

## 1: A Grammar of the English Language by William Cobbett

*William Cobbett () was (in the words of G. K. Chesterton) 'the noblest English example of the noble calling of the agitator'. His radicalism brought him into conflict with the authorities on many occasions, but he reserved a special kind of venom for politicians like Lord Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington, for men of letters like the lexicographer Dr Johnson, and the Fellows of.*

After about fifteen years devoted chiefly to grammatical studies and exercises, during most of which time I had been alternately instructing youth in four different languages, thinking it practicable to effect some improvement upon the manuals which explain our own, I prepared and published, for the use of schools, a duodecimo volume of about three hundred pages; which, upon the presumption that its principles were conformable to the best usage, and well established thereby, I entitled, "The Institutes of English Grammar. With much additional labour, the principles contained in the Institutes of English Grammar, have here been not only reaffirmed and rewritten, but occasionally improved in expression, or amplified in their details. New topics, new definitions, new rules, have also been added; and all parts of the subject have been illustrated by a multiplicity of new examples and exercises, which it has required a long time to amass and arrange. To the main doctrines, also, are here subjoined many new observations and criticisms, which are the results of no inconsiderable reading and reflection. Regarding it as my business and calling, to work out the above-mentioned purpose as circumstances might permit, I have laid no claim to genius, none to infallibility; but I have endeavoured to be accurate, and aspired to be useful; and it is a part of my plan, that the reader of this volume shall never, through my fault, be left in doubt as to the origin of any thing it contains. It is but the duty of an author, to give every needful facility for a fair estimate of his work; and, whatever authority there may be for anonymous copying in works on grammar, the precedent is always bad. The success of other labours, answerable to moderate wishes, has enabled me to pursue this task under favourable circumstances, and with an unselfish, independent aim. Not with vainglorious pride, but with reverent gratitude to God, I acknowledge this advantage, giving thanks for the signal mercy which has upborne me to the long-continued effort. Had the case been otherwise,--had the labours of the school-room been still demanded for my support,--the present large volume would never have appeared. I had desired some leisure for the completing of this design, and to it I scrupled not to sacrifice the profits of my main employment, as soon as it could be done without hazard of adding another chapter to "the Calamities of Authors. That method of teaching, which I conceive to be the best, is also there described. And, in the Grammar itself, there will be found occasional directions concerning the manner of its use. I have hoped to facilitate the study of the English language, not by abridging our grammatical code, or by rejecting the common phraseology [sic--KTH] of its doctrines, but by extending the former, improving the latter, and establishing both;--but still more, by furnishing new illustrations of the subject, and arranging its vast number of particulars in such order that every item may be readily found. An other important purpose, which, in the preparation of this work, has been borne constantly in mind, and judged worthy of very particular attention, was the attempt to settle, so far as the most patient investigation and the fullest exhibition of proofs could do it, the multitudinous and vexatious disputes which have hitherto divided the sentiments of teachers, and made the study of English grammar so uninviting, unsatisfactory, and unprofitable, to the student whose taste demands a reasonable degree of certainty. The mind, like the body, is strengthened by hard exercise: When, after all the trouble we have taken, we merely find anomalies and confusion, we are disgusted with what is so uncongenial: Hence, no doubt, one of the reasons why our language has been so much neglected, and why such scandalous ignorance prevails concerning its nature and history, is its unattractive, disheartening irregularity: If there be any remedy for the neglect and ignorance here spoken of, it must be found in the more effectual teaching of English grammar. They must present themselves to the mind as by intuition, and with the quickness of thought; so as to regulate his language before it proceeds from the lips or the pen. If they come only by tardy recollection, or are called to mind but as contingent afterthoughts, they are altogether too late; and serve merely to mortify the speaker or writer, by reminding him of some deficiency or inaccuracy which there may then be no chance to amend. But

