

# Language Families

## Extra Background

Certain words from Indo-European, like 'mother', 'night', 'moon', and 'wolf', have survived relatively unchanged in most modern European languages.

## Pupil Guidance

English and German are sibling languages. They share the same parent language — Low German.

## Pupil Guidance

Words that have changed relatively little are usually those that are important to human survival or family relationships.

## Suggested Scaffolding

Encourage students to say the German words aloud if they are struggling to guess what the English words are.

## Extension Idea

Pupils can use the concept of early human beings developing words for the things that are important to them to create a story or poem about what it might have been like to be a Stone, Bronze or Iron Age person.

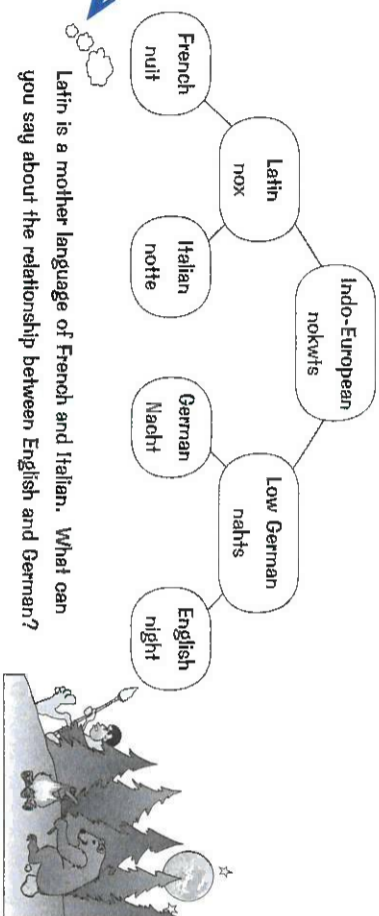
## Section 1 — Words At War

### Language Families



Did you know that languages belong in families? Most of the languages spoken in Europe belong to an extended family called 'Indo-European'. They have developed from an original language spoken over 5,000 years ago.

As the Indo-European people moved around Europe thousands of years ago, their language changed and developed into lots of different languages. Look at this simplified family tree, which shows how languages kept branching off. It shows the word 'night' in the different languages.



Latin is a mother language of French and Italian. What can you say about the relationship between English and German?

Look at the table below. Can you guess what the English words are?

| Indo-European word | French word | German word | English word  |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| nas                | nez         | Nase        | n_o_s_e       |
| pisk               | poisson     | Fisch       | f_i_s_h       |
| wodr               | eau         | Wasser      | w_a_t_e_r     |
| brrehter           | frère       | Bruder      | b_r_o_t_h_e_r |

Do you notice any similarities in the way these words are spelt?

Are the English words in the table above more similar to the French or German words? Why might this be?

The English words are more similar to the German words. I think this is because English and German share the same parent language — Low German.

Think about the family relationships between the languages.

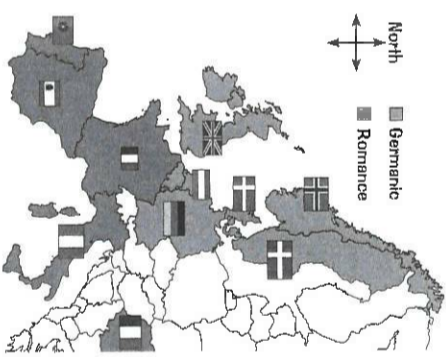
## Language Families — Aims:

- to enable pupils to understand that some languages spoken today developed from Indo-European
- to give pupils an understanding of Germanic and Romance language families.

The family tree shows us that English belongs to the Germanic family of languages. Languages which come from Latin are called Romance languages. The map below shows where these two different families of languages are spoken.

Can you put each language into the correct language family?

- Danish
- Dutch
- English
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Spanish
- Swedish
- German
- Italian



**Germanic Languages**  
English, Dutch, German, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian.

**Romance Languages**  
Italian, French, Romanian, Spanish, Portuguese.

Look at the map above. What do you notice about the location of Germanic languages and Romance languages?

I notice that most of the Germanic languages are in the north and west of Europe, and that most of the Romance languages are in the south of Europe.

What do you think this suggests about early European settlers?

What have you learnt about language families?

I understand that English is a Germanic language, and some of our words are like German words.

## Pupil Guidance

Ask pupils to think about language relationships, looking back at the family tree on page 2.

