American, African, and Caribbean blacks to the English language. Chapter 7 explains the uniqueness of American English and Chapter 8 explains the development of English in Australia and New Zealand. Chapter 9 talks about English in various countries throughout the world influenced by the British Empire and the United States, whereas the Epilogue explains how the authors think English will develop in the future.



Quotes

"We each of us possess, in a great or less degree, what the Germans call 'speech-feeling,' a sense of what is worthy of adoption and what should be avoided and condemned. This in almost all of us is an instinctive process...We know, for instance, that it is now wrong to say 'much' rather than 'many thanks'...We say a picture was 'hung', but a murderer was 'hanged', often, perhaps, without being conscious that we made the distinction...Grammarians can help this corporate will by registering its decrees and extending its analogies; but they fight against it in vain" (Introduction, pg.12-13.)

"It has become the language of the planet, the first truly global language" (Chapter 1, 19.)

"The year the Anglo-Saxons first crossed the sea to the former Roman province of Britannia, in AD 450, the odds against English becoming a world language were about a million to one. It was then an obscure sub-branch of the Germanic family of languages and not even native to the British Isles..." (Chapter 1, 48.)

"The making of English is the story of three invasions and a cultural revolution" (Chapter 2, 51.)

"Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558 at the age of twenty-five.... James I ... died in 1625. During their reigns, about seventy years, the English language achieved a richness and vitality of expression that even contemporaries marveled at" (Chapter 3, 91.)

"In the end, American English was to be influenced by these and many other peoples, in a series of vital blood transfusions" (Chapter 3, 125.)

"Scots is one of the oldest, richest and most interesting varieties of English, with a pedigree that dates back to the Anglo-Saxon invasions of the sixth and seventh centuries" (Chapter 4, 127.)

"In England, as we have seen, the Anglo-Saxons and the Celts hardly mixed. In Ireland, the strange and sometimes tragic fusion of their two languages has made a culture, spoken and written, that is one of the glories of the English language." (Chapter 5, 163.)

"Yet [Black English] remains controversial even within the Black community. For some, it is an authentic means of self-expression for Black English speakers throughout America and the world. For others, who prefer the norms of Standard English, Black English represents the disadvantaged past, an obstacle to advancement, something better unlearned, denied or forgotten" (Chapter 6, 195.)

"The age of English languages was dawning" (Chapter 7, 269)



"In the next one hundred years, the English, the Scots and the Irish were to take their mother tongue to some of the furthest places on earth: to New Zealand, to the Cape colony in Southern Africa, to the country then known as Rhodesia, to India, the imperial jewel, to the island fortress of Singapore, to Hong Kong and the China Station, and to the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic" (Chapter 8, 271.)

"Our own view, based on observation throughout the English-speaking world, is that, given a world of satellites, televisions and telephones, English will probably continue to flourish at two quite distinct levels: International Standard and Local Alternative" (Chapter 9, 340.)

"As long as there are Democrats and Republicans, Tories and Socialists (or whatever), linguistic conservatives and radicals will go on firing at each other across the water" (Epilogue, 347.)

"Language is a city, to the building of which every human being brought a stone" (Epilogue, 351.)

Topics for Discussion

What are the superlative properties of English or what does this language have "the most of" in comparison to other world languages? Give three examples.

Explain the "three invasions and a cultural revolution" theory of the evolution of English that the authors advance in Chapter 2.

Why did English flourish and expand during the Elizabethan Age? Give two examples and explain in detail.

What is distinctive about the Guid Scots tongue? From where did it originate?

What is distinctive about Irish English? How did it develop?

Give three important differences between American and Standard English. List three developments in the United States that led to general developments.

Why is English the world's dominant language today? What did the British contribute? What did the Americans contribute?

Write two brief paragraphs, one using American slang, vocabulary, and grammar and the other using Cockney.

What do the authors predict about the future of the evolution of English? To what extent have they been proven correct by the past twenty-five years? Do you think this prediction will be correct in the future?