

Final Exam

Thursday, December 15
9AM - noon
MB 3.210

Coverage

Comprehensive, with an emphasis on Brinton and Arnovick, chapters 8-13 - for more specific information see the Terms and Concepts to Know (below).

Format

Note: sections of the exam may or may not appear in the order given below. All information given about format and weighting is subject to reasonable change.

1) Definitions (20%)

You will define major terms (as listed below) and provide appropriate examples or illustrations. Approximately half of the terms will be drawn from material in chapters 8-13; the rest will come from earlier in the course. 1-3 sentences each.

2) Middle English transcription (10%)

You will transcribe Middle English words in the phonetic alphabet used in Brinton and Arnovick. Precise formation of phonetic symbols will be required. You will not need to mark primary stress.

3) The Great Vowel Shift (10%)

You will demonstrate understanding of the Great Vowel Shift through a series of short exercises and questions. Among other things, you will need to be able to produce the appropriate modern English vowel given a Middle English vowel and vice versa, and you will need to reason why the Great Vowel Shift may or may not have affected given words. The format will be identical to that found on the Great Vowel Shift Quiz.

4) Historical transcriptions (15%)

You will be given words or phonetic transcriptions of words in Old, Middle, or Modern English and asked to transcribe and spell their cognates in one or more of the other historical varieties of English. Precise formation of phonetic symbols as given in Brinton and Arnovick is required. You will not need to mark stress, but basic knowledge of

historical English stress patterns may be helpful or even essential. There will of course be some variation in the spelling of Old and Middle English words.

The format of this portion of the examination will be similar to that found in the "Spelling and Sound Changes" section of Homework 5.

5) True / false (15%)

You will assess the accuracy of statements about the historical events, terms, concepts, symbols, etc. Approximately half of this section will draw on material from chapters 8-13; the rest will come from the earlier chapters.

6) Essay (30%)

You will compose a substantial essay in response to an open-ended prompt. The prompt will be designed to allow you both to demonstrate your comprehensive understanding of the class materials and to extend that understanding as you write. The best essays will bring together, in sharp focus, a wide range of ideas and form new and probing conclusions about the history of the English language. The mark on the essay will also be dependent upon the quality—the precision and elegance—of the writing.

Terms and Concepts to Know

Aside from the information below, you will be responsible for the fundamental concepts for this course (such as “vowel” and “consonant” or “diachronic change”). You will not be required to know all the terms from the first two study guides, but knowledge of these fundamental concepts will be expected.

At the bottom of this study guide, I have listed the terms from the first two examinations that are fair game.

You will not be required to produce the sound changes of the First Sound Shift or umlaut, or comment specifically on the characteristics of Old English, but passive knowledge of those subjects might be quite helpful.

Transcription

You will be required to transcribe and spell Old, Middle, and Modern English words, basing your transcriptions on information given about those words in other periods (as you did on the grid in Homework 5). In a separate section, you will also have to transcribe Middle English words, basing your transcriptions on their Middle (and, when relevant, Modern) English spelling.

Chapter 8

Terms: Norman Conquest – Anglo-French – diglossic – Hundred Years War – West and East Midland – Kentish – London

- French influence on English
- Latin influence on English
- Middle English dialects
- Middle English orthography
- Middle English consonants and vowels
- Middle English transcription

Chapter 9

Terms: vowel reduction – inflectional leveling – objective – periphrasis – standard dialect

- effects of vowel reduction
- characteristics of Middle English inflection (you do not need to learn inflectional patterns)
- origins of Middle English pronouns
- causes of loss of grammatical gender
- characteristics of Middle English word order and syntax
- from synthetic to analytic language
- rise of a standard dialect

Chapter 10

Terms: Early Modern English - Great Vowel Shift – palatalization

- Great Vowel Shift
- characteristics of Renaissance respelling
- characteristics of Early Modern English inflection

Chapter 11

Terms: prescriptivism - hypercorrection – ascertainment – language academy - the his-genitive - purism – linguistic corruption - prescriptive grammar - Renaissance

History: Protestant Reformation - Industrial Revolution - American Revolution - colonization - Accademia della Crusca - Académie française

People: William Caxton - Samuel Johnson - Robert Lowth - Noah Webster - Joseph Priestly - Jonathan Swift - Robert Cawdrey - Donatus

Identify: *A Table Alphabeticall - A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755)

- reasons for and characteristics of prescriptivism
- the question of usage
- causes of spelling changes
- the history of English dictionaries and grammar books
- the history of proposals for a language academy
- the intersection of history and language change

Chapter 12

Terms: Modern English – neologism

Identify: *Oxford English Dictionary* - James Murray

- characteristics of Modern English
- the growth of English vocabulary
- effects of new media on language

Chapter 13

Terms: - North American English (NAE) – British English – Received Pronunciation (RP) – General American – General Canadian – regional dialect – African-American Vernacular English – pidgin - creole - pidginization - creolization – slang

- British, American, Canadian vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and intonation (general characteristics)
- social implications of dialect usage in Britain and North America
- characteristics of North American regional dialects and standard English

Questions to consider:

- What influences were there on the development of Middle English? Early Modern English?
- What influences are there on Modern English (in North America and elsewhere)?
- How are language changes in the post-medieval period different from or the same as changes in the earlier period?
- What social factors affect language change in this period?
- What different meanings does “grammar” have? Why are those different meanings important?
- What effect has prescriptivism had on language use? Is prescriptivism ever good?
- Why did the dictionary develop when and how it did?
- Why is English a world language?
- Would English be a better language without prescriptivism?
- What use is there in studying the history of the English language?
- What effects have new media had on the English language?

Terms from Previous Study Guides

These terms are taken from the previous study guides. In some cases, they duplicate the terms already on the final examination study guide. In most cases, they should already be quite familiar by this point in the term, and so their possible inclusion on the exam should not be unduly burdensome.

These terms are all fair game for the definition section of the final exam.

Other terms, which are not included here, may be useful for the completion of the essay question, but they will not be tested directly through definition or True/False.

Chapter One: language – phonology – morphology – syntax – inflection – Old English – Anglo-Saxon – Middle English – Early Modern English – Late Modern English – linguistic corruption – prescriptivism – descriptivism

Chapter Two: phonetic alphabet – phoneme – allophone – consonant – voicing – vowel – diphthong – monophthong – stress

Chapter Three: ease of articulation – hypercorrection – analogy – language contact

Chapter Four: Indo-European – Germanic – West Germanic – cognate – Proto-Indo-European

Chapter Five: Grimm's Law – Verner's Law – First Germanic Consonant Shift – weak verbs – strong verbs

Chapter Six: palatalization – umlaut – mutation – compounding – derivation

Chapter Seven: person – number – grammatical gender – grammatical paradigm – conjugate – decline – case – agreement

Other Information

- You may write in pen or pencil, but your writing must be legible.
- The time limit will be strictly enforced.
- I will be available to answer questions before the exam, but I do not answer questions during exams.