## Extra Background

An example of another language family can be found in the Celtic languages. This family includes: Welsh, Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Breton (which is spoken in Brittany, Northern France).

## Extension Idea

Ask children to use a translation program on the Internet to look at common words in other languages, and see if they look similar to the equivalent English word.

## Pupil Guidance

Pupils should understand that when people move, languages move too. As early European settlers moved about the continent and settled in different locations, their original languages began to change until they developed into separate languages.

# Word Invasions

## Extra Background

The language spoken by the Saxons before the Norman conquest was called Old English. It was a well-developed language, with its own literature. It was not a less-developed language than Norman French.

## Suggested Scaffolding

If pupils are struggling, the graphics provide a hint for each word.

In this range, the term 'Saxon' has generally been used as shorthand for 'Anglo-Saxon'.

**Extra Background**  
Although Old English was the language of the majority of the population, the people who spoke it did not have political power. The Normans brought in their own language as the language of the ruling class. If you couldn't speak, read, or write it, it would be difficult to have a high-status position.

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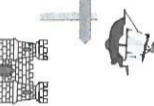
## Word Invasions



Britain has been invaded several times over the centuries, and each group of invaders has influenced the language we speak today. The Romans invaded in 43, then almost 400 years later, the Saxons invaded and settled in Britain. After the Saxons, the Vikings invaded in about 800, and in 1066 the Normans invaded!

The Romans spoke Latin, and some Latin words have survived in English from when the Romans invaded. Can you work out what the English versions of these Latin words are?

portus → p o r t  
strata → s t r e t  
castellum → c a s t l e

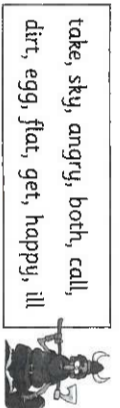


Are these words connected? Do these words tell you anything about the Romans?

The Saxons and the Vikings spoke Germanic languages. Here are some words from the Saxons and the Vikings that we still use today.



and, like, before, bring, can, see, do, find, go, have, I, to



take, sky, angry, both, call, dirt, egg, flat, get, happy, ill

How would you describe these words which have survived into modern English? Think about how they sound, and also what they are used for.

These words are quite short. They are words that we use every day.

Think about how often you use these words.



In 1066, William of Normandy conquered England. William and his army spoke a Romance language called Norman French.

What do you think might happen to the languages when one set of people conquer another? Think about both the language of the conquerors, and the language of the conquered.

The language of the conquered people might die out or change because the conquerors force people to use their own language.

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## Pupil Guidance

Conquering people often force their language on the conquered people. This helps them to maintain power.

## Word Invasions — Aims:

- to give pupils an understanding of how language in England developed as a result of invasions from the Romans to the Normans
- to show pupils how Latin words came into English through Norman French
- to enable pupils to understand why English is still considered a Germanic language.

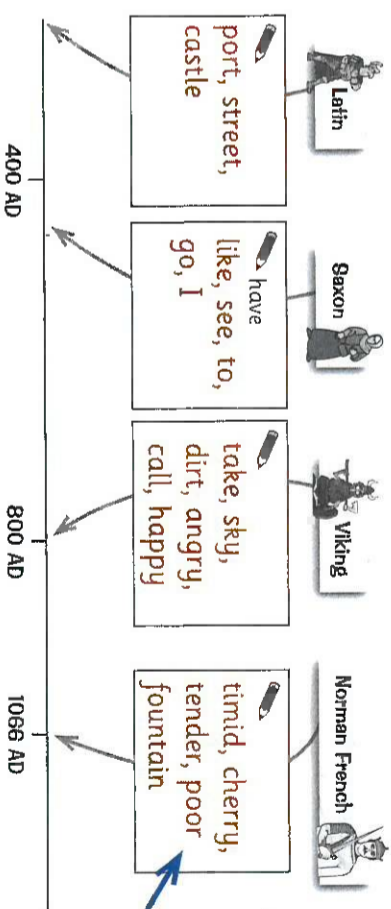
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Norman French descended from Latin, so we can trace how words came from Latin into Norman French, and then into English. Look at the words below. Can you work out what the modern English words are?

| Latin   | Norman French | English   |
|---------|---------------|---|
| fons    | fontaine      | <u>f</u> <u>o</u> <u>u</u> <u>n</u> <u>t</u> <u>a</u> <u>i</u> <u>n</u> |
| pauper  | poure         | <u>p</u> <u>o</u> <u>o</u> <u>r</u>                                     |
| ceruus  | cherise       | <u>c</u> <u>h</u> <u>e</u> <u>r</u> <u>r</u> <u>y</u>                   |
| timidus | timide        | <u>t</u> <u>i</u> <u>m</u> <u>i</u> <u>d</u>                            |
| tener   | tendre        | <u>t</u> <u>e</u> <u>n</u> <u>d</u> <u>e</u> <u>r</u>                   |

These words have travelled a long way — from Rome, to Normandy, then to England. Are you surprised by how much or by how little these words have changed along the way?

