

# Chapter 1

## English as a Lingua Franca



*Among more than 5,000 languages used in the world, English has become a real global lingua franca. It is the native language of many countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and a number of Caribbean nations. When combining the number of both native speakers and language learners, English is the most commonly used language in the world and is widely used in international cultural, political and economic affairs. This chapter will introduce the evolvement of English from a local language used in medieval England to a global lingua franca.*





## Text A

# English as a Lingua Franca

### Pre-class Preparation

#### MOOC Watching

Watch the MOOC video “English as a Lingua Franca” to prepare for Text A.



#### Pre-reading Questions

1. What is a lingua franca? Which language has served as a regional lingua franca and which language has served as a global lingua franca?
2. Which countries speak English as a first language and which countries speak it as a lingua franca?

### In-class Reading

## English as a Lingua Franca

- ① A **lingua franca** is a common language used to make communication possible between people who do not share a native language. **English as a lingua franca (ELF)** refers to the use of English as a global means of communication between people of different languages. By the middle of the 19th century, the British Empire had spread English through the colonies of “the empire on which the sun never sets”. The rise of the United States in the 20th century, along with worldwide broadcasting in English by BBC and other broadcasters, significantly **accelerated** the spread of the language

#### accelerate

v. 使增速；加快，增加



across the world. Since the foundation of the United Nations at the end of World War II, English has become the main worldwide language in diplomacy and international relations. It is one of the six **official languages** of the United Nations. Many international organizations, including the European Union<sup>1</sup>, European Free Trade Association<sup>2</sup>, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)<sup>3</sup> and the International Olympic Committee<sup>4</sup>, set English as a major or sole working language. Now English is the world's most widely used language in mass media, book publishing, scientific research, international trade, and international **telecommunications**.

**telecommunication**

*n.* 电信, 远程通信

② English is spoken as a majority language in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland. And it is used as either the official language or one of the official languages in more than 60 **sovereign** states. In the 21st century, English is more widely spoken and written than any other language. **Potential** ELF users include both those who speak English as an additional language and those who speak English as their main language. If you are speaking English with someone who speaks English as a second language, whether or not English is your main language, you are both using ELF. Now, Modern English family includes a large number of **varieties** spoken in diverse countries. This includes American English, Australian English, British English, Canadian English, Caribbean English, Nigerian English, New Zealand English, Philippine English, Singaporean English and South African English. This wide spread of English use has made English communication acceptable in most international contexts.

**sovereign**

*adj.* 有主权的, 至高无上的  
*n.* 君主

**potential**

*adj.* 潜在的, 可能的

③ British linguist Jennifer Jenkins points out that ELF is not a new phenomenon. What makes ELF a **novel** phenomenon is the extent to which it is used in spoken, written and **computer-mediated communication**. A typical ELF conversation might involve an Italian and a Korean professor chatting at an international academic conference held in Berlin, a Spanish tourist asking a local for the way in Japan, or an Arabian negotiating with a

**novel**

*adj.* 革新的



Chinese salesperson in New York. In a general sense, ELF communication concentrates on function rather than form. That means communicative **efficiency** (i.e. getting the message across) is more important than correctness. Although English is not the official language for many countries, it serves as a bridge between people from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, Modern English is regarded as the first global lingua franca or the first world language.

### **T Cultural Terms**

1. **lingua franca** 通用语（指不同母语国家可以相互交流的共同语言）
2. **English as a lingua franca (ELF)** 英语作为国际通用语（指不同母语使用者将英语作为全球性交流媒介）
3. **official language** 官方语言（经国家、政府或其他权威机构认定具备法定地位的语言文字）
4. **variety** 英语的变体（指英语在不同国家、地区使用的不同形式）
5. **computer-mediated communication** 计算机为中介的沟通（也称网络沟通）

### **C Cultural Notes**

#### 1. the European Union

欧洲联盟，简称“欧盟”，是欧洲多国建立的政治经济联盟，创立于1993年。它目前有27个成员国，为世界第三大经济实体，其中19个国家接受欧元作为流通货币。

#### 2. European Free Trade Association

欧洲自由贸易联盟，是欧洲促进贸易的政府间组织，成立于1960年，目前成员国有冰岛、挪威、瑞士、列支敦士登四国。

#### 3. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

亚太经济合作组织，是亚太地区促进经济合作与贸易投资的论坛，成立于1989年，现有21个成员经济体。

#### 4. International Olympic Committee

国际奥林匹克委员会，是一个非政府、非营利国际体育组织，负责组织举办夏季奥林匹克运动会、冬季奥林匹克运动会、残疾人奥林匹克运动会和青年奥林匹克运动会，其总部位于瑞士洛桑。