how shall, or can, this readiness be acquired? The student will therefore find, that I have given him something to do, as well as something to learn. But, by the formulæ and directions in this work, he is very carefully shown how to proceed; and, if he be a tolerable reader, it will be his own fault, if he does not, by such aid, become a tolerable grammarian. The chief of these exercises are the parsing of what is right, and the correcting of what is wrong; both, perhaps, equally important; and I have intended to make them equally easy. To any real proficient in grammar, nothing can be more free from embarrassment, than the performance of these exercises, in all ordinary cases. For grammar, rightly learned, institutes in the mind a certain knowledge, or process of thought, concerning the sorts, properties, and relations, of all the words which can be presented in any intelligible sentence; and, with the initiated, a perception of the construction will always instantly follow or accompany a discovery of the sense: Thus it is the great end of grammar, to secure the power of apt expression, by causing the principles on which language is constructed, if not to be constantly present to the mind, at least to pass through it more rapidly than either pen or voice can utter words. And where this power resides, there cannot but be a proportionate degree of critical skill, or of ability to judge of the language of others. Present what you will, grammar directs the mind immediately to a consideration of the sense; and, if properly taught, always creates a discriminating taste which is not less offended by specious absurdities, than by the common blunders of clownishness. But, if parsing and correcting are of so great practical importance as our first mention of them suggests, it may be well to be more explicit here concerning them. The pupil who cannot perform these exercises both accurately and fluently, is not truly prepared to perform them at all, and has no right to expect from any body a patient hearing. A slow and faltering rehearsal of words clearly prescribed, yet neither fairly remembered nor understandingly applied, is as foreign from parsing or correcting, as it is from elegance of diction. Divide and conquer, is the rule here, as in many other cases. Begin with what is simple; practise it till it becomes familiar; and then proceed. No child ever learned to speak by any other process. Hard things become easy by use; and skill is gained by little and little. For parsing is, in no degree, a work of invention; but wholly an exercise, an exertion of skill. It is, indeed, an exercise for all the powers of the mind, except the inventive faculty. Perception, judgement, reasoning, memory, and method, are indispensable to the performance. Nothing is to be guessed at, or devised, or uttered at random. If the learner can but rehearse the necessary definitions and rules, and perform the simplest exercise of judgement in their application, he cannot but perceive what he must say in order to speak the truth in parsing. His principal difficulty is in determining the parts of speech. To lessen this, the trial should commence with easy sentences, also with few of the definitions, and with definitions that have been perfectly learned. This difficulty being surmounted, let him follow the forms prescribed for the several praxes of this work, and he shall not err. The directions and examples given at the head of each exercise, will show him exactly the number, the order, and the proper phraseology, of the particulars to be stated; so that he may go through the explanation with every advantage which a book can afford. There is no hope of him whom these aids will not save from "plunging into chaos. And, as our own language, so far as thought can project itself into the future, seems likely to be coeval with the world, and to spread vastly beyond even its present immeasurable limits, there cannot easily be a nobler object of ambition than to purify and better it. It was some ambition of the kind here meant, awakened by a discovery of the scandalous errors and defects which abound in all our common English grammars, that prompted me to undertake the present work. Now, by the bettering of a language, I understand little else than the extensive teaching of its just forms, according to analogy and the general custom of the most accurate writers. This teaching, however, may well embrace also, or be combined with, an exposition of the various forms of false grammar by which inaccurate writers have corrupted, if not the language itself, at least their own style in it. With respect to our present English, I know not whether any other improvement of it ought to be attempted, than the avoiding and correcting of those improprieties and unwarrantable anomalies by which carelessness, ignorance, and affectation, are ever tending to debase it, and the careful teaching of its true grammar, according to its real importance in education. What further amendment is feasible, or is worthy to engage attention, I will not pretend to say; nor do I claim to have been competent to so much as was manifestly desirable within these limits. But what I lacked in ability, I have endeavored to supply by diligence; and what I could conveniently strengthen by better authority than my own, I have not failed to support with all

