

Questions on Jespersen's Growth and Structure
of the English Language.

A. On the Chapter Headings.

1. "The English Language is positively and expressly masculine." Discuss.
2. Give some account of the beginnings of the English Language.
3. What, according to Jespersen, are the special features of Old English?
4. Write a note on the Scandinavian influence on the English language.
5. Characterise the influence exercised by French on the English language.
6. Contrast the influence of French upon English with the influence exercised on English by languages other than French.
7. Estimate the influence of the classical languages (Latin and Greek) on the English Language.
8. Give a brief account, with examples, of the sources of English vocabulary.
9. Outline the main characteristics of English grammar so as to show its development.
10. Give some account of the influence of Shakespeare on the English Language.
11. How far does the language of prose differ from the language of poetry in English?
12. Write notes on:
 - (a) aristocratic and democratic tendencies mirrored in English;
 - (b) the influence of religion on the English Language;
 - (c) the expansion of English.

B. Individual words to be noted.

(i) More important:

church; minster; cheap; handbook; gift; earl; dwell; die; bylaw; saunter; trusteeship; uninhabitable; gossip; wire; jeopardise; caddy; peddle; Yankee; breeches; brethren; kine; helpmate; assassin.

(ii) Less important:

pony; plough; angel; hindrance; transpire; dart; brush; puppy; weird; rhinoceros.

C. University Questions.

a) On particular words:

1. Write notes on: kitchen; dainty; bridal; busk; leal; doubt; kindergarten; Miss; children; surround; scientist; thou, you; alms; bankrupt; egg; Jehu; Mrs. Grundy; heathen; gospel; nostril; admiral; vinolia; navy; since; heart of hearts; doeth; riches; island; mob; the age I live in; its; in spite of John's saying so; he lives in a house of his own; England's wrongs; is being built.
2. Give 3 words borrowed from each of the following: (a) Danish or Scandinavian; (b) Latin before 590 A.D.; (c) Latin between 597 and 800 A.D.; (d) Dutch; (e) Italian; (f) 3 native English words.
3. How has English come to borrow words from languages other than Latin, Greek, Scandinavian, French? Mention 2 words borrowed from each of the following Portuguese, Spanish, Russian, German, Hebrew.
4. How is English related to German, Norwegian, French, Italian? How did Latin words come into English? Explain: mile, wine, Creed, mass, royal, prince, beef, siege.

b) On specific topics:

1. Discuss: (a) The beloved I with a big letter; primitive Aryan; nonce-words and their origins; back formation, with examples; Johnsonese; malapropism; value-stress.
2. Explain the origin of the affixes (a) -ish; (d) - able (c) -ee; the linguistic omnivorousness of English; the spirit infinitive; hybrids; Journalese; -ing; consonant shift.
3. Discuss: quasi-classical words; prudery in language; pronoun of courtesy; speech mixture; poetic words.
4. Write notes on: similar forms for both verb and noun; Saxon words and French synonyms; TH and S in the verb.
5. Explain: the prefix de- ; word shortening; the formation of compounds in English.

S.B. 23.8.56

c) On the Latin Element:

1. Discuss whether the large proportion of Latin words in English has been on the whole beneficial or otherwise to the language. (Ch VI)
2. Give with examples, an account of the influence of Latin on the English vocabulary before 1400 A.D.
3. C. a).4.

d) On the Danish-Scandinavian element:

1. Write on the nature and extent of the Scandinavian element in English, contrasting in with the French element.
2. A. 4.
3. C.a).3.
4. Contrast the influence of the Danish and Norman invasions on English (Ch.IV)

e) On the French element:

1. A. 5.
2. A.6.
3. C.d). 1.
4. C.d).4.

f) On general topics:

1. Give an account of the origin and early history of * English, and state briefly the general characteristics of the language-family to which it belongs. (Ch. II and III).
2. Discuss the nature of the English accent.
3. Starting as one of the purest and least mixed of languages, English has come to be the most composite language in the world. Explain, prove and illustrate.
4. Give a brief account, with examples, of the sources of Modern English.
5. Illustrate by examples how English has grown with the advance of thought.
6. Explain the relation of Old to Modern English.
7. How does Modern English differ from Old English in grammar (Ch.VIII), vocabulary (CH.IV & VII), and idiom?
8. Explain the nature and strength of the foreign element in Old English.

g) On nouns, verbs and pronouns:

1. Write a note on the formation of the genitive in Modern English.
2. What is the Group Genitive? Is there any difference between it and the older genitive?
3. What is the use of inflexions? How can their disappearance from English be explained?
4. Trace the history of the genitive case and of plural forms in the declension of English nouns.
5. Compare and contrast the gender systems in old and Modern English, giving examples.
6. Account for the large loss of inflexions in English. Show what means have been developed to make up for this loss. Give examples (Ch.VIII).
7. Sketch the history and uses of SHALL and WILL.
8. Old English verbs were defective in expressing distinctions of TENSE. Show how this defect has been overcome in Modern English, giving examples.
9. Discuss the traces of the subjunctive mood in Modern English.
10. What is a strong verb? Give examples.
11. What were the defects of the Old English pronominal system? How have these been remedied?