

Introduction to English Linguistics

7: Semantics and the Lexicon



P. S. Langeslag

Part I: Using *OED*

Part II: Semantic Change

Part III: A Brief History of Borrowing

Part IV: Lexicography

Accessing *OED*

1. Visit [oed.com](https://www.oed.com)
2. Enter your query; or select the avatar in the top right
3. When prompted to sign in, select “Sign in through your institution”

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Amelioration

A shift to more favourable denotation or connotations.

- ▶ *nice*
- ▶ *knight*
- ▶ *minister*

Pejoration

A shift to less favourable denotation or connotations.

- ▶ *egregious*
- ▶ *idiot*
- ▶ *notorious*
- ▶ *mistress*
- ▶ *hussy*

Terms denoting minorities are subject to rapid pejoration.

Broadening

A shift to more inclusive denotation.

- ▶ *cupboard*
- ▶ *phone*
- ▶ Terms for currency:
 - ▶ Latin *pecunia* (cf. *pecus*)
 - ▶ Old English *feoh*
 - ▶ Old Norse *fé*
 - ▶ Finnish *raha*

Narrowing

A shift to more restrictive denotation.

- ▶ *hound*
- ▶ *wife*
- ▶ *fowl*
- ▶ *girl*

Bleaching

A loss of semantic content or intensity.

- ▶ *will* v.
- ▶ *really*
- ▶ *nice*

Associated with grammaticalization.

Metaphoric Use

The extension of a word to nonliteral but structurally similar referents.

- ▶ *great*
- ▶ *mouse*

Metonymy

Using the word for one concept to refer to an associated concept.

- ▶ *tongue* (to mean “language”)
- ▶ *brass* (to mean “military officers”)
- ▶ *dish* (to mean “food item”)
- ▶ *City Hall* (to mean the city government)
- ▶ *10 Downing Street* (to mean the Prime Minister’s Office)

Synecdoche

- ▶ Pars pro toto:
 - ▶ *glasses* (to mean spectacles)
 - ▶ *Holland* (to mean the Netherlands)
 - ▶ *Rome* (to mean the Roman Republic/Empire)
- ▶ Totum pro parte:
 - ▶ *America* (to mean the United States)
 - ▶ *England* (to mean any sports team representing England)

Part I: Using *OED*

Part II: Semantic Change

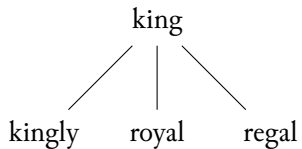
Part III: A Brief History of Borrowing

Part IV: Lexicography

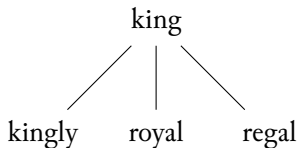
Loan Resistance

English	computer
Dutch	computer
German	Computer/Rechner
French	ordinateur
Finnish	tietokone
Icelandic	tölva

Consociated Versus Dissociated Lexicon



Consociated Versus Dissociated Lexicon



English

Base Word	Derivative
mouth	oral
law	legal
tooth	dentist

German

Base Word	Derivative
Mund	mündlich
Gesetz	gesetzlich
Zahn	Zahnärztin

Medieval Loans: Celtic

A very small number of landscape terms: *crag* survives.

Possibly considered a low-status source (cf. *wealh*).

Medieval Loans: Latin

- ▶ Old English period: ecclesiastical word-field
 - ▶ *psealm* (ultimately Hebrew), *prēost* (ultimately Greek), *mæsse*
- ▶ Generally: learning and administration
 - ▶ *contradiction*, *item*, *scribe*, *simile*

Medieval Loans: Old Norse

- ▶ Old English period
 - ▶ Nautical word-field: *wicing*, *æsc*, *cnearr*, *lip*
 - ▶ Legal word-field: *lagu*, *griþ*, *saclēas*
- ▶ Later loans: thousands, many now core vocabulary
 - ▶ Lexical words:
 - ▶ Verbs: *call*, *cast*, *choose*, *die*, *get*, *hit*, *loan*, *raise*, *rid*, *seem*, *take*, *want*
 - ▶ Nouns: *anger*, *dirt*, *egg*, *fellow*, *guest*, *husband*, *keel*, *knife*, *leg*, *outlaw*, *skull*, *sky*, *window*, *wing*
 - ▶ Adjectives: *flat*, *ill*, *loose*
 - ▶ Function words: *both*, *same*, *they*, *though*