Below is a timeline showing when words came to Britain. Fill in the boxes with a few examples from these pages of words which have come into English from the different languages.



English contains lots of words that come from Latin roots. Why do you think it is still called a 'Germanic' language?

Because most of the words that are used everyday are from German roots, either through the Vikings or the Saxons.

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## Pupil Guidance

Pupils might also say that English has descended from Low German which is a Germanic language.

## Pupil Guidance

Pupils may notice that 'pauper' is a word in modern English, meaning 'poor person'. This is an example of a 'doublet', where we have two words in English from the same root. See page 9 for more on doublets. Similarly, 'font' comes from the Latin word 'fons'.

## Suggested Scaffolding

Encourage children to refer back to page 4.

## Pupil Guidance

This is only a selection of the possible answers.

## Extension Idea

Pupils could extend this timeline by adding examples of words that have come into English during recent years.

# William's Words

**Extra Background**  
William of Normandy replaced Saxon landowners with his own men as a reward for their services in battle.

**Suggested Scaffolding**  
Some students might understand this concept more clearly if they are given a different scenario. Imagine that aliens, who speak the language Zorg, have taken over Earth. How would humans react to the alien invaders and their language?

**Extra Background**  
The Norman French word for pig was 'porc'. This was also their word for the meat of a pig. So they'd have said: "There's a 'porc' in the field" and "there's some 'porc' on the plate".

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## William's Words



William of Normandy and his army had a huge impact on the Saxons living in Britain. William's language had a huge impact too.

Look at the scene below between a Norman knight and a Saxon peasant.



"O pausan, auroi ce porc, merci!"  
"OK peasant, I'll have that pig, thanks!"



"Heo waes min swin! Agiefe me min swin!"  
"That was my pig! Give me my pig!"

The knight is speaking Norman French and the Saxon is speaking Old English.

What does it suggest about the relationship between the Normans and the Saxons? Circle the sentences you think apply.

It was hard for the Saxons and Normans to understand each other.

The Saxons and the Normans understood each other's language.

The Normans were more powerful.

The Saxons would need to learn Norman words.

Think about the sentences you have circled above. How would you feel if you were a Saxon and had to speak the language of the people who had conquered you?

I might feel angry because I wouldn't be able to speak my language if I wanted to talk to the people who were in charge.



Within a few years, the Normans had changed England completely. If you were a Saxon, you didn't have much power or much land. If you wanted to be an important person, you had to speak Norman French.



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**Extension Idea**  
Ask pupils what they call a 'cow' or a 'sheep' when it's on the plate ('beef' and 'mutton'). Tell pupils that 'beef' and 'mutton' entered the language from Norman French and that 'cow' and 'sheep' come from Saxon words. What does this suggest about who ate the meat and who looked after the animals?

- William's Words — Aims:**
- to demonstrate to pupils how the Saxon and Norman languages interacted after the Norman conquest
  - to give pupils an understanding of the social implications of the Norman conquest through language.

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The Normans were here to stay, so they needed to find a way to communicate with the Saxons. How do you think the language spoken by the Saxons changed after the Norman invasion?

After the Norman invasion, the Saxons might have started to use more Norman French words.

Sort the modern English words below into two groups — words ordinary people would use every day, and words that would be used to rule a country.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Everyday Words</b></p> <p>milk</p> <p>sky cry</p> <p>dream house</p> <p>meat bread</p> <p>buy run</p> <p>hope apple</p> <p>anger</p> | <p><b>Ruling a Country Words</b></p> <p>convict</p> <p>moral traitor</p> <p>punishment</p> <p>discussion</p> <p>court</p> |
|--|---|

One set of words comes from the Saxons, and the other set comes from the Normans. No prizes for guessing which was which!

How did the English language change once its people had been conquered by the Normans?

