History of English

The following outline presents some of the major influences and developments in the history of English.\(^1\) In plain-type text are found the major landmarks in the non-linguistic history of English — that is, factors such as conquest of English speakers by speakers of other languages; intellectual attitudes towards languages; social, religious, and political changes, and so on, which affect how a language changes. English has been influenced by other languages throughout its development and has borrowed a great many vocabulary items, samples of which are listed in the appropriate sections. In bold-face type are found some of the major landmarks in the linguistic history of English — that is, the actual changes in the language itself, some of which have been influenced by outside events. (Latest revision 2002)

Non-linguistic history: linguistic history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Language Influence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-English</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grimm's Law</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Settlement of British Isles by Celts</td>
<td>Celtic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>{London, Dover, Avon, Cornwall}</td>
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<tr>
<td>55 B.C.</td>
<td>Beginning of Roman raids</td>
<td>Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>43 A.D.</td>
<td>Roman occupation of 'Brittania'</td>
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<tr>
<td>early 5th C.</td>
<td>Romans leave British isles</td>
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<tr>
<td>449</td>
<td>Germanic tribes defeat Celts</td>
<td>Germanic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Old English (450-1100)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of /s/</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adoption of /z/</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i-umlaut</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Allophonic variants [f]/[v], [θ]/[ð], [s]/[z], [ŋ]/[n] become phonemic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vowel reduction and subsequent loss of final [a] in unstressed syllables</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lead to loss of case endings, more rigid word order, greater use of prepositions</td>
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</table>

\(^1\) This section owes its essence to Language Files, file 131, The Ohio State University, third edition, 1985.
c. 600  England is converted to Christianity
       Latin borrowings
       {abbot, altar, cap, chalice, hymn, relic,
       sock, beet, pear, oyster, cook, lily,
       rue, school, verse, meter}

c. 750  Beowulf composed writing (only
       extant manuscript written c. 1000)
9th-11th C. Invasions by Scandinavians
       Scandinavian borrowings
       {birth, sky, trust, take, skirt, disk,
       dike; simplified pronoun system}
1066  Battle of Hastings - Norman Conquest
       large French influence
       {court, battle, nation, enemy, crime,
       justice, beef, pork, veal, mutton,
       charity, miracle}

Middle English (1100-1450)

c. 1200  Normandy and England are separated

1300-1600 The Great Vowel Shift
       Simplification of the initial consonant
       clusters:
       [kn] > [n] 'knee'
       [wr] > [r] 'wrong'
       Voicing of voiceless sonorants:
       [hl] > [l] 'hlaf' > 'loaf'
       [hr] > [r] 'hring' > 'ring'

13th-14th C. Growing sense of English-ness
1340-1400 Chaucer
Early Modern English (1450-1700)

1476  First English book published; spelling is eventually standardized
       Latin and Greek
1564-1616Shakespeare  borrowings and neologisms
       {anachronism, allusion, atmosphere, capsule, dexterity, halo, agile, external, insane, adapt, erupt, exist, extinguish}

Modern English (1700-present)

16th-19th C. Imperialism  borrowings from various languages
       development of American English
19th-20th C. scientific and industrial revolution  technical vocabularies

The Old English i-umlaut

Old English change Modern English

fo:t-i>  fe:t  feet
lu:s-i>  li:s  lice
mann-i>  menn  men
da:li>  dæ:l  deal
full-tan>  fill  fill
bru:dt>  bri:d  bride
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old English</th>
<th>Modern English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kɪn</td>
<td>chin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gɪl̥dən</td>
<td>yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kɪl̥</td>
<td>chill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gæ̥r</td>
<td>year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skæ̥p</td>
<td>sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skɪr</td>
<td>shire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skɪl̥d</td>
<td>shield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ske̥kan</td>
<td>shake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nɔsu</td>
<td>nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wul̥fas</td>
<td>wolves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bɑθ̥tan</td>
<td>bathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knḁfa</td>
<td>knave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Middle English to Modern English

Middle
Modern

English

1. hü{s} 'house'
2. wif 'wife'
3. stån 'stone'
4. hê 'he'
5. hrôf 'roof'
6. sön 'soon'
7. hwît 'white'
8. kwên 'queen'
9. nâm 'name'
10. bôn 'bone'
11. bâk 'bake'
12. hlûd 'loud'
13. lik 'like'
14. wîd 'white'
15. ur 'our'
16. ūs 'thousand'
17. bêô 'bee'
18. bêt 'beet'
19. môn 'moon'
20. dô 'do'
21. dêôd 'deed'
22. tôêçôn 'teach'
23. hôl 'whole'
24. ōk 'oak'
25. mûd 'made'
3. Using the chart(s) above as guides, determine what the following Old English words would be in modern English. Involves I-umlaut and the Great Vowel Shift.

gōs __________ goose

- gōs - i __________________________

wīf __________________________

hūs __________________________

lūs __________________________

lūs - i __________________________

mūs __________________________

mūs - i __________________________

full - fæn __________________________

lēaf __________________________

fōt - i __________________________

brūdī __________________________

mann - i __________________________