

The English language

- 1 SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Where are you most likely to see or hear English words in your country?
- Read the information about the history of English. Are the sentences true or false? Write T or F.
 - Britain's first inhabitants spoke Latin. ____
 - Old English arrived from Norway and Denmark. ____
 - The Vikings invaded parts of Britain between about 800 and 1000 AD. ____
 - After 1066, most powerful and important people in Britain spoke French. ____
 - Over half of all English words come from French and Latin. ____
- Read the information again and answer the questions.
 - Where did the Saxons come from?
 - What language did the Romans bring?
 - Where did the Celtic speakers go after the Saxons arrived?
 - What language did the Vikings speak?
 - After 1066, which language did most ordinary people speak?
 - Which very common English word came from Celtic?
 - What percentage of English words come from Old English and Norse?
- 3.23** Listen to an interview about English as a global language. Which one of these topics do they not mention?
 - The future of English
 - The number of English speakers
 - How English became a global language
 - The influence of technology
 - Foreign words in English
 - The effect of English on other languages
- 3.23** Listen again. What is the significance of these numbers and dates?

1 the 18th and 19th centuries	5 1.5 billion
2 1945	6 half a million
3 55%	7 one hundred years from now
4 335 million	
- 6 SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Ask and answer the questions.
 - What are the benefits of being able to speak English for people in your country?
 - Does your language have words borrowed from English and other languages? Give examples.

Origins of English words



1 Before the arrival of the Romans in the first century AD, the people of Britain spoke **Celtic languages**, similar to modern Welsh. Very few Celtic words came into English. But one very common one did: *dad*.

2 In 43 AD, the Romans arrive, bringing **Latin** with them.

3 **Old English** arrives in the 4th and 5th centuries AD, with Saxons from North Germany and Holland. The Saxon invaders pushed the Celtic speakers to the west and north.

4 In the 9th century AD, Vikings invade northern and eastern England from Norway and Denmark. Many very common English words come from their language, **Norse**.

5 In 1066, William the Conqueror and the Normans invade. Their language, **French**, becomes the language of the aristocracy, the church and the government, while the ordinary people continue to speak English. But many French words come into English.

Words for meats, e.g. *beef* and *mutton*, are French, but the words for the animals are Old English: *cow* and *sheep*. That's because the farmers who looked after the animals spoke Old English, while the rich Normans, who ate the meat, spoke French.

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