It added many words that were used by the Normans to govern the people, but kept Saxon words for daily life.

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**Extra Background**  
Eventually the two languages — Norman French and Old English — combined to form Middle English.

**Pupil Guidance**  
All of the everyday words (except 'anger' and 'apple') are monosyllabic. Most of the Norman words in the right-hand box are polysyllabic.

**Pupil Guidance**  
The 'everyday' words come from Saxon and the 'ruling' words come from Norman French.

**Extra Background**  
The Normans began to use Saxon words as the Normans and Saxons married, and children grew up knowing both languages. Children are important in the process of integrating one language with another. They pick up new words and ideas more quickly than older people.

# Latin Survives

## Extra Background

The Oaths of Strasbourg in 842 were pledges of mutual defence between two half-brothers holding different territories. The oaths they took were in their own languages — Old French, and Old German, because it was considered that everyone should understand what they were promising.

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## Latin Survives



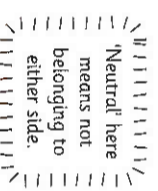
Latin didn't have any native speakers by the 900s — no one spoke it as their first language. But it continued to play an important role in European life. Let's see how!



In the year 842, two kings promised to support each other. One king was from what is now Germany, the other was from what is now France. In front of their armies, they made their promises to each other in each other's language. Their armies made a promise in their own languages. However, the document recording the event was mainly written in Latin.

What does this suggest about Latin at this time? Have a think about each of the statements below. Tick whether you Agree, Disagree or Can't Tell.

|   | Agree                               | Disagree                 | Can't Tell                          |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| "Latin was used for important documents." | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| "Neither king could understand Latin."    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| "Latin was used for writing."             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| "Latin was an international language."    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| "Everyone could speak two languages."     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| "Latin was used as a neutral language."   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |



For centuries, Latin was used throughout Europe as the language of the Church. If you were a Saxon who couldn't understand Latin, how would you feel about having to listen to Latin in church?



I think I would  wonder why I couldn't listen to a service in a language that I understood.

Latin was given a big boost in the 1400s when scholars rediscovered lots of Latin books from Roman times, which hadn't been read for hundreds of years. Suddenly it was new and exciting to speak, write and read Latin. This period is called the Renaissance, which means 'rebirth'.

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**Suggested Scaffolding**  
A different scenario might be helpful if pupils struggle to think of an answer. Imagine that your teachers have decided to teach all their lessons in Latin. How would that make you feel? Do you think you'd still be able to learn as much as you do now?

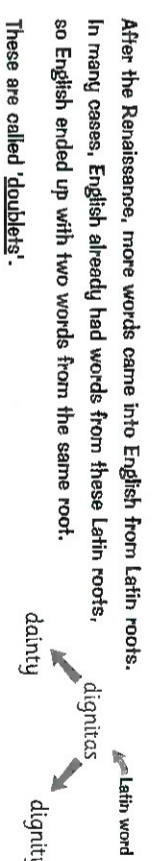
**Extension Idea**  
Research Elizabeth I to investigate how important speaking different languages was in the Renaissance. She spoke and read six!

## Latin Survives — Aims:

- to allow pupils to investigate how Latin remained an important language across Europe, especially for the Church and as a written language
- to demonstrate to pupils the ways in which Latin words continued to flow into English, creating 'doublets'.

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So Latin really came into fashion during the Renaissance. How do you think lots more people reading Latin would have affected the English language?



Below are some more doublets. Can you think of the missing word in each doublet? Look up all the words in a dictionary and write their definitions on the lines.

fragilis → frail      Weak

frāgīlīe → Easily breakable

potio → poison      Something bad for you

pōtīōn → A liquid that can heal, or is magical

securus → sure      When you know something will happen

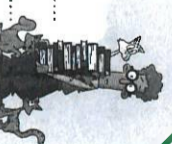
sēcūrē → Safely put away, or kept

These pairs of words mean different things but their meanings are related. Pick one pair of words, and explain in your own words how their meanings are similar.

Frail and fragile are both to do with something not very strong. Poison and potion are both something you might drink. Sure and secure are both to do with being safe.

How did Latin survive in Britain despite having no native speakers?

Latin survived because of the Church, and because it was used by educated people.



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**Extra Background**  
The Renaissance was a time of renewed interest in learning, and many texts in Latin and Greek came into Britain through universities.