that was due, of names, guillemets, and references. Like every other grammarian, I stake my reputation as an author, upon "a certain set of opinions," and a certain manner of exhibiting them, appealing to the good sense of my readers for the correctness of both. All contrary doctrines are unavoidably censured by him who attempts to sustain his own; but, to grammatical censures, no more importance ought to be attached than what belongs to grammar itself. He who cares not to be accurate in the use of language, is inconsistent with himself, if he be offended at verbal criticism; and he who is displeased at finding his opinions rejected, is equally so, if he cannot prove them to be well founded. It is only in cases susceptible of a rule, that any writer can be judged deficient. I can censure no man for differing from me, till I can show him a principle which he ought to follow. According to Lord Kames, the standard of taste, both in arts and in manners, is "the common sense of mankind," a principle founded in the universal conviction of a common nature in our species. See *Elements of Criticism*, Chap, xxv, Vol. If this is so, the doctrine applies to grammar as fully as to any thing about which criticism may concern itself. But, to the discerning student or teacher, I owe an apology for the abundant condescension with which I have noticed in this volume the works of unskillful grammarians. For men of sense have no natural inclination to dwell upon palpable offences against taste and scholarship; nor can they be easily persuaded to approve the course of an author who makes it his business to criticise petty productions. And is it not a fact, that grammatical authorship has sunk so low, that no man who is capable of perceiving its multitudinous errors, dares now stoop to notice the most flagrant of its abuses, or the most successful of its abuses? And, of the quackery which is now so prevalent, what can be a more natural effect, than a very general contempt for the study of grammar? My apology to the reader therefore is, that, as the honour of our language demands correctness in all the manuals prepared for schools, a just exposition of any that are lacking in this point, is a service due to the study of English grammar, if not to the authors in question. The exposition, however, that I have made of the errors and defects of other writers, is only an incident, or underpart, of the scheme of this treatise. Nor have I anywhere exhibited blunders as one that takes delight in their discovery. My main design has been, to prepare a work which, by its own completeness and excellence, should deserve the title here chosen. But, a comprehensive code of false grammar being confessedly the most effectual means of teaching what is true, I have thought fit to supply this portion of my book, not from anonymous or uncertain sources, but from the actual text of other authors, and chiefly from the works of professed grammarians. Campbell, "the violation is much more conspicuous than the observance. It therefore falls in with my main purpose, to present to the public, in the following ample work, a condensed mass of special criticism, such as is not elsewhere to be found in any language. The rudiments of every art and science exhibit at first, to the learner, the appearance of littleness and insignificance. And it is by attending to such reflections, as to a superficial observer would appear minute and hypercritical, that language must be improved, and eloquence perfected.

### 2: What are the origins of the English Language? | Merriam-Webster

*A grammar of the English language () / a facsimile reproduction with introduction by Charlotte Downey and Flor Aarts.*

Any attempt by one author to assert an independent grammatical rule for English was quickly followed by equal avowals by others of truth of the corresponding Latin-based equivalent. In particular, increasing commerce, and the social changes it wrought, created new impetus for grammar writing. Many such grammars were published in various European languages in the second half of the seventeenth century. They spread beyond their erstwhile readership of "learned," privileged, adult males to other groups of native speakers such as women, merchants, tradesmen, and even schoolboys. The first half of the nineteenth century would see the appearance of almost new books on English grammar. Eighteenth-century prescriptive grammars[ edit ] Robert Lowth , Bishop of Oxford and thereafter of London , scholar of Hebrew poetry , and for a short time Oxford Professor of Poetry , was the first and the best known of the widely emulated grammarians of the 18th century. His influence extended, through the works of his students Lindley Murray and William Cobbett , well into the late 19th century. He would also become, among prescriptive grammarians , the target of choice for the criticism meted out by later descriptivist linguists. Lowth wrote against preposition stranding , using "whose" as the possessive case of "which", and using "who" instead of "whom" in certain cases. In America in , the American Rev. It "appears to have been the first English grammar prepared by an American and published in America. Johnson developed his grammars independently of Lowth, but later corresponded and exchanged grammars with him. Eves, Ellenor Fenn aka Mrs. They "together published a total of twelve discrete grammars, with over one hundred documented editions appearing well into the nineteenth century". This enterprise comprised scholars at various universities, their students who were training to be teachers of English, and journals publishing new research. Past and Present, by John Collinson Nesfield , was originally written for the market in colonial India. Grammar of spoken English , by H. Palmer , written for the teaching and study of English as a foreign language , included a full description of the intonation patterns of English. His ideas would inspire the later work of Noam Chomsky and Randolph Quirk. John Hart The opening of the unreasonable writing of our English toung Brief Grammar of English. Orthographie and Congruitie of the Britan Tongue.

