Words With Histories

Trace the people and events behind English words.

7.L.4.e "Learn the history of the English language."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle one example word from each of these four sources: Old English, Old Norse, French, and Latin. Underline a nearby clue that tells when or how each source shaped English.

What Is in an English Word?

1 Imagine opening a lunch bag packed with words instead of food. The word *bread* comes from Old English, the language spoken in England before the Norman Conquest of 1066. Old English grew from the speech of Germanic peoples who settled in Britain beginning in the fifth century. Many common words for home and daily life survived from this early layer. English did not stay sealed, though. As people traveled, fought, traded, and lived beside one another, their languages left new words behind.

2 In the late 700s, Viking raiders began reaching Britain. Later, some Scandinavian settlers made homes there. Their Old Norse met Old English in places where neighbors spoke and worked together. English gained *sky* from Old Norse. In that language, its ancestor meant "cloud." Another turning point came in 1066, when William of Normandy conquered England. His followers used French in government and at court. English speakers gradually adopted French words, including *court*. Everyday speech and the language of powerful rulers became part of the same growing vocabulary.

3 Borrowing did not end with rulers and settlers. During the 1500s and 1600s, scholars in England wrote about mathematics, medicine, and discoveries using many terms drawn from Latin. The word *radius* came from Latin, where it meant "ray" or "spoke." In geometry, it names a line segment from the center of a circle to its edge. English still gains words when new ideas or contacts call for them. A single sentence can hold words from very different times, each with a clue to the history of the people who used it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which passage word comes from the earliest layer of English described here? How did that layer begin in Britain?

2. How did contact between neighbors help bring *sky* into English?

3. What event helped bring French into English? Name the passage word that came from French.

4. What kind of work helped bring Latin terms into English in the 1500s and 1600s? Give the passage example and its meaning in geometry.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label about how English gained words over time. Name at least three language sources in historical order, include one word example from the passage, and end with what this history shows about how languages change.

ANSWER KEY

Words With Histories

GRADE 7 · 7.L.4.e

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle one example word from each of these four sources: Old English, Old Norse, French, and Latin. Underline a nearby clue that tells when or how each source shaped English. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which passage word comes from the earliest layer of English described here? How did that layer begin in Britain?	**Bread comes from Old English, which grew from the speech of Germanic peoples who settled in Britain beginning in the fifth century.**
2	How did contact between neighbors help bring *sky* into English?	**Scandinavian settlers spoke Old Norse alongside Old English speakers, and English gained sky from Old Norse.**
3	What event helped bring French into English? Name the passage word that came from French.	**William of Normandy conquered England in 1066. Court is a French word that English speakers adopted.**
4	What kind of work helped bring Latin terms into English in the 1500s and 1600s? Give the passage example and its meaning in geometry.	**Scholars wrote about subjects such as mathematics and medicine. Radius came from Latin and names a line segment from a circle's center to its edge.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

English began with Old English, which grew from the speech of Germanic settlers in Britain. Later, contact with Scandinavian settlers brought words from Old Norse, including sky. After the Norman Conquest, English adopted French words, and scholars later drew terms from Latin. This history shows that a language changes as people meet and share ideas.

For the museum label, accept any accurate sequence of at least three sources named in the passage. The final sentence should explain language change, not just list words.