## Exercise

### True or False

**Directions:** Determine whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. “English as a lingua franca” refers to the use of English as a global means of communication between people of different languages.
2. The rise of the British Empire in the 20th century significantly accelerated the spread of the language across the world.
3. In the 21st century, English is the second most widely spoken language in the world only after Mandarin Chinese.
4. In a general sense, ELF communication focuses more on function than form.
5. Although English is not the official language in China, it serves as a bridge for Chinese people to know about the world.

## Critical Thinking

**Directions:** Talk about the following topic with your group members. Then choose one speaker to express his or her opinion on behalf of the whole group.

Nowadays, China is developing at a fast speed and has attracted more and more attention from the whole world. Do you think Mandarin Chinese will replace English as the first language or global lingua franca in the future? Share your reasons and evidence with your partners.

## Post-class Thinking

### Blank Filling

**Directions:** Scan the QR code to fill in the blanks of the mind map of Text A and you will have a better understanding of the structure of the text.





## Text B

# A Brief History of the English Language

### Pre-class Preparation

#### MOOC Watching

Watch the MOOC videos “The Origin and Development of the English Language” and “Modern English: A Voyage to Be a Global Language” to prepare for Text B.



MOOC video “The Origin and Development of the English Language”



MOOC video “Modern English: A Voyage to Be a Global Language”

#### Pre-reading Questions

1. Do you know any differences between English in the past and at the present?
2. How many stages are there in the development of the English language?

### In-class Reading

## A Brief History of the English Language

- 1 How did English become a global language? Who created the English language and who brought it to the other parts of the world? A brief history of the English language will provide answers to the above questions. The following parts will introduce the origin of the English language and four



important periods in its development.

② English is a West Germanic **Anglo-Frisian language** belonging to the **Indo-European language** family. English is classified as a **Germanic language** because it shares common features with other Germanic languages such as Dutch, German, and Swedish. Meanwhile, English shares other features with Frisian, so it is also classified as an Anglo-Frisian language. English was brought to Britain by Germanic people from what is now called northwest Germany and the Netherlands. It uses a vocabulary unlike other European languages of the same era. A large portion of the modern English vocabulary comes from **Anglo-Norman languages**.

③ The history of English is complex and **dynamic**. Generally speaking, there are four periods in the development of the English language: Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English, and Late Modern English.

**dynamic**  
*adj.* 动态的

#### ★ Old English (550–1066 AD)

④ The history of English started with the arrival of three Germanic **tribes** who invaded Britain in the 5th century. They are Angles, Saxons and Jutes who crossed the North Sea from today's Denmark and northern Germany. Later, they mixed their Germanic dialects to form a language called **Englisc**, from which Old English was derived. Before the arrival of the Germanic tribes, the Celts had been living in Britain for thousands of years. They were then either killed or chased to other areas and their **Celtic languages** had a slight influence on today's English. The Romans had brought Latin to Britain, which was a part of the Roman Empire for four hundred years (55 BC–410 AD). By the 7th century, the Germanic language of the Anglo-Saxons became **dominant** in Britain, replacing Latin and the Celtic languages which were used during Roman Britain.

**tribe**  
*n.* 部落, 部族

**dominant**  
*adj.* 占优势的

⑤ In 597, the arrival of **St. Augustine** introduced **Christianity** into England. This brought more Latin words into English. Words concerning churches and ceremonies such as “church”, “**bishop**”, “monk” and

**Christianity**  
*n.* 基督教  
**bishop**  
*n.* (基督教) 主教



**baptism**

*n.* 洗礼

**script**

*n.* 书写字母

**alphabetic**

*adj.* 字母的

“**baptism**” came indirectly from Greek through Latin. It is from Latin that English took its **script** and **alphabetic** system. Old English was written down using the Latin alphabet. In the middle of the 9th century, Scandinavian words entered the English language with the invasion by Norwegian and Danish **Vikings**. Their northern Germanic words and speech had a fundamental influence on English. Many English words used today come from these ancient Vikings. Words like “sky”, “egg”, “window”, “husband”, “lift” and “take” are from the old languages of these northern countries.