### 3: The Grammar of English Grammars/Catalogue - Wikisource, the free online library

*A Grammar of the English Language provides a fascinating snapshot of the language and grammar of the early nineteenth century. It was a controversial book, first published in New York and in London.*

His father, a smallholder and tailor, was well-read and had a decently-sized book collection. One of his friends from Latin school, Niels Matthias Petersen , who went on to be the first professor of Nordic languages at the University of Copenhagen, later remarked that "His short stature, his lively eyes, the ease with which he moved and jumped over tables and benches, his unusual knowledge, and even his quaint peasant dress, attracted the attention of his fellow students". His teacher, Jochum E. By comparing the original work and the translation, he was able to make an Icelandic vocabulary, cross-referencing the Icelandic words with cognates in Danish , Swedish , German , Dutch and English. An interest in orthography also led Rask to develop his own spelling system for Danish that more closely resembled its pronunciation, and it was at this time that he changed the spelling of his last name from "Rasch" to "Rask". University years[ edit ] In , Rask traveled to Copenhagen to continue his studies at the University of Copenhagen , where he stayed in the Regensen dormitory. Although he was not particularly religious and even had expressed serious doubts, he signed up as a student of theology , although in practice he simply studied the grammar of various languages of his own choosing. In , he finished his first book, Introduction to the Icelandic or Old Norse Language, which he published in Danish in It was a didactic grammar based on printed and manuscript materials accumulated by his predecessors in the same field of research. According to Hans Frede Nielsen, it exceeded anything previously published on the topic. There, he studied Sami and Finnish in order to determine whether they were related to the Scandinavian languages. From to , Rask visited Iceland , where he became fluent in Icelandic and familiarized himself with Icelandic literature and customs. In , while still living in Iceland, he finished his prize essay, "Investigation of the Origin of the Old Norse or Icelandic Language" , in which he argued that Old Norse was related to the Germanic languages , including Gothic, to the Baltic and Slavic languages , and even to Classical Latin and Greek, which he grouped together under the label Thracian. He also argued that the Germanic languages were not related to Basque , Greenlandic , Finnish or the Celtic languages on this last instance he was wrong, and he later acknowledged this. The academy accepted the essay but suggested that he could have spent more time comparing Icelandic with Persian and other Asian languages. Because of this, Rask envisioned a trip to India to study Asian languages such as Sanskrit , which was already being taught by philologists such as Franz Bopp and Friedrich Schlegel in Germany. In , after returning from Iceland, Rask worked as a sub-librarian at the University of Copenhagen library. He traveled first to Sweden, where he stayed for two years. The editions were bilingual, with the original Icelandic accompanied by his Swedish translations. In , he left Stockholm for St. In about six weeks, he was said to have mastered enough Persian to be able to converse freely. Translated to English, it reads: In , he was hired as a professor of literary history, and in , he was hired as a librarian at the University of Copenhagen. In , just a year before his death, he was hired as professor of Eastern languages at the University of Copenhagen. He is buried in Assistens Cemetery in Copenhagen. By , he knew twenty-five languages and dialects, and he is believed to have studied twice as many. His numerous philological manuscripts were transferred to the Royal Danish Library at Copenhagen. Rask influenced many later linguists, and in particular Karl Verner carried on his inquiries into comparative and historical linguistics.

