



According to the Encyclopedia Britannica the English language itself really took off with the invasion of Britain during the 5th century. Three Germanic tribes, the Jutes, Saxons and Angles were seeking new lands to conquer, and crossed over from the North Sea. It must be noted that the English language we know and study through various English language courses today had yet to be created as the inhabitants of Britain spoke various dialect of the Celtic language.

During the invasion, the native Britons were driven north and west into lands we now refer to as Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. The word England and English originated from the Old English word Engla-land, literally meaning “the land of the Angles” where they spoke English.

Old English can be subdivided into the following:

- **Prehistoric or Primitive (5th to 7th Century)** – available literature or documentation referencing this period is not available aside from limited examples of Anglo-Saxon runes;
- **Early Old English (7th to 10th Century)** – this period contains some of the earliest documented evidence of the English language, showcasing notable authors and poets like Cynewulf and Aldhelm who were leading figures in the world of Anglo-Saxon literature.
- **Late Old English (10th to 11th Century)** – can be considered the final phase of the Old English language which was brought about by the Norman invasion of England. This period ended with the consequential evolution of the English language towards Early Middle English.

While the Norsemen and their English counterparts were able to comprehend one another in a manner of speaking, the Norsemen's inability to pronounce the endings of various words ultimately resulted in the loss of inflectional endings.

If this were a few hundred years ago, and we were in medieval Britain, could we have imagined that a speech defect would bring about the amazing changes modern history is now looking back on? Something to ponder...

<https://www.oxfordinternationalenglish.com/a-brief-history-of-the-english-language/>