**Suggested Scaffolding**  
Encourage pupils to try writing these words out in different sentences — this may help them to distinguish the difference in meaning.

**Pupil Guidance**  
Pupils will give slightly different definitions for these words, which could act as another discussion point on shades of meaning.

**Extension Idea**  
Encourage pupils to link the work on doublets with work on synonyms. They could use a thesaurus to investigate the shades of meaning in words that are similar.

# Words On The Page

## Extra Background

In 1841, 33% of men signing a marriage register in England, and 44% of women, had to make their mark (draw an 'x') instead of write their name, as they couldn't write. Prior to that, even fewer people could read or write. The adult literacy rate now in Britain is about 99%.

## Pupil Guidance

The oral tradition of telling stories and singing ballads lived on while literacy developed alongside it. Eventually the stories were written down.

## Extra Background

Illuminated manuscripts were often handwritten on vellum — a type of parchment made from animal hides. The process of making vellum was time-consuming and expensive. Most printed books were printed on paper.

## Extension Idea

Investigate the lives of Johannes Gutenberg and William Caxton and how their work helped to develop book printing in Europe.

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## Words On The Page



Language isn't just spoken, it can be written down too. But it wasn't always written down. Let's take a look at how words came to be on the page...

Early English poetry was recited or sung, and wasn't written down until about 650. Why might people tell poems or stories rather than write them down? I think they did this because most people couldn't read or write.

Over 1,500 years ago most books were handwritten in Latin. They were written by monks who were living and working within the Church. We call their handwritten documents manuscripts.



There were problems with writing things down by hand. What do you think these problems could be? Tick all that apply — there's even space to write your own if you can think of any!

- People could make mistakes.
- It was boring.
- It took a long time.
- It was expensive.

Making paper and ink might have been difficult.

Not everybody could read and write. Here are some occupations from the 1500s. Circle the ones who probably would have been able to read and write.

- lawyer
- farmer
- scribe
- nobleman
- grocer
- peasant

Why do you think some people didn't need to be able to read or write?

Things began to change when William Caxton introduced the first printing press to England in 1476. William printed books of poetry, stories and works of philosophy — and most of them were printed in English, rather than Latin!



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## Pupil Guidance

People may not have needed to read or write because they could do everything they needed without it.

## Words On The Page — Aims:

- to enable pupils to consider how books developed and who might have owned and used them
- to enable pupils to understand how the invention of printing affected literature and spelling
- to allow pupils to consider how the meanings of words in dictionaries can change over time.

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Think about the things you use and see everyday that have been printed. Make a list of them here.

- posters
- newspapers
- books
- leaflets
- bus timetables
- magazines
- cereal packets
- milk cartons

How do you think the invention of the printing press changed the lives of ordinary people?

I think that the printing press probably didn't affect the lives of illiterate people too much. If you were literate, the printing press meant there were more books available in English.

Before the invention of the printing press, people used to spell words differently all the time. Why do you think the development of the printing press would improve people's spelling?

I think that before the printing press, different writers might spell the same word differently. After the printing press, writers might spell words the same as in printed books, so there would be less variation.

Dictionaries were also printed to help people with their spelling. But sometimes even the dictionary needs updating...

In 1755, a man called Dr Samuel Johnson published 'A Dictionary of the English Language'. This is his primary definition for the word 'keen'.

**keen** *adj* [keɪn, Saxon]  
Sharp; well edged; not blunt.

Do you think this is the most widely used meaning of the word 'keen' nowadays? If not, what do you think the word 'keen' means?

No, I think nowadays the word 'keen' means you are interested in something.

From the 1500s onwards more books were being printed in English. What does this tell you about the importance of the English language?

I think that it means that English was becoming more important as a language, and French / Latin less important.



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## Pupil Guidance

The split in the 1540s from the Roman Catholic Church, whose primary language was Latin, and wars with France also fuelled the rise of the English language.

## Pupil Guidance

Perhaps focus on certain areas in pupils' homes, such as the kitchen, and ask them to list everything they can think of.

## Extra Background

Once the press was developed, printers began to standardise spellings. This was because they set individual letters made of lead into a wooden frame to compose words. It was easier to spell words the same way every time, rather than changing the letters.

## Suggested Scaffolding

Pupils could look up the word 'keen' in the dictionary and discuss its different meanings.

## Pupil Guidance

Words constantly change meanings and drop in and out of use. Pupils might like to ask older people for examples of words they seldom hear now.