## 4: Grammar - Basic English Grammar lessons

*A Grammar of the English Language provides a fascinating snapshot of the language and grammar of the early nineteenth century. It was a controversial book, first published in New York and in London. The author, William Cobbett (), was a champion of the poor who had taught.*

A Journal of Mormon Scripture 25 Three archaic, extra-biblical features that occur quite frequently in the Book of Mormon are not present in the history, even though there was ample opportunity for use. Relevant usage in the History is typical of modern English, in line with independent linguistic studies. This corroborating evidence also indicates that English words were transmitted to Joseph throughout the dictation of the Book of Mormon. In short, the History contains a significant amount of language typical of the early 19th century. Given what linguists know about English usage of this time, these particular usage tendencies would have been expected in this short write-up by Joseph of his personal history. This provides support for the view that English words were actually transmitted in some way to Joseph in , words that he then dictated to scribes. Further studies based on a larger corpus may be carried out in the future. The history has the advantage of being mostly written down by Joseph himself and close in time to when the Book of Mormon was set down in writing, making it a fairly reliable, homogeneous text. Also, some features of the history are archaizing and biblical, such as verbal inflection. These things tend to make a linguistic comparison of the Book of Mormon and the History valid and meaningful. Because Book of Mormon usage is not derivable [Page ]from biblical usage, the nearly 2, instances of positive periphrastic did found throughout the Book of Mormon point to English words being transmitted to Joseph throughout the dictation. The delivery of words mentioned in 2 Nephi The primary evidence, however, resides in the archaic, extra-biblical vocabulary, form, and structure of the Book of Mormon text. More than 1, instances of positive declarative periphrastic did is a prime example of that. The match with 16th-century English usage is present on multiple levels: There are only a dozen clear instances of personal that and personal who: Factors such as the function of the relative pronoun restrictive [defining] versus non-restrictive; object versus subject and the type of antecedent affect the subconscious choice of the relative pronoun. I have limited my analysis to restrictive contexts but have considered various antecedents. On average, the earliest text of the Book of Mormon clearly prefers personal which, followed by personal that, followed by who m. This is very different from the usage found in the History, which contains 10 instances of who m , two instances of personal that, but none of personal which. Significantly, the Book of Mormon does not imitate biblical usage in this regard, although it is definitely archaic. With different antecedents, relative-pronoun usage varies in the scriptural texts. I have cross-verified this by considering usage in two five-million-word corpora [Page ]of the authors Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper. However, it is anything but rare in the Book of Mormon, since we find about instances of it in the text. Yet these are found in great abundance in the earliest text of the Book of Mormon: These same features of the History, by reason of their frequency of occurrence and systematic, categorical nature, constitute the primary evidence found in this account that the Lord did indeed transmit words and their grammatical forms to Joseph Smith for the dictation of the Book of Mormon. This view is established by the following types of manuscript and textual evidence: To these we can now add the following specific evidence: Such a dialect has been presumed to have maintained a host of archaic forms, structures, vocabulary, and systematic usage from centuries before. It does not appear that proponents of this theory have taken into account linguistic studies of the kind referenced in this paper. Specific and general linguistic evidence indicates that the following view of the translation process of the Book of Mormon is an extremely unlikely one: The present-tense verbal system of the earliest text of the Book of Mormon is different from both 19th-century American dialect and biblical usage. In addition, the past-tense system is clearly different from both 19th-century American dialect and biblical usage, and the complex, variable perfect verbal system is as well. So also is verbal complementation, subjunctive marking, auxiliary usage, etc. Archaic, extra-biblical features of the text, however, did not make it difficult to understand for 19th-century English speakers, especially for anyone familiar with archaic King James English, since there was plenty of shared use. But, as

