



MAPLE RIDGE
MUSEUM

& COMMUNITY ARCHIVES



H

**History
Analysis**

Etymology

What is Etymology?

A Few Important Definitions

Etymology (n.) - The study of the origins of words and how their meanings change over time. A discipline under the umbrella of linguistics.

Linguistics (n.) - The scientific study of languages and their structures. Includes many fields of study.

Loan word (n.) - A word taken from another language that undergoes little or no change. Ex. "*café*" in French to "*cafe*" in English.

Language change (n.) - The phenomenon by which languages change over time.

Derivation (n.) - The process of creating new words from previous word. Ex. loneliness from the root word "lonely."

Compounding (n.) - The process of creating new words by putting together two or more other words. Ex. "bookstore" which is made up of the words "book" and "store."

Semantic Change (n.) - The process where the meaning of words change over time. Ex. "gay" used to mean "joyous" but it now means "homosexual."

How Is Etymology Studied?

Etymology is studied using a number of different methods including: using and analyzing old texts, analyzing different dialects of the same language, comparing one language to other related languages and analyzing semantic change.

Why Learn About Etymology?

Learning about etymology can be a useful reading strategy. It can allow the reader to puzzle out the meanings of new words by finding familiar patterns within them.

A Brief Timeline of English

Match the dates with the events that shaped the English language

- The Battle of Hastings** - This battle led to the Norman conquest of England which in turn led to many French words being loaned into English.
- Angles, Saxons and Jutes arrive in England** - These were the Germanic people who brought their language (which would later become Early English) to England.
- The Vikings Invade** - The Viking invasions led to some standardization of the English language and the borrowing of some Norse words.
- Proto-Germanic was likely spoken** - Proto-Germanic is a reconstructed language that is the hypothetical mother language of English.
- Proto-Indo-European was likely spoken** - This is a reconstructed language that is the hypothetical mother language of most languages spoken in Eurasia.
- The Great Vowel Shift** - This is a series of changes that happened in the pronunciation of English.
- The Romans Leave England** - As the Roman Empire was falling, the Roman Empire retreated from England.
- Shakespeare** - Shakespeare is credited as being the first to record as many as 2000 words. It is likely that he also created many of these words.
- King James' Bible** - The first legal English language bible. Before this, all bibles had to be written in Latin.
- The Royal Society** - The Royal Society is a scientific society that is responsible for the creation of many scientific words found in English.
- English Colonization** - English colonization is responsible for many loan words from languages spoken in the territories they colonized.
- Canterbury Tales** - Canterbury tale is considered to be one of the first works written in Early Modern English.
- The Internet** - With new developments in technology, new words are created to explain it.
- The Gutenberg Press** - This press revolutionized the process of printing. Ultimately, this led to increased literacy and standardization of spelling.
- Webster's Dictionary** - One of the first widely published dictionaries. It contributed to the standardization of spelling in American English.

c. 2500 BCE

c. 500 BCE

c. 410 CE

c. 400-500 CE

c. 700-1000 CE

1066 CE

1387-1400 CE

c. 1400-1700 CE

c. 1440

1564-1616 CE

c. 1583-1914 CE

1611 CE

1660 CE

1828

1983 CE

Almost Synonyms

For each pair of words, decide which ones have French origins and which ones have Germanic origins

There are many cases in the English language where two words that are more or less synonymous will give very different impressions. In many of these cases, the two words will come from different origins. Most words that are considered fancier or more refined have French origins and their synonyms with Germanic or Norse origins will be seem simpler by comparison. This is because early English was almost exclusively spoken by the lower classes and the upper classes spoke French. Over time, the words that the French speaking upper classes used bled into English but they still held the implications the wealth and prestige that is associated with the upper classes.

Synonyms	Norse/Germanic Origin	French Origin
Room/Chamber		
Fraternal/Brotherly		
Cow/Beef		
Sheep/Mutton		
Depart/Leave		
Answer/Respond		
Retain/Keep		
Support/Help		
Power/Strength		
Woods/Forest		
Art/Craft		
Friendly/Amiable		
Enter/Come in		
Buy/Purchase		
Blouse/Shirt		

How Can Etymology Be Used As a Reading Tool?

Words are often made up of some combination of: prefixes, suffixes and roots. Learning to identify common patterns can help to identify the meanings of unfamiliar words . Add slashes (/) between the prefixes, suffixes and roots of the words. Note: Some words may not have all of these features.

1. Disappear

2. Disappearance

3. Revisit

4. Overworked

5. Misinform

6. Devalue

7. Transcribe

8. Antithesis

9. Cooperate

10. Interact

11. Hyperinflation

12. Incompatibility

13. Neocolonialism

14. Subdivision

15. Alteration

16. Reformulation

17. Unavoidable

18. Immaturity

19. Hypothetical

20. Implication