- ⑥ In Modern English, about 25,000 words are from Old English. Many of today’s words are from Old English—nouns like “friend”, “son”, “daughter”, “home” and “ground”, prepositions like “in”, “on”, “by” and “from”, and verbs like “come”, “go”, “love” and “sing”. However, Old English does not sound like Modern English at all and words have complex endings and vowel change, which differs greatly from the language we use today. Therefore, Old English is almost **unintelligible** to English speakers in the 21st century.

**unintelligible**

*adj.* 令人费解的

★ **Middle English (1066–1500 AD)**

- ⑦ From the 8th to the 12th century, Old English gradually transformed into Middle English. In 1066, William the Conqueror, the Duke of **Normandy**, invaded and conquered England. The French king brought French to England. Old French then took over as the language of Royal court, administration and culture. Latin remained a primary language used mostly for written language, especially that of the church. English, however, was reduced to the language of the lower class and was considered a vulgar tongue.

**assimilate**

*v.* 吸收, 同化

- ⑧ Standing side by side with the other two languages, English has survived and **assimilated** many words from French. After England and France split in the 14th century, English became dominant in England again



and was developed into Middle English. Middle English form showed many signs of French influence, both in vocabulary and spelling. About ten thousand French words poured into English and covered every realm of culture and society. The words with French roots in English vocabulary are words of power and legislation, such as “castle”, “crown”, “army”, “duke”, “governor”, “romance” and “parliament”. In order to **reconcile** Old Norse and Old English, Middle English greatly simplified the inflectional system. Middle English literature is represented by Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*<sup>1</sup>, and Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur*<sup>2</sup>. Middle English continued to be spoken until 1500 when Modern English was gradually shaped.

**reconcile**

v. 使和谐一致, 调和

### ★ Early Modern English (1500–1700 AD)

9 Early Modern English was characterised by the Great Vowel Shift<sup>3</sup> (1350–1700), inflectional simplification, and linguistic **standardisation**. The Great Vowel Shift affected the pronunciation of long vowels of Middle English and explained why English vowel letters have very different pronunciations from the same letters in other languages. Vowel sounds were made further to the front of the mouth and the letter “e” became silent at the end of words.

**standardisation**

n. 标准化

10 In 1476, William Caxton brought the printing press to England. Printing brought standardisation to English spelling. Grammar became fixed and the dialect of London became standard. Between the end of the 16th century and the early 17th century, the rise of Renaissance<sup>4</sup> in England greatly boosted the development of Early Modern English. The revival of classical literature brought many Latin and Greek words into the language. English grew, flowered and exploded with new words. Literature began to flourish in this period. It was during this period that William Shakespeare<sup>5</sup> (1564–1616), one of the greatest writers in English, produced most of his works. His works contributed to the standardisation of the English language.



### ★ Late Modern English (1700–Present)

11 From around 1700, the Late Modern English period started. In the 19th century, Britain became “the empire on which the sun never sets” and English was spread through its colonies and geographical dominance. The rise of the British Empire not only introduced English to the world, but also assimilated new words from all major languages in the world. Moreover, the Industrial Revolution brought forth many new inventions, which made it necessary to create more new words and English greatly facilitated international trade and business. Commerce, science and technology, diplomacy, and formal education all contributed to English becoming the first global language.

12 After World War II, the growing economic and cultural influence of the United States and its status as a superpower, enabled the English language to spread across the world much faster. Thousands and thousands of new words from other languages poured into the English language to express new ideas, inventions and scientific achievements. *The Oxford English Dictionary* lists more than 250,000 distinct words, not including many technical, scientific, and slang terms. As Modern English developed, standard usage of English was put forward and spread through public education and publications. In 1755, Samuel Johnson published his *A Dictionary of the English Language*<sup>6</sup>, which introduced standard spellings of words and usage norms. In 1828, Noah Webster published *An American Dictionary of the English Language*<sup>7</sup>, trying to establish an American English norm which was independent of the British standard.

### T Cultural Terms

1. **Anglo-Frisian language** 盎格鲁弗里希语（属于西日耳曼语，古英语、低地苏格兰语、古弗里希语都属于这一分支。）
2. **Indo-European language** 印欧语系（世界上分布最广泛的语系，欧洲、南亚、美洲和大洋洲的大部分国家都采用印欧语言作为母语或官方语言。印欧语系包括 400 多种语言和