partially outlined, in quite a few important ways the usage of the two scriptural texts is systematically distinct. And the texts are different in many ways that fall short of being called systematic because there is less-than-frequent occurrence of forms and constructions. No Finite Complementation after the Verbs desire and suffer There is one example of the verb desire used with verbal complementation in the History and another example of the verb suffer. The complementation in this case is infinitival, which is typical when the person desiring something and the person doing the desired action are the same. But twice the Book of Mormon employs a that-clause and the auxiliary might in such a case. Consequently, there was only a small chance that Joseph would have used this uncommon construction once in the History, had he been responsible for its usage in the Book of Mormon. The usage in question reads in the infinitive: Verbal complementation after the verb suffer in the Book of Mormon most commonly occurs with a that-clause and the auxiliary should, although there is substantial variation in usage, almost all similar to what is found in the Early Modern English period. In the History finite complementation in this case would have read: They are also typical Book of Mormon usage: Nonstandard Usage of the History Plural was and were The History contains several examples of nonstandard plural was: For example, when archaic language is combined with plural was, an Early Modern English view is more likely. This phraseology combines plural was with archaic personal which a non-restrictive relative pronoun. The extensive variation present in the earliest text points to Early Modern English possibilities, as in the following case: There might be a few examples of past-tense come and become in the earliest text of the Book of Mormon, although all possible candidates may be cases of scribal mix-ups A detailed treatment of the manuscript and first-edition evidence of past-tense come and become will appear shortly in part 3 of Royal Skousen, *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon*. This view ultimately rests on observable, descriptive linguistic facts: Massively represented syntax supports independent instances of archaic, extra-biblical vocabulary. Obsolete lexical usage supports the descriptive linguistic conclusion that there is archaic, extra-biblical syntax and morphology. Primary Sources [Page ] Besides the page images and transcription of the History made available online by the Joseph Smith Papers project, <https://yale.edu/yspp>, bit. It currently contains close to 60, transcribed texts printed between the years to This corpus is precisely searchable, making it a valuable resource for discovering Early Modern English usage. A Journal of Mormon Scripture 14 Here is a current alphabetical listing of past-tense main verbs taken from the History: For most of these verbs we can find Book of Mormon usage of positive declarative periphrastic did. Of course here I properly exclude five negative declarative cases: Mouton de Gruyter, , , , Table 2 , bit. In the 17th century the tide fell fast in affirmative declarative sentences, whereas the use of do became regular in negative and interrogative ones. The modern state of things was practically achieved around Cambridge University Press, , , bit. Brant Gardner, *The Gift and Power*: Greg Kofford Books, , 8. Here the which may refer to maintenance, word, or God. If the which refers to Deity, it would be similar to the following: Cambridge University Press, , â€”, bit. See also, for example, Catherine N. Mouton, , â€”, wrote the following: A Journal of Mormon Scripture 18 In the first, second, and second-to-last items of this list, the Lord is quoted by Joseph Smith. Roger Lass Cambridge, UK: Skousen, *Grammatical Variation*, â€” Book of Mormon spelling control is largely confined to the first instance of proper nouns. A Window on the Ancient World The Earliest Text, ed. A Journal of Mormon Scripture 7 See Skousen, *Grammatical Variation*, â€”, â€” An example of archaic, extra-biblical morphology is the occasional use in the earliest text of the Book of Mormon of the verb form art in nonâ€”second-person singular contexts. We can find this kind of language on Early English Books Online: See the examples scattered throughout Skousen, *Grammatical Variation*, as well as my various articles on the subject in this journal. Greg Kofford Books, , â€” The statements Gardner quotes are basically s conclusions based on non-systematic study of the text. Skousen once had similar, American dialectal views of the text, before systematically studying the earliest text. Gardner, *The Gift and Power*, See Skousen, *Grammatical Variation*, bottom of page. See Skousen, *Grammatical Variation*, â€” There is also an anomalous instance of were: See the final section for information on these primary sources. Many Early Modern English examples similar to these could be provided.

### 5: Catalog Record: A grammar of the English language, in a | Hathi Trust Digital Library

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## 6: The Grammar of English Grammars/Preface - Wikisource, the free online library