Medieval Loans: French

- ▶ c. 900 Norman loans pre-1250
- ▶ c. 10,000 French loans after
- ▶ Predominantly high-register lexical words
 - ▶ Law and administration: *administration, count, crime, duke, judgement, judge, jury, liberty, peasant, prince, prison, state, accuse, complain, condemn, govern*
 - ▶ Church: *abbey, clergy, confession, convent, creator, devotion, miracle, religion, saint, sermon, theology, adore, convert, pray, preach*
 - ▶ High culture: *beef, diamond, fur, jewel, mutton, pearl, pork, satin, venison*
 - ▶ Military: *banner, battle, siege, standard*

Lexical Competition

OE <i>hīe</i>	↔	ON <i>þeir</i>
OE <i>ey</i>	↔	ON <i>egg</i>
OE <i>þēah</i>	↔	ON <i>þó</i>
NF <i>reward</i>	↔	CF <i>regard</i>
NF <i>wile</i>	↔	CF <i>guile</i>
Latin <i>debita</i> (< <i>dēbitum</i>)	↔	French <i>dette</i>
NF <i>mouton</i>	↔	OE <i>scēap</i>
NF <i>boef</i>	↔	OE <i>cū</i>
NF <i>porc</i>	↔	OE <i>swīn</i>

(Early) Modern Loans: Science

- ▶ Latin: *antenna, data, fauna, genus, inertia, larva, nucleus, pendulum, species, tentacle, vertebra, virus*
- ▶ Greek: *cosmos, meteorology, narcosis, indirect, anaesthesia, camera, electric*
- ▶ French: *anatomy, muscle*

(Early) Modern Loans: Culture and Food

- ▶ French: *ballet, beau, cabaret, casserole, champagne, elegant, etiquette, genteel, liqueur, ragout, salon, soup, vogue*

(Early) Modern Loans: Law, Military, Politics

- ▶ Latin: *propaganda, ultimatum, veto*
- ▶ French: *bayonet, brigade, colonel, envoy, guillotine, platoon*

(Early) Modern Loans: General

- ▶ Latin: *agenda, area, dismiss, exit, instruct, popular*
- ▶ Greek: *role, trophy*
- ▶ French: *attic, crisis*

(Early) Modern Loans: Trade and Art

- ▶ Dutch: *boss*, *cookie*, *dock*, *dollar*, *landscape*, *sketch*, *tea*, *yacht*
- ▶ Portuguese
- ▶ Celtic
- ▶ British colonial languages

Normalization of Foreign Morphemes

- ▶ Negative prefixes: *a-*, *dis-*, *in-*, *non-*
- ▶ Privative prefixes: *de-*, *dis-*
- ▶ Locative, temporal, pejorative, intensifying, quantifying prefixes: *hyper-*, *multi-*
- ▶ Suffixes: *-age*, *-ist*, *-ique*, *-ment*, etc.

Today's Lexicon

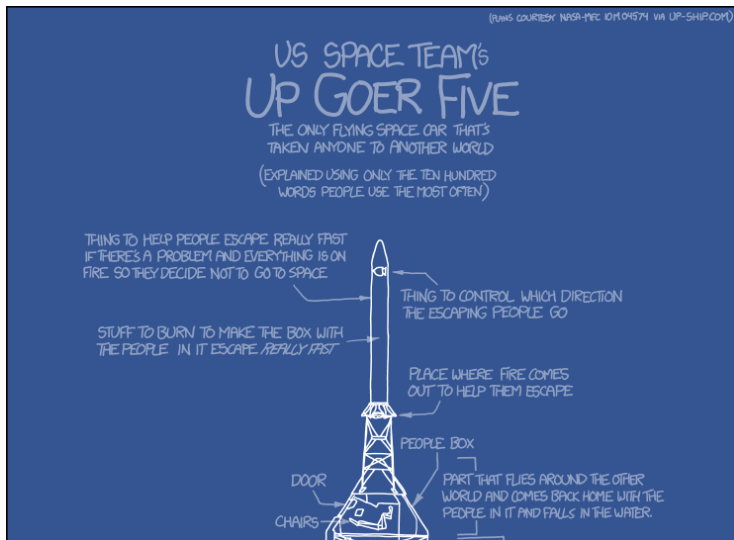


Figure: Detail from **Up Goer Five**, CC-BY-SA Randall Munroe

Today's Lexicon

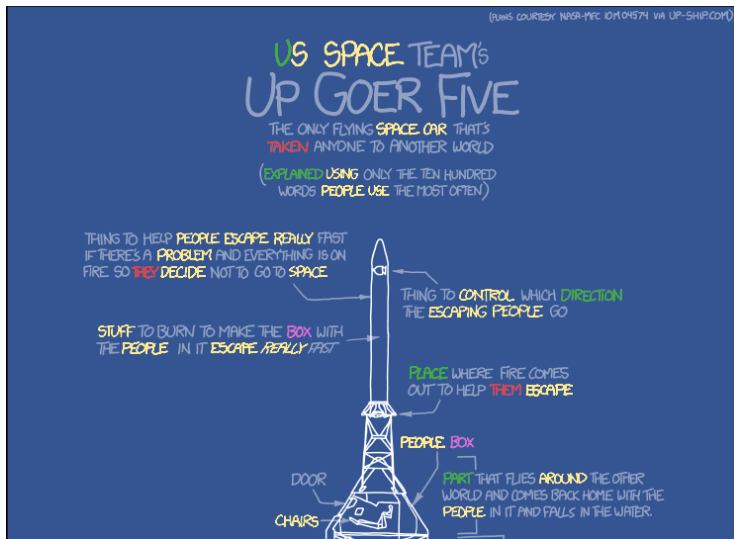


Figure: Detail from Up Goer Five Etymology, source CC-BY-SA R. Munroe

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Interlinear Glosses

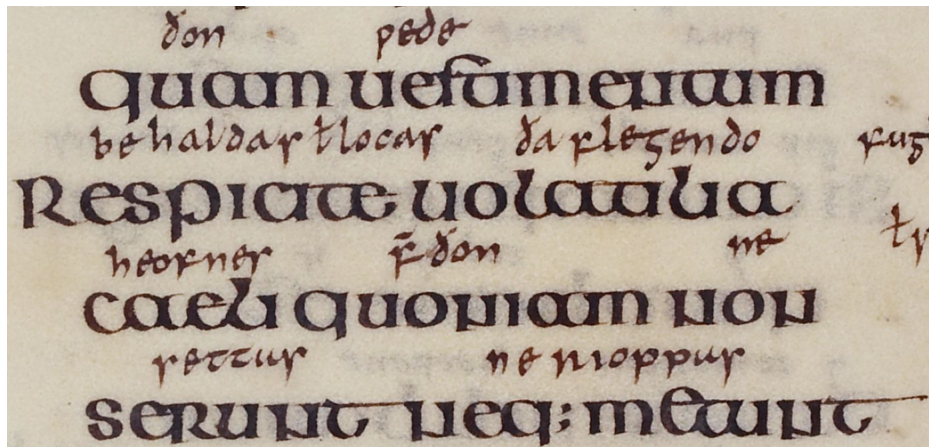


Figure: London, British Library, Cotton Nero D iv fol. 38r (c. 700) (detail; PD/British Library)

Glossaries

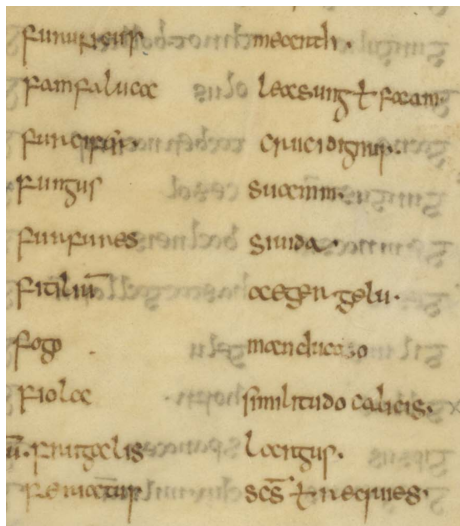


Figure: Épinal, Bibliothèque municipale 72, