Chapter Four

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The *Domesday Book* (from the OE *dæm* “accounting”) was a list of all the landholders in England compiled in 1085-1086. Some thirteen to fourteen thousand holdings were listed and revealed that the great majority were in the hands of the Normans, who had replaced the original Anglo-Saxon landholders. King William was interested in assessing the tax potential and in documenting landownership. This provided an astonishingly detailed picture of society: how many lords, villagers, cottagers, and slaves and how much land was forest, meadow, pasture and where there were mills and fisheries. The *Domesday Book* reveals that the royal family and the church abbots controlled just over half the land directly. The remainder was held by just under 200 tenants, particularly a dozen or more barons. It was this class that would eventually offer the most opposition of royal prerogative and power (see *Magna Carta, Barons’ Revolt*).

The *Domesday Book* offers excellent testimony to the hierarchy of the feudal system, at the head of which was the king. He granted land to tenants such as the barons to reward them for their service to him in the Conquest. They then granted it to sub-tenants who did the same until we find peasants at the bottom who worked the land of the lords in return for rents. Slaves worked the land but could not hold any on their own.
**Word formation processes** include four basic types with a number of prominent sub-types. The following table illustrates them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>process</th>
<th>combination</th>
<th>deletion</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>composition:</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>undo computer mouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affixation;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compounding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shift or conversion</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>(to) read → (a) read, a shift from verb to noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blending</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>in-fomercial &lt; information commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shortening</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>tech(nology)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Word-formation processes

**Derivation** is one of two processes of **word formation** (the other is **compounding**). Derivation is commonly carried out by means of affixation, adding a prefix or a suffix. This was already the case in OE. Examples: prefixing: *goflub “kill”* (Text 3.1) < *of* “off” + *flub*, the past of *slam “beat”*; suffixing: *softe “softly”* (Text 3.3) < *soft(e) + -e*, the adverbial suffix. A further means of derivation is **ablaut** or vowel change. See also **blending, conversion, shortening, and compounding**.

**Affixational derivations** consist of one or more free morphemes (a word which can stand alone) and at least one bound morpheme (affix). Example: *handyman* < *{hand} + {y} + {man}* , where *{hand}* and *{man}* are free and *{y}* is bound. The following types of affix occur in English:

- **prefixes** come before. Example: *in-coming*
- **suffixes** follow after the free form. Example: *sisterhood*
- **infixed** are rare in English (informal, vulgar or obscene). Example: *three-goddamn-thirty in the morning*
- **combining forms** are bound forms which differs from affixes in tending to be technical (usually from Latin and Greek), e.g. *{bio-} in *bio-degradable*, they may combine with other combining forms without a free morpheme in between.
  Example: *Anglophone*. This is something which prefixes and suffixes cannot do.

**Compounding** is a means of **word formation** in which two independent words (free morphemes) are combined to form a new word. Example: OE *magd-man “virgin, maiden”* literally *maid + person* (History of English, Text 2.1).

**Reduplication** lies between affixation and compounding. In reduplication a word or a part of a word is repeated. Examples: *talk-talk* (or *pidgin* *tak-tak*) or *StE better-shelter*. The effect of reduplication may be an intensification of meaning as with *talk-talk* including plural, repetition, indivisibility, or intensification as with *better-shelter*. 

Shifts aka zero derivation or conversion (also: functional shift; multiple class membership) involve a change in word class (or part of speech) without any formal alteration in the word involved. This became more frequent as English lost its distinctive part-of-speech inflections. Examples: an update (noun < verb); a fun thing (adjective < noun); to smart-bomb (verb < noun). There are also secondary shifts, which are shifts within one word class. Example: the intransitive verb walk in She was walking shifts to transitive in She was walking the dog.

Blends aka telescope or portmanteau words are – like compounds – combinations of two other words, at least one of which has been shortened. They often have a shared element. Examples: motel < motor and motel with shared <t>; or squatter + aristocracy = squatterocracy (see History of English, Table 11.6) without a shared element.

Shortenings consist of initialisms (abbreviations and acronyms), back-formation, clipping, and ellipsis.

Abbreviations (a.k.a. letter words) are the first letters of each of the words in a longer expression which pronounced as a series of letters. Example: BO (< body odor). Abbreviations and acronyms together make up initialisms.

Acronyms (a.k.a. syllable words) are a means of word formation in which the initial letter or letters of a longer expression are used as an independent word. Example: South West Township (of Johannesburg) goes under the acronym, Soweto. Acronyms and abbreviations together make up initialisms.

Back formation is a means of word formation in which a “simpler” word which did not previously exist is derived from a more complex one on the basis of a well-established pattern. Example: edit is a formation backward from editor on the pattern of bake forward to baker.

Clipping is a process in which a part of an original word is removed. Example: mob is a 17th century clipping of Latin mobile vulgus “vacillating crowd.” This includes the following subtypes:

- front-clipping leaves out an initial element. Example: neighborhood > hood.
- back-clipping leaves out a final element. Example: detox < detoxification.
- medial-clipping removes something from the middle. Example: vegan < vegetarian.

Ellipsis refers to a compound part of which is deleted; the remaining part takes on the meaning of the whole. Example: mobile/cell phone > mobile (in BrE) or cell (in AmE).

Multi-word expressions, including fixed expressions consist of more than one word which together form a unit with a meaning which cannot be concluded from the combination of the meanings of each. The major types include, binomials (including doublets) and trinomials, idioms, and phrasal and prepositional verbs. Collocations and proverbs (including cliches
and commonplaces) are often regarded as fixed expressions, but have no real place in word-formation because they are much more the product of syntax than of morphology.

**Binomials (including doublets) and trinomials** are instances in which two or three words are coordinated. The words are usually from the same part of speech and may have overlapping or shared meaning. Example: *pe consuetude and pe custom* (History of English: Text 5.5). Or they may be alliterative. Example: *stif & starc & strong* (Text 4.7). Or they may rhyme. Example: *barryng and garrying* (Text 5.1). ModE bi- or trinomials are often irreversible. Example: the meronyms *book, line, and sinker*. Or they may be a fixed expression. Example from the field of eating: *bacon and eggs*.

**Idioms** are multi-word expressions which are less than a full sentence and are not semantically transparent. Example: *to pull someone’s leg* “to kid someone.” The words do not contribute individually to the meaning, i.e. replacement of *pull* by the synonym *tag* is not possible. Rather, the meaning of the idiom is derived from the whole. Both *pragmatic idioms* and *phrasal verbs* belong to the idioms but are often treated separately.

**Pragmatic idioms** are idioms which are bound to a communication situation such as greeting or leaving-taking, complimenting, or apologizing. Examples (of personal address plus an apology): *My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons* (Witwoud in Congreve’s *Way of the World*: I.iii).

**Phrasal verbs** occur as far back as Old English and are very frequent in ModE. Examples: OE phrasal verb: 7 þæs þyme III niht ridon tæwgen eorlas up “& about three nights afterwards two earls rode up” (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 871). ModE: *There’s a bloke here behind taking down every blessed word you’re saying* (Shaw, Pygmalion: Act I).
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*Magna Carta* was written, as was established custom, in Latin (see text below). It consisted of a list of freedoms recognized by the king. It defined rights under the law and recorded customary practices. Above all, it limited the king’s power, for the first time, though still only symbolically, establishing the rule of law. The short excerpt which follows is only one of sixty-three paragraphs in the *Magna Carta*.


13. And the city of London shall have all its ancient liberties and free customs, as well by land as by water; furthermore, we decree and grant that all other cities, boroughs, towns, and ports shall have all their liberties and free customs.

Neither the signing of the *Magna Carta* in 1215 nor the First Barons’ War (1258-1265), motivated by John’s renunciation of *Magna Carta*, stopped the inflow of French officials that had begun under John and was reinforced under his successor Henry III (1216-1272). See *History of English* 4.1.2.

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**Language and nation** figures as the major criterion in approaching the historical spread of English. National identity and national forms of English have a great deal of saliency. Example: the widely recognized distinction between AmE and BrE. Although IrE is a part of BrE and CanE is a part of AmE, there is reluctance on the part of many to see IrE and CanE as regions of the respective larger types. Furthermore, the standard language, i.e. StE, has been a constant sort of support for movement to consolidate national power (see *Standard English and prescriptivism* and *Literacy, education, and urbanization*).

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**Phonemicization** is the process in which an *allophone* becomes a distinct sound (*phoneme*). Two words with a sound which once existed as two variants are now distinct. Example: With the loss of final /ŋ/ after /ŋ/ in words like *sing* the phoneme /ŋ/ now stands distinct from the /n/ of *sin*. 
Phonotactic features in ME. Phonotactics comprise the rules (i.e. regularities) which describe the possible combination of phonemes in a given language such as the permissible initial consonant clusters /hl-/ /hr-/ /hrw-/, and /hn-/ in OE or contextual variants (allophones) like initial voiceless fricatives (/f, ð, s/) but medial voiced ones (/v, ð, z/), also in OE.

Among the changes which occurred in the ME period a few were the result of borrowing from French. Native phonotactic patterns (excluding the Southwestern dialects which had initial /vc-/ and /sc-/; see History of English 4.5 and 8.2.7.2) did not allow initial voiced fricatives (as mentioned above; see also History of English 2.3.1; 3.3.2; 4.2.1). However, a number of words borrowed from French began with /vc-/ or /zc-/. Examples: village, vice, or victor and zenith (< French anith, zéul, or zodiac (< French zodiaque). Consequently, the potential for the /f-c/ and /s-z/ contrasts was now given, as the two members of each pair were no longer allophonic variants, but now phonemically distinct. Examples (ModE forms): fat-cot, said-zyed.

The gradual loss of many of the initial consonant clusters of OE (as mentioned above) may have brought the phonotactics of ME into closer accord with French, but were hardly due to French language influence.

See also Loss of /h/; open-syllable lengthening.

H-dropping is the loss of /h/. Although /h/ has generally been lost in consonants clusters like /hr-/ and before consonants as in right, it has been retained before vowels. Dropping pre-vocalic /h/ is stereotypically stigmatized as violating the norms of “good English.” Example: Cockney ‘ana fox boun.

Open-Syllable Lengthening is the general lengthening and lowering of vowels in open syllables in the early ME period, esp. in the South. An open syllable is one ending in a vowel. Example (ModE): monosyllabic be or go; polysyllabic later or diner (the <t> of later and the <n> of diner belong to the second syllable). Closed syllables, in contrast, end in a consonant. Examples (ModE): bet or got, polysyllabic latter or dinning. In ME the short /i/ of seek, for example, became a long /i:/, thus lengthening and lowering. Later raising occurred in the framework of the Great Vowel Shift (GVS). In ME the loss of final schwa /a/ led to many of the current spellings in which long vowels or diphthongs contrast with short vowels. Example: short vowel in lat vs. long vowel/diphthong in late.

Vowel change in ME was characterized by the early effects of the *Great Vowel Shift (GVS)* and by *Open Syllable Lengthening*. A further change involved the lengthening of vowels followed by a consonant cluster consisting of /r/, /l/, /n/, or /m/ + voiced consonant. This led to a long /u:/ in words like sound, found, pound, round, etc. and /i/ in find, kind, wind, hind, etc., which then diphthongized in the course of the GVS to /au/ and /ai/. This change did not occur if a cluster of three consonant followed; hence we have *child* and *kind* with /aι/, but *children* and *kindred* with /ι/. This change was, however, uneven, cf. noun *wind* /u:/ but verb *wind* /ai/; noun and verb infinitive *wound* /u:/, but past participle *wound* /au/.


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**Spelling (orthography)** is the conventional means of representing language in the written medium. English uses the Latin *alphabet* for this, but once also used *runes*. The principle of English spelling is – despite its bad reputation, which itself is due largely to a lack of serious *spelling reform* – phonetic. Many of the exceptions are due to *borrowing* or to *sound changes* (see also *archaisms*) which have occurred since spelling was fixed. Examples: &lt;ea&gt; is regularly used for /e/ as in *beet*, but uneven change means that quite a few exceptions exist where the pronunciation is /e/, e.g. *death*, and a few where it is /e/ &lt;great&gt;.

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**Declension**: the set of *case, number, and gender* forms which a noun, a *determiner*, an *adjective*, or a *pronoun* may have. OE had four to five cases, three numbers, three genders. ModE has three cases for the *personal pronouns*, two for the noun, and none for adjectives and determiners. There are now only two number categories.
**Word order change.** In OE the difference to ModE is esp. clear in subordinate clauses, in which there was a clear tendency for the verb to appear at the end of the sentence. Example: *Gif cyning at manes him drinard*, literally “If king at man’s home drinketh” (*History of English Text 2.1, Ælfric’s Laws*, 602 or 603, where all the gif-clauses share this word order pattern). Without doubt, the Norman Conquest had a massive affect on vocabulary, changed patterns of word formation, and altered the phonological structure of the language. However, there is less agreement about its effects on word order and inflection even though there is considerable evidence of change between OE and ME – whatever the grounds for is may have been.

**Word order change in ME:** Throughout the ME period there was an increasing shift from synthetic to analytic structure, that is, from a syntactic system which was highly dependent on inflectional endings with less strictly fixed word order to a system with few endings and highly prescribed word order. The new word order, whose default setting was SVO, led to the gradual abandonment of SOV, which had been frequent in dependent clauses in OE.

In ME there was also a move to greater use of periphrastic verb structures, i.e. ones which depended more on auxiliaries than on mood and tense inflections, and on prepositional phrases in place of case endings. While pronoun objects in OE tended to be pre-verbal, nominal objects were post-verbal in main clauses. Note that only 18% of all noun objects preceded the verb in the early ME *Ormulum*, while 51% of pronoun objects still did (cf. Palmatier 1969: 51, where no distinction is made between main and sub-clauses, qtd in Fischer 1992: 372). Example of a pre-verbal noun object in ME, albeit in a subordinate clause: *taht he Dreding 7 age sette “that he dreed and awe impose”* (*History of English Text 4.5, Admonition from the Ormulum, 2nd half of 12th century*). The noun-pronoun difference is explained as due to lighter weight and *theme-theme* structure: noun phrases are “heavier” and heavier elements tend to come later in the sentence. The loss of inflection is frequently given as one of the motivations for fixed word order and the use of prepositions. Certainly, pronouns, with case marking, could follow the older pattern longer, e.g. *Himm dredde* (ibid.).

Note that OE was, in the matter of word order, organized by discourse structure, which means that elements could be moved to the front of the sentence in order to come into focus. In ME, in contrast, word order is much more strictly determined by syntactic factors and no longer allows the freedom of movement of OE (cf. Fischer 1992: 372ff). *Havelok the Dane* (1295-1310; *Text 4.6 in History of English*) illustrates the continuation of SOV word order in the subordinate clauses, where the lexical verb comes in final position as in *that icht you wile tale “that I want to tell you”*. This is even the case in the two following main clauses which have the verb in final position: *Wo so it wilhe bere... “Whosoever wants to hear it...”* and *The tale is of Havelok imaked “the tale is made/written about Havelok,”* in which the past participle (*imaked*) of the passive comes at the end. On the other hand, the subclause in the final sentence does not use a final verb position: *Whil be was lited, be yede ful nakad “while he was little, he went fully naked”*. What this shows is the variability which word order still had and which could be used to put words at the end of a line for the purposes of rhyme.
One of the consequences of fixed word order may well be the use of singular concord with conjoined subjects, e.g. Whereof supplant and tricherie / Engendered is (Gower: ii.2840f), with a plural (conjoined) subject, but a singular verb. But, as Fischer points out, concord was “to some extent more loosely structured in Middle English than in Present-Day English,” cf. *panne the Mynstrall begyen to don bere mynstrelge everych in bire Instruments* (Mandev. (Tit) 155.16f), with a singular subject *(Mynstrall)* but a plural verb *(begyen)* and plural anaphoric pronouns *(bire, bire)*. The stricter usage of ModE usage often results from the pronouncements of 16th and 17th century grammarians (Fischer 1992: 364).

A further result of more fixed word order was the loss of dative subjects as the ME period proceeded. In the sentence *Him is lever* literally: “to/to for him is preferable” a dummy subject is added (cf. ModE *it is preferable to him*) on the model of *pe kinge* (dative) *is lever, where pe kinge is re-interpreted as nominative. From this we get ModE *The king/He prefers*, even though numerous “dative” predicates remain, e.g. *it pleases me*.

In the later ME period word order changes continued. Especially remarkable was the gradual move from accusative object before verb, as the more typical OE pattern, to accusative object after the verb, which comes to dominate by the end of the ME period. The frequencies given in Table 5.2 are taken from Fries 1940:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1000</th>
<th>1200</th>
<th>1300</th>
<th>1400</th>
<th>1500</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>before verb</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>1.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after verb</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>98.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Change in verb-object word order (Fries 1940, qtd. in Hopper/Tragott 1993: 60)

The impression given in the table should be relativized inasmuch as the percentages “conceal complex word order adjustments involving differences such as those between pronoun and noun, definite and indefinite NP, heavy and light NP, independent and dependent clause, and so forth” (Hopper / Traagott 1993: 60). Verb second “still operates in Middle English. … By the fifteenth century it was mainly triggered when a *wh*-element or a negative element was the first constituent in the clause” (Fischer 1992: 375). See also *Theme-theme*. 
**Thematic structure, theme-rheme** is the arrangement of information in a sentence or text. What is known or given (= the **topic**) usually comes first and represents the **theme**. What is said about it follows and is **new** (= the **comment**) and is the **rheme**. Example: *Changes in inflectional system [theme] continued to simplify the paradigm [theme]*.

In OE sentence elements could be rearranged with relative ease in order to front what was thematic. As **word order** grew more fixed, movement became more restricted. Nevertheless, a number of ways remained in which an element could be fronted. The following schematic examples may help to make this clear. Line 1 begins with an OE example (*History of English Text 3.1 Angle-Saxon Chronicle. The Invasion of the Vikings in 787*) and is followed by six ModE alternatives, one unmarked and five with focus on the Patient (in the sense of **thematic roles**).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7 bine man sfeolh</th>
<th>fronting</th>
<th>Patient is <em>(bine)</em> marked by accusative case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And they killed him</td>
<td>unmarked (SVO)</td>
<td>Patient <em>(bined)</em> is in object position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And him they killed</td>
<td>fronting</td>
<td>Patient <em>(bined)</em> is marked by left dislocation with stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And be wæt get killed</td>
<td><em>be</em> / <em>get</em> passive</td>
<td>Patient <em>(be)</em> is the subject of the passive sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And they had / get him killed</td>
<td><em>have</em> / <em>get</em> passive</td>
<td>Patient <em>(bined)</em> is the object of <em>have</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was him <em>(that/who)</em> they killed</td>
<td>cleft-sentence</td>
<td>Patient <em>(bined)</em> is the focus of copula <em>be</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What they did to him was kill him</td>
<td>pseudo-cleft sentence</td>
<td>Patient <em>(bined)</em> is the object of the preposition to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Structural alternatives in ModE for rearranging sentence elements to change the focus

**Fronting** and **clefting** are treated under **topicalization, topic.** **Passivization** (see also **passive**) is the structure which is perhaps the most frequently used to change the focus and, in this fashion, the functional sentence perspective. In English, the topic of a sentence is usually named at the beginning and what is said (predicated) about it, at the end. The passive allows a direct or an indirect object which is the topic to occupy the initial thematic position and thus helps to realize the desired thematic focus of the sentence. A study of the use of the passive in two journal papers on astrophysics confirms the validity of this principle. In addition, however, the same study offers three further explanations of the use or non-use of the passive: (1) Standard procedural choices in astrophysics research are reported in the passive while unique procedures chosen by the authors of the articles are reported in the active (with the subject *we*). (2) Previous work in the same field is reported in the active *we*-form if it is the author’s own and in the passive if it is by others and stands in contrast to the author’s own work; if other work agrees with or supports the author’s research the active is used. (3) Work which the author proposes to do in the future is referred to in the passive (Tarone et al. 1998).

The functionality of the passive is also pointed out by Mehrotra in IndE: The active voice is direct and may be used to a subordinate, as in “I request you to look into the case.” This would be impertinent if used toward someone of higher standing. For one’s boss the passive, as more indirect, would be normal: “You are requested to look into the case” (Mehrotra 1982: 166).


Traditional dialects are geographical and usually rural varieties of English which have been passed down in unbroken tradition since Anglo-Saxon times without undergoing major processes of *koinéization* or *accommodation* to GenE. Examples: the Lowlands Scots dialects.

Reduction of strong verb forms has to do with the leveling of the four ablaut distinctions in the principal parts of strong verbs in OE (see verb classes of OE). The resulting forms may retain three, two, or no different vowels. Examples: *sing-sang-sung,* *sting-stung-stung,* *sit-set-set.* Some verbs vary between regular and irregular principal parts in standard ModE. Examples: *dreamt* and *dreamed,* *dose* and *dosed,* *woke* and *waked.* Non-standard and regional forms may vary from *StE.* The use of past tense forms such as *drunk* in non-standard GenE results from a different choice of form for the past tense, viz. generalization of *drunken* rather than *drank* (see principle parts).

These forms have as a group undergone a high degree of regularization as a large number of OE irregular (or strong) verbs have become ModE regular (or weak) ones (see verb classes of OE and of ModE). Example: *belpen-belpt-belpt-belpen* has become *help-helped-helped* in StE. Of the more than 300 strong verbs of OE only around half are still irregular. The present irregular verbs consist of those with no variation (put-put-put), with two forms (send-send-sent), and those with three distinct forms (draw-drew-drawn). Only the verb *be* has retained four distinct forms (*be-was-were-gone*). While most of the changes in principal parts led to regularization, there are occasional examples of the adoption of irregular forms for a verb which might be expected to be regular. Example: *dig-dug-dug,* a verb presumably borrowed from French (*digger* "to hollow out, to make a dike").
Perfect(ive) aspect includes both perfect and perfective. The perfect is, next to the progressive, one of the major two grammaticalized types of aspect in standard ModE. It is formed with the auxiliary have + past participle and is aspectually distinct from the simple past. Example: I haven’t seen her (up to now) vs. I didn’t see her (in the past).

In OE, in AAVE, and in some creoles perfective aspect refers to a completed action. Example: OE {ge-} as in gefordran “enter,” which is used for a more “complete” action than fordon “go” (History of English Text 2.3, The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 9th century). This and other prefixes are lexical, and perfective aspect is, consequently, lexical in nature in OE. In AAVE this Ved = completive / perfective, i.e. an eventuality is over (+ resultant state); such aspectual usage is incompatible with states and is also not possible with past adverbs such as yesterday (Green 1998: 47ff). Example: I done promise Miss Sally (History of English Text 10.6, Harris. “Why the Alligator’s Back Is Rough,” 19th century) indicates an already completed action. In Tok Pisin pain is a transitive verb which regularly takes the final syllable {-im}, which marks transitivity, giving it the meaning “search.” When, however, the action of searching is successful (that is, finding), this is marked by having painim followed by “finish,” a “complete aspectual marker,” which in TP is, phonetically, painis (/j/ > /p/; /ʃ/ > /s/). Thus we find here the following pairs:

- painim / painim painis  
  search / find
- boilim / boilim painis  
  boil / sterilize
- promis / promis promis  
  promise / keep a promise (Mühlhäusler 1986: 171)

The perfect form in OE (as opposed to the lexical perfective) was formed with bāwen, which in OE was already a perfect auxiliary. However, it was not the only auxiliary of the perfect; ben was also used, but the former was outsourcing the latter. In Havelok we find both, e.g. Quanne be havede this pleinte made “when he had made this complaint” (134); Quanne be weren alle set “when they were [had] all sat” (l. 162; note that although this is a northern text, where they might be expected, be is used for both “he” and “they”). The original distinction between change-of-state and (some) intransitives with ben and stative with bāwen was not maintained strictly. The loss of ben is sometimes explained by the high functional load of bāten (passive, progressive, perfect) (Fischer 1992: 260ff).

In ME the placement of the past participle at the end was still common and continued until the 16th century. Today speakers still distinguish between I have done it and I have it done. According to Mustanoja the perfect as a “compound tense form is longer and therefore more emphatic than the simple preterite … A more emphatic verb form is desirable for indicating the completion of an action which continues up to the moment of speaking than for expressing an action which clearly belongs to the past” (1960: 504). While speculative, this is not uninteresting. Fischer supports this with the observation that the perfect is more frequent in instructional and colloquial texts (as compared to narrative ones) and occurs mostly in the 1st and 2nd persons. But why this happens precisely in ME is not clear though this might be a part of the general change in Germanic languages from morphological tense/mood/aspect verbal marking to a system with grammaticalized auxiliaries (Fischer 1992: 256ff).

Example of the perfect in ME: Bote the Flemminges, that [fay] in the west side of Wales, habethe y-left here
strange speke and spekeith Saxonylych y-now (Text 5.1, John of Trevisa’s Polychronicon, 1387). The usage seen here is fully congruent with ModE usage: a past happening (“have given up their strange speech”) with current consequences (“they speak Saxon-like now”). Yet Miller reports that the past and the perfect are both possible for recently completed events in modern Scottish English (Miller 2004: 54ff).

In EModE the perfect was still commonly formed with either have or be, the latter with intransitive verbs, esp. ones of movement, and verbs of change of state. Usage was, however, no longer fully consistent as the following shows. Examples: 1 August. At the office all the afternoon, till evening to my chamber; where, God forgive me, I was sorry to hear that Sir W. Pens maid Betty was gone away yesterday, for I was in hopes to have had a bout with her before she had gone, she being very pretty (History of English Text 6.1 Pepys’ Diary, August 1, 1661). The shift to have may have helped distinguish between perfects and passives, cf. ambiguous was grown. Example. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and compliment her with the imputation of an affair with a young fellow, which I carried so far, that I told her the malicious town took notice that she was grown fat of a sudden; and when she lay in of a droopy, persuaded her she was reported to be in labour (History of English Text 6.7 Congreve. The Way of the World, 1700). The context, esp. the human subject makes it clear that this is a perfect and not a passive, but the likelihood of confusion between the two structures cannot be overlooked.

Perfect aspect in present-day non-standard InE is more finely differentiated than in StrE – frequently, but not always as the result of substratum influence. “It may be the case that, as Bliss (1984: 143) has claimed, ‘Southern Hibernian English has precisely the same range of tenses [and aspects] as Irish has, but the forms are built up of English material’...” (Winford 2009: 214). The following types of perfect aspect can be distinguished:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>interpretation</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>indefinite anterior perfect</td>
<td>I never went till it [car race] yet.</td>
<td>experiential perfect but used with the past tense form</td>
<td>standard colloquial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after perfect, aka hot-news perfect</td>
<td>You’re after ruinin’ me.</td>
<td>relatively recent past; modeled on Irish, but word order as in English</td>
<td>stereotypically InE; avoided in educated speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medial-object perfect</td>
<td>I have it forgot. Mary, I have your match made</td>
<td>focus on result; typically dynamic verbs; English and Irish models</td>
<td>recessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in-perfect</td>
<td>they are gone lidle over it. And there was a big ash-tree growing there one time, and it is, it is, it is withered and fade’ away now</td>
<td>intransitive counterpart of preceding used with change of state (did) or motion (come, go, leave); Irish + English models</td>
<td>recessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extended-now perfect</td>
<td>I’m in here about four months. We’re living here seventeen years.</td>
<td>continuative; Irish and English models</td>
<td>standard colloquial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standard have perfect</td>
<td>we haven’t seen one for years</td>
<td>for all of above</td>
<td>more careful, educated usage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Perfect Aspect in InE (Filippula 2004: 74ff; Fitz 2006: 291; Siemund 2004: 405ff; Winford 2009: 2125)
**Grammaticalization** is the process by which originally lexical items diverge into two, one continuing to be lexical, the other taking on a grammatical function while losing its lexical meaning.

Grammaticalization as an approach is (1) diachronic, which implies change, and (2) synchronic, in which syntactic, discourse-pragmatic phenomena are reanalyzed in the basically fluid pattern of language use. Traditional grammar traces the evolution of grammatical forms out of earlier lexical forms. In the process the linguistic units lose in semantic complexity, pragmatic significance, syntactic, and phonetic substance (Heine/Reh 1984: 2, 15). Grammaticalization may include desemanticization, bleaching, and emptying or loss of semantic or pragmatic meaning (ibid.: 4). In this process, a word loses its lexical meaning as it turns into a grammatical marker. Examples: The **going of be going to do something** no longer suggests its one-time lexical meaning of movement. Or: the word HAVE, which, if lexical, means, among other things, “to possess”; when grammaticalized as the auxiliary HAVE, it helps to form the perfect construction, i.e. a condition which a current situation metaphorically possesses.

See 8.2.3.1; also **lexicalization**.

Grammaticalization may involve several of the following steps, though all eleven are seldom found for any one case of grammaticalization (cf. esp. Hopper 1991; Lehmann 1985):

i. layering and coexistence of older and newer forms: newly grammaticalized gotta next to older must or *should*;

ii. divergence - an item splits into a lexical and a (new) grammatical item: **GOT** “have” vs. **GOTTA** “obligation”;

iii. specialization – the variety of formal choices narrows; a smaller number of forms assume more general grammatical meanings: näkt/night, läffe, and , nän/noon were parallel forms, but only nä + st > näkt > not grammaticalized fully (see also **negation**);

iv. **obligatorification**: questions (with few exceptions) have to be formed using auxiliary DO;

v. reanalysis: a phase in which linguistic elements are differently understood than was originally the case. Example: the reassessment of got in a (non-standard) sentence like I *got a bike* as present-tense so that negation with periphrastic *do* is possible: *I don’t* *got a bike*.

vi. coalescence: **got to** → **gotta**;

vii. condensation: **have gotta** → **gotta** (in some dialects);

viii. **persistence** – of traces of the original lexical meanings: two word order variants of the perfect, “has got a lot to do” and “has got to do a lot” coexist;

ix. fixation: no object may come between the **gotta** of obligation and the infinitive;

x. paradigmatization: the movement of **want to** to **wanna** represents the filling of a paradigmatic gap once filled by **WILL**, whose volitional meaning has gradually faded in favor of its predictive, epistemic use (see 8.2.3.1);

xi. de-categorialization: loss of features associated with the larger lexical category as when **GOTTA** no longer participates in most complex verb forms, as with ungrammatical *I will gotta do it*.
Modal auxiliaries are a sub-category of the auxiliary verbs which represents grammaticalized modality.

The main verbs in this class are can, may, must, shall, and will. Although four of the five modal verbs listed are “new” past tenses (could, might, should, and would), but none for must), they do not have non-finite forms, i.e. there is no infinitive, no present, and no past participle. The traditional modals are also characterized by the absence of to before the following infinitive. The semantic criteria for modality are extremely varied but center on the opinion or attitude of the speaker (cf. Lyons 1977: 452; Palmer 1986: 2) or a speaker’s judgment of the likelihood of a proposition being true (Quirk et al. 1985: 219).

Three types are frequently recognized: (1) Deontic for permission and obligation. Example: you may/must stay overnight. (2) Dynamic for ability and volition. Example: She couldn’t/wouldn’t speak French. (3) Epistemic for possibility and probability. Example: They may/must be at home. A fourth type may be emerging: (4) Evidential for hearsay and factual. Example: Language history can be interesting (factual). (See also semi-modals for more on the four types.) Hearsay is not associated with a full modal, but can be expressed by the semi-modals suppose or be said to. Example: Language history is supposed to be interesting. See also double modals.

The development of the modal verb is, from a formal point of view, intimately connected not only with the older Germanic emergence of preterite-present verbs, none of which have the 3rd person singular present tense inflection since the present tense forms were originally past tense (or preterite) forms and thus had no such ending. This lies behind the class of traditional modal auxiliaries may, must, can, will, shall, which do not a 3rd person singular {s}. (Further modals are also recognized, most commonly ought (to), need, dare, and want (to).) More recently the NICE features, which are concerned chiefly with the lack of the use of periphrastic do, have come to apply to all the auxiliaries, that is, the primary auxiliaries, be, have, and do and the modal auxiliaries, but not to lexical verbs:

N - direct Negation (should > shouldn’t)
I - Inversion in questions (I will > Will I?)
C - Code or reduced forms (I may go > so may you, i.e. without repeating the main verb go)
E - Emphatic affirmation (Must we run? Yes, we must) (cf. Coates 1985: 4)
**Negation** can be carried out in a number of ways on the sentence level. Usually, it is the verb which is negated, and negation is expressed by adding the word *not* or its contraction *n’t* to the auxiliary.

Example: *He must be at home* and negated *He must not* (ox: *mustn’t*) *be at home.* If there isn’t any auxiliary, *periphrastic do* is supplied. Example: *She gave me a call* and negated *She did not* (ox: *didn’t*) *give me a call.*

*Not* is the chief marker of negation. Its OE form *nāht* developed out of *nā* “no” + *wīht* “person, thing,” which was originally used together with pre-verbal *ne* “not” to lend it more emphasis. ME example: *But be ne lefte nat* “But he did not leave [off visiting his parishioners]” (Chaucer. *Canterbury Tales,* “Prologue” [Parson], late 14th century, l. 492). As time went by, it was *nāht* which came to express negation while the original negator *ne* weakened phonetically and began to drop out of the language. One consequence of this was that the negative marker *nāht/not* no longer always preceded the verb in ME, as prescribed by the negative-first principle. Example: *His arwas droopped noght* “His arrows [feathers] drooped not” (*Canterbury Tales,* “Prologue,” [Yeoman], late 14th century, l. 107). The adoption of *do* was a way of ensuring that the negator could continue to come before the lexical verb. For with the introduction of *do, not* followed this new auxiliary, yet still preceded the lexical verb, thus preserving the negative-first principle (cf. Mazzon 1994).

Further words with a negative or with a semi-negative or restrictive sense such as, in the first case, *never,* and in the second, *barely, barely, infrequently, only, rarely, seldom* and others carry enough semantic weight for the verb (actually, the auxiliary) to retain second position in the sentence, thus insuring that the lexical verb appears in third position. Example: *We are unskild in the arts of makeing our follys agreeable, nor can we dress up the D— [Devill] so much to advantage, as to make him pass for an angel of light* (W. Byrd. “Letter to Mrs. Jane Pratt Taylor,” 1735). This continues to be the case today (see also *word order*).

The negator *never* was originally a contraction of *ne + ever.* In the regional and traditional dialects *never* is more widely used than in StE. Example (Sam Weller): *I never see one o’ the articles o’ furniter* (History of *English Text 8.3,* Dickens. Sam Weller, 1837). *Never,* in contrast to *not,* does not demand periphrastic *do* (see preceding example), but may be combined with it. Example: *You know I didn’t never play it in my life.* (History of *English Text 10.3,* Larrier. “Three without, Doubled,” non-standard GenE, 1917).

English pidgins and creoles frequently negate the verb by using a pre-verbal negator. Example: Daddy Jack: “Oona no bin see da’B’er’Cater…” “‘ You (plural) no have seen Brother Alligator?’” (History of *English Text 10.6,* Harris. “Why the Alligator’s Back Is Rough,” 1881, l. 17).


**Concord/aka agreement:** a process in which two or more words show their relationship to each other in being marked for the same category such as *number* or *person.* Example: verb concord will be plural
if its subject is plural and singular if the subject is singular. Here we can speak of grammatical (plural) concord, e.g. soldiers are ...); the concord is notional if the meaning, but not the form of the subject is plural as in police are... (see collective nouns). Finally, it is juxtapositional (by closeness) if the part of a multiple subject nearest the verb determines whether the verb should be singular or plural. Example: Either the girls or the boy was there.

Among the many cases of concord which are not strictly grammatical we find the re-analysis of the subjects with plural complex determiners, e.g. A number [singular, grammatically the subject] of employees [the notional subject] have [not has] been dismissed. In ModE speakers draw the line without worrying about consistency in either direction: A row of houses was/ were standing where cows had once grazed. Plural expressions which are viewed as units take singular verbs, cf. $1000 is a lot of money; toast and jelly is my favorite.
Demonstratives together with other specifiers such as the articles belong to the part of speech or word class of determiners. They function as pronouns and as determiners and are the only determiners which mark singular and plural. Example: this-these. Demonstratives are fundamentally deictic, and basically emphatic. Since emphasis may tend to fade over time as seen in the change from demonstrative to definite article (see articles), emphatic this here and that there are a ModE way of re-introducing emphasis.

There was a split in the OE demonstrative paradigm resulting in a definite article (see articles), initially with singular the < OE æt by analogy with the other th- forms and plural tho. A deictic system emerged from the other half of the split, where that (plural tho, later those) took on the meaning of deictic distance in the 12th century. The second of the two deictic determiners was generalized from pis, the nominative and accusative singular of the emphatic OE demonstrative to which the plural adjectival ending –e was added giving us the pair this/these (Lass 1992: 2.9.1.2). The full paradigm of forms appears in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
<th>neuter</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td><em>pes</em></td>
<td><em>pote</em></td>
<td><em>pis</em></td>
<td><em>pæs</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td><em>pīs</em></td>
<td><em>pīswe</em></td>
<td><em>pīs</em></td>
<td><em>pīswe</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dative</td>
<td><em>pīnum</em></td>
<td><em>pīse</em></td>
<td><em>pīnum</em></td>
<td><em>pīnum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td><em>pīne</em></td>
<td><em>pīse</em></td>
<td><em>pīne</em></td>
<td><em>pīs</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td><em>pīs</em></td>
<td><em>-</em></td>
<td><em>pīs/pote</em></td>
<td><em>pīnum</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Demonstrative *this* in OE

In some varieties, we find a three-stage system: this/these (near the speaker), that/those (near the hearer), and yon(d)er (distant from both) which still reflects an earlier contrast. The distinction was not always carefully maintained, and the third member began to fade except in regional and traditional dialects. It is known, of course, to readers of Shakespeare, who are familiar with such lines as But soft! what light through yonder window breaks (Romeo and Juliet II.2) or Yon(d) Cassius has a lean and hungry look (Julius Caesar I.2) (§6.3.3.2).

Demonstrative *that* ("those") occurs in Northern English, but non-standard *them* is more frequent, as it is in non-standard GenE. Example: *them boots* (History of English: Text 11.1). In IrE the demonstrative *them* is used not only attributively as in *them bouses* but also by itself pronominally, e.g. *Them was cornstalks* (Filippula 2004: 93).

Demonstrative pronouns in the English Southwest are differently distinguished. Like StE the system marks close and distant, singular and plural, but also has a further distinction between count and mass nouns. Here pronoun case leveling can still be seen in the now rare use of non-standard *they* for equally
non-standard, but general them, e.g. Well, like think one what’s in there now, her, for killing all they women (Wagner 2004: 164).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>deixis</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>mass</th>
<th>StE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>close</td>
<td>singular</td>
<td>these / thick</td>
<td>this (here)</td>
<td>this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>plural</td>
<td>these (here)</td>
<td></td>
<td>these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distant</td>
<td>singular</td>
<td>thick, thicky (here)</td>
<td>that (there)</td>
<td>that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>plural</td>
<td>they, them there</td>
<td></td>
<td>those</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Demonstratives in Southwest English (from Wagner 2004: 163) (§8.2.7.2)


Articles belong together with other specifiers or determiners such as the demonstratives as one of the parts of speech or word classes of English. Articles are distinguished as definite the and indefinite a/an. (This distinction might be regarded as the realization of a secondary grammatical category, viz. specificity). The former developed out of the OE demonstrative, the latter, out of the unstressed numeral een “one” to a/an. In English pidgins and creoles the indefinite article often appears as one, cf. it a wan naif “there was a knife” (Bickerton 1981: 55). In OE both were marked for case, number, and gender.

The use of a demonstrative before a noun has the effect of emphasizing (and specifying) the following noun. In emphatic speech styles this must have been common usage. From what initially were singular cases speakers would have generalized this usage. In this way the original deictic sense would then have become less prominent and the sense of specification would have been generalized to nouns for which spatial deixis was not prominent, i.e. not just deictic se fis (lit. “that fish”), but also burh bite hanger (“by that hunger”), a much more abstract usage.

The paradigm for the articles in OE are given in the following tables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
<th>neuter</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>te</td>
<td>te</td>
<td>þæt</td>
<td>þæ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>þæ</td>
<td>þæh</td>
<td>þæ</td>
<td>þæna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>þæm</td>
<td>þæh</td>
<td>þæm</td>
<td>þæmu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>þæn</td>
<td>þæn</td>
<td>þæn</td>
<td>þæn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>þæþ</td>
<td>þæþ</td>
<td>þæþ</td>
<td>þæþ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Demonstratives (used as definite articles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
<th>neuter</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>ðæn</td>
<td>ðæn</td>
<td>ðæn</td>
<td>ðæn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>ðæns</td>
<td>ðæns</td>
<td>ðæns</td>
<td>ðæns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>ðænsu</td>
<td>ðænsu</td>
<td>ðænsu</td>
<td>ðænsu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>ðænu</td>
<td>ðænu</td>
<td>ðænu</td>
<td>ðænu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr.</td>
<td>ðænu</td>
<td>ðænu</td>
<td>ðænu</td>
<td>ðænu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Numerals one (used as the indefinite article)

The definite article is more widely used in some varieties of English than in StE. In Northern English vernaculars, reduction as in “farmer “the farmer” may result in loss: the – θ – t – ? – zero when unstressed, and there is some loss of both the definite and the indefinite article there in comparison to StE, cf. I’m bloody champion (B. Hines. Kes. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969, 17).

Personal pronouns (systems of) are a sub-grouping of the pronouns which have a deictic function and indicate the person(s) speaking (1st person); the person(s) spoken to (2nd person); and the person(s) spoken about (3rd person). In English they are marked for case, number, and gender (3rd person singular only). The possessive pronouns and the reflexive pronouns are also differentiated by person. As the comparison of the pronoun systems of English (link) shows, there have been alterations within the system over time and geographical spread. There is a basic stability in the system in the maintenance of the person-distinction (but see second person pronoun usage), but there has also been some loss of number distinctions as well as significant case leveling (see also nominative you and pronoun exchange) and a certain amount of discussion about the use of gender and inclusive / exclusive pronouns.

Standard Southern Middle English personal pronoun system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>nominative</th>
<th>genitive</th>
<th>dative- accusative</th>
<th>reflective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>my, myn</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>my self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>thou</td>
<td>thy, thyn</td>
<td>thee</td>
<td>thy self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd m</td>
<td>he</td>
<td>his(e)</td>
<td>hym</td>
<td>hym self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>hir(e)</td>
<td>here</td>
<td>hir self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>(h)it</td>
<td>his(e)</td>
<td>(h)it</td>
<td>it self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>oure</td>
<td>vs</td>
<td>vs self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>ye</td>
<td>youre</td>
<td>yow</td>
<td>youre self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>hir(e)</td>
<td>hem</td>
<td>hem self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to OE the personal pronouns of Middle English reveal a reduced case system – one with essentially the same distinctions found in modern StE. However, the 2nd person singular continues to exist as a distinct form vis-à-vis the 2nd person plural.

The 3rd person feminine as well as the 3rd person plural (both in the subject case only) have taken on forms phonetically clearly distinct from the other third person pronouns. See History of English 4.2.3.3 and 5.3.1.

Relative pronouns: a sub-grouping of the pronouns divided among other things into ones with personal and with non-personal reference. Examples: personal: who(m); non-personal: which; both: whose, that. In OE the demonstratives s, so, bat could be used as relative pronouns. ModE that goes back to OE þæt, which was indeclinable; who derived from the interrogatory pronoun possibly influenced by French, where qui is both interrogatory and relative.
The Renaissance is the high point of the re-birth of learning in the West, which began with scholasticism. But in contrast to scholasticism the Renaissance was a much broader movement effecting not only intellectual life, but also literature, art, and architecture. Furthermore, it stands for a paradigmatic change in the way first intellectuals and later the well educated looked at the world. The role of religion was to lose its primacy and the individual to become more central. In scientific thought empirical work became increasingly central, which led to a weakening of much traditional thought and authority.

The Renaissance spread north- and westward from Italy, where it had its beginnings in the 15th century or even earlier. As it moved beyond Italy to Northern Europe it contributed to the Reformation. In England the Renaissance is widely associated with the Tudor dynasty as is the Reformation in England. In this History of English the Renaissance is largely parallel to the Early Modern Period. Printing and the use of English for translations of the Bible as well as empirical scientific work as seen in Text 6.5 by Isaac Newton were a part of this.
Phrasal verb (pattern) is a combination of a verb and, most usually, an adverbial particle. Verbs of this sort have increased by both the number which exist and the frequency of occurrence over time.

Examples: drink up, look out. Phrasal verbs did occur in OE, but far less frequently than in ModE.


Old Norse language contact led to the adoption of new phrasal verbs like farenn forp and sedan forp “travel, go” (Blake 1996: 126) and may have helped strengthen a tendency toward the decline of many of the older prefixes and their replacement with phrasal verbs (but see Thim 2008). While some prefixes such as {over} and {under}, as in overwork and underplay, have remained and are, indeed, productive (Schröder 2008), very many disappeared, esp. the once common {ge-, a-, of-} quoted above.

In ModE phrasal verbs are usually subclassified in two groups: (1) phrasal verbs as such and (2) prepositional verbs. The first differ from the second in being either transitive or intransitive and – in the case of transitive verbs – in allowing the phrasal particle to either precede or follow a noun object.

Examples: Intransitive phrasal verb: Hey, look out! The light’s turning red. Transitive phrasal verb with a noun object: Look up the term in a dictionary, or: Look the term up in a dictionary. Transitive phrasal verb with a pronoun object: Look it up (not *Look up it)! Prepositional verbs must be transitive and the prepositional element must precede the object. Example: Look at clouds (not *Look the cloud at!)

See History of English 4.2.1+8.


Scott’s Ivanhoe, a 19th century highly romanticized historical novel, dramatically exploits the theme of the foreign domination of England and points out the cultural distinctions between the manor house with its terms of French origin and the field with its Saxon vocabulary. Examples: Saxon deer, swine, and cow, but French venison, pork, and beef.
Norman and Central French borrowings. French had great influence on English, particularly in the 
ME period. French language contact appeared in two distinct varieties: the French of the Norman 
conquerors and now landholders after 1066; the Central French of Paris and the French monarchy. 
The most significant influence was on vocabulary, but also reinforced or initiated structural 
innovations. Examples: vocabulary: catch (Norman) and chase (Central); pronunciation: the distinction 
between initial /ç/- and /ʃ/-; morphology: the suffix -(es); spelling: <ou> for /ʌ:/; grammar: you 
(sg.) as with French vous.

French cultural ascendancy was a major reason why French was seen as a language of great prestige and 
an object of cultivation, associated as it was with chivalrous society at its best. Starting in the 13th 
century French was used by the educated and in high society more and more as a matter of culture and 
fashion rather than as an economic or political necessity as it had been before. French continued to 
hold this position until well into modern times. In the meantime English has displaced French as the 
international language of cultural ascendancy.

Creolization: the process in which a pidgin becomes a native language. Usually this occurs when 
children are exposed to a pidgin as their primary language. In adopting it they expand its linguistic 
repertory and its domains of use. Example: In many families in urban Papua-New Guinea the parents 
do not share a native language and must rely on Tok Pisin, which is effectively the only language of the 
children, for whom it is now a creole.

Language imposition, shift, loss, and death: the often darker side of the spread of English. The 
association of English with power has led to its imposition on colonial peoples often resulting in 
language shift and the death of indigenous languages. Example: the extinction of numerous American 
Indian languages. Immigrant languages have been subject to loss among immigrants though not to 
language death because of language maintenance in the countries of origin. See generation model
ME literature (in English) was dominated initially by religious and didactic writing. Examples are

Ancrene Riwle (aka Ancro Wisse) (Herefordshire, c. 1230 and the Ornulhun, also religious writing from the 12th century. It is particularly interesting because of the system of spelling adopted in it. Historical writing includes Cursor Mundi and Robert Gloucester’s Chronicle.

ME literature was highly influenced by French traditions of writing as seen in The Owl and the Nightingale (c. 1200), and, indeed, quite a bit of English literature was written in French. However, the move to writing in English grew to a distinct force as time went by. The French traditions led to the virtual abandonment of alliterative poetry (see History of English 5.2, 5.2.1+4, Beowulf and Text 2.3, Sir Gawain, and Piers Plowman). A second important change in the later ME period was the appearance of individual authors such as Chaucer, Langland (see Piers Plowman), Wycliffe (History of English Texts 5.3, 6.3), Barbour (History of English Texts 5.8), Trevisa (History of English Texts 5.1, 5.10), and Bliue Harry (History of English Text 5.11), even though some literature, like for example Sir Gawain does not have an identifiable author. In addition, Sir Gawain represents the important medieval genre of the romance.


The Owl and the Nightingale is a debate poem from the 12th or 13th century. It is written in rhyming couplets of iambic tetrameter, putting it in the French rather than the native English poetic tradition. It consists of 1794 lines. This work is an exchange of recriminations between the two birds, a serious owl and a gay nightingale. Rather than resort to physical violence the two agree to enter into a debate, which itself proceeds along the lines of a medieval scholastic disputation. Consequently, the poem draws on all the rhetorical devices of the times and goes into topics such as music, ethics, marriage and adultery, and much more. The lines quoted in History of English Text 4.8 are from the introduction. See History of English 4.4.

Ancrene Riwle (aka Ancro Wisse) (Herefordshire, c. 1230), which explains religious rule and devotional conduct in eight sections dealing with various aspects of the life of religious sisters, is a sophisticated work and a great example of early ME prose writing.

The Lay of Havelock the Dane is a medieval romance about the legend of the founding of Grimsby in Lincolnshire; it was written in the North Midlands before 1300 and combines the Celtic, English, Danish, and Norman influences in an extremely intricate plot. See the short sample in History of English Text 4.6.

Robert Gloucester’s Chronicle was written in the mid to late 13th century. It described the Barons’ War (1264-1267) in vivid detail, suggesting that the author had witnessed it. It is of interest in the framework of this History of English because of the comments Gloucester makes about the use of English. See History of English 4.1.1 and Text 4.2.

Cursor mundi (c. 1300) is a religious poetic history of the world in octosyllabic couplets running to 30,000 lines and written by an anonymous Northern English writer. See History of English 4.1.2 and Texts 4.3 and 4.9.
The *Ornament* (East Midlands) is an example of religious writing from the late 12th century. It paraphrases the gospels and adds homilies on them. It is particularly interesting because of the system of spelling adopted in it (see *History of English* 4.2.3 and *Text 4.5*).

*Of Arthur and of Merlin* (before 1325) is a ME poem of over 9000 lines, interesting here because of its comments on the relationship between French and English. See *History of English* Text 4.4.

*Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1343-1400). The *Canterbury Tales* are the best known and the best of ME writing. Their author, Chaucer, lived under circumstances (traveling for the king at home and abroad) which allowed him to become acquainted with people from all walks of life, which in turn allowed him to produce a witty and penetrating portrait of English society. In composing the *Tales* he draws on both literary traditions and his own observations. But he avoids sermonizing. By choosing a group of pilgrims he creates a cast of characters which covers all sorts of personalities and vocations. By having them tell stories, he makes fun of human lust, vanity, and foolishness. Only a few of his pilgrims come away unblemished and escape the irony and ridicule he dishes out. See *History of English* 5.4.2 and *Texts 5.2, 5.7a-b*.

*Piers Plowman*, William Langland. *Piers Plowman* is a specifically allegorical religious text written shortly before the *Canterbury Tales*. At least a part of it was by William Langland (c. 1330-?), who wrote and rewrote it between about 1360 and 1387. It does not follow the French custom of rhyme, but continues to rely on alliteration. It has often been brought into connection with Lollardy though Langland seems to have dissociated himself clearly from this movement. In a number of steps (Latin *passus*) the protagonist, Piers Plowman, a humble man, undertakes a quest for truth in a series of dream-visions involving the search for three allegorical characters, Dowel (“Do-Well”), Dobet (“Do-Better”), and Dobest (“Do-Best”). Biblical background can be seen in one of the dreams in which Piers shows Will, the narator, a tree whose fruit he wants to try; this refers to the Garden of Eden. In another dream Will dreams he is in Jerusalem and sees the crucifixion. The following excerpt (also on the book website *Text 5.12*) provides ample opportunity to see the regular use of alliteration (cf. *A Pilgrim’s Progress*, another dream-allegory frequently quoted in *History of English* chap. 6 and *Text 6.11*).

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**Passus I (“Step One”), 146-164**

*FOR truth be tellit that love*

*Is triacle of bene*

May no synne be on him sene · that useth that spine,*

*And alle his werkes be wroughte · with love as him listes;*

*And leerd it Moneys for the lewest thing · and moste like to bene;*

*And also the plente of pees · moste precious of vertues.***

*For Truth tells us that love ·*

*Is the trustiest medicine in Heaven;*

*No sin may be seen on him by whom that spice is used.*

*And all the deeds he pleased to do were done with love.*

*And [he] taught it to Moses as a matchless thing, and most like Heaven,*
And also the plant of peace, most precious of virtues.

For beewe wyghte noughte bolden it; it was so hony of hym-self;
Tyle it haldde of the erthe; yeten his fylle,
And what it hused of this folde; flesche and blode taken,
Was newere luff upon lynde; lighter ther-after,
And portayff and persant; as the paynt of a neede,
That wyghte non armour it lette; no none heigh walkes.

For heaven might not [be able to] hold it, so heavy it seemed,
Till it had with earth alloyed itself.

And when it had of this earth taken flesch and blood,
Never was leaf upon linden lighter thereafter,
And portable and piercing as the point of a needle. (Translated by: E.T. Donaldson)

No armor might obstruct it, nor any high walls. in Robertson, E. and S.H.A. Shepherd

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is an Arthurian romance of unknown authorship. It was composed in the late 14th century and stands like Piers Plowman in the alliterative tradition. The language is that of the northwest Midlands. It consists of 2,530 lines in 101 stanzas. As the excerpt below illustrates (also on the book website as Text 5.13), the text draws on historical antecedents in classical tradition, which was a common practice. The spellings was and bat for was and bat are peculiarities of Gawain.

Sir Gawaine and the Grene Knyght

Fytte the First

I

Hit was Ennis pe arbol, & bi highe kynde,
pat sypen deprede provencis, & pattrowes bcome
Weden of al pe wole in pe west ile.

Fro riche Romnul to Rome richis hym saype,
With gret babbaunce pat burshe be bigge upon first,
& neuesus bit his owne name, as bit now bat;
Ticius (turns) to Tuscan, & tellez begynnes;
Langeberde in Lombardie lyfes up homes;
& fer over pe French flool Felix Bruttus

On many bokkes ful broke Bretayn be sette;
with wynne;

Where were, & wrake, & wonder,
Be tyme bat won pe-inne,
& ef hope bylyse & blunder
Ful skete bat skifteynne

First Section

I

It was Aeneas the noble and his high kindred,
Who afterwards conquered and became patrons
Of well nigh all the wealth of the West Isles,
As soon as rich Romulus turns him to Rome,
With great pride he at once builds that city,
And names it with his own name, which it now has;
Ticius turns to Tuscany, and founds dwellings;
Longobard raises homes in Lombardy;
And far over the French flood Felix Brutus
Establishes Britain joyfully on many broad banks,
with joy;

Where war and waste and wonder
By turns have since dwelt therein,
And often bliss and blunder
Full swiftly have shifted since