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Help What are the origins of the English Language? The history of English is conventionally, if perhaps too neatly, divided into three periods usually called Old English or Anglo-Saxon, Middle English, and Modern English. The earliest period begins with the migration of certain Germanic tribes from the continent to Britain in the fifth century A. By that time Latin, Old Norse the language of the Viking invaders, and especially the Anglo-Norman French of the dominant class after the Norman Conquest in had begun to have a substantial impact on the lexicon, and the well-developed inflectional system that typifies the grammar of Old English had begun to break down. The following brief sample of Old English prose illustrates several of the significant ways in which change has so transformed English that we must look carefully to find points of resemblance between the language of the tenth century and our own. Gregory the Great" and concerns the famous story of how that pope came to send missionaries to convert the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity after seeing Anglo-Saxon boys for sale as slaves in Rome: The sense of it is as follows: Gregory] asked what might be the name of the people from which they came. It was answered to him that they were named Angles. Others, however, have vanished from our lexicon, mostly without a trace, including several that were quite common words in Old English: Other points worth noting include the fact that the pronoun system did not yet, in the late tenth century, include the third person plural forms beginning with th-: Several aspects of word order will also strike the reader as oddly unlike ours. In subordinate clauses the main verb must be last, and so an object or a preposition may precede it in a way no longer natural: Nouns, adjectives, and even the definite article are inflected for gender, case, and number: The system of inflections for verbs was also more elaborate than ours: In addition, there were two imperative forms, four subjunctive forms two for the present tense and two for the preterit, or past, tense, and several others which we no longer have. Even where Modern English retains a particular category of inflection, the form has often changed. Old English present participles ended in -ende not -ing, and past participles bore a prefix ge- as geandwyrd "answered" above. The period of Middle English extends roughly from the twelfth century through the fifteenth. The influence of French and Latin, often by way of French upon the lexicon continued throughout this period, the loss of some inflections and the reduction of others often to a final unstressed vowel spelled -e accelerated, and many changes took place within the phonological and grammatical systems of the language. It is fiction in the guise of travel literature, and, though it purports to be from the pen of an English knight, it was originally written in French and later translated into Latin and English. In this extract Mandeville describes the land of Bactria, apparently not an altogether inviting place, as it is inhabited by "full yuele [evil] folk and full cruell. Moreover, in the original text, there is in addition to thorn another old character ȝ, called "yogh," to make difficulty. It can represent several sounds but here may be thought of as equivalent to y. Even the older spellings including those where u stands for v or vice versa are recognizable, however, and there are only a few words like ipotaynes "hippopotamuses" and sithes "times" that have dropped out of the language altogether. All the same, the number of inflections for nouns, adjectives, and verbs has been greatly reduced, and in most respects Mandeville is closer to Modern than to Old English. The period of Modern English extends from the sixteenth century to our own day. The early part of this period saw the completion of a revolution in the phonology of English that had begun in late Middle English and that effectively redistributed the occurrence of the vowel phonemes to something approximating their present pattern. Other important early developments include the stabilizing effect on spelling of the printing press and the beginning of the direct influence of Latin and, to a lesser extent, Greek on the lexicon. Later, as English came into contact with other cultures around the world and distinctive dialects of English developed in the many areas which Britain had colonized, numerous other languages made small but interesting contributions to our word-stock. The historical aspect of English really encompasses more than the three stages of development just under consideration. English has what might be called a prehistory as well. As we have seen, our language did not simply spring into existence; it was brought from the Continent by Germanic tribes who had no form of writing and hence left no records. Philologists

know that they must have spoken a dialect of a language that can be called West Germanic and that other dialects of this unknown language must have included the ancestors of such languages as German, Dutch, Low German, and Frisian. They know this because of certain systematic similarities which these languages share with each other but do not share with, say, Danish. However, they have had somehow to reconstruct what that language was like in its lexicon, phonology, grammar, and semantics as best they can through sophisticated techniques of comparison developed chiefly during the last century. Similarly, because ancient and modern languages like Old Norse and Gothic or Icelandic and Norwegian have points in common with Old English and Old High German or Dutch and English that they do not share with French or Russian, it is clear that there was an earlier unrecorded language that can be called simply Germanic and that must be reconstructed in the same way. Still earlier, Germanic was just a dialect the ancestors of Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit were three other such dialects of a language conventionally designated Indo-European, and thus English is just one relatively young member of an ancient family of languages whose descendants cover a fair portion of the globe.

### 7: Catalog Record: A grammar of the English language | Hathi Trust Digital Library

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### 8: Rasmus Rask - Wikipedia

*An Elementary Grammar of the English Language: With an Analysis of the Sentence. John Seely Hart. Eldredge & Bro., Appears in books from*

### 9: History of English grammars - Wikipedia

*The history of English grammars begins late in the sixteenth century with the Pamphlet for Grammar by William* [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com) *the early works, the structure and rules of English grammar were based on those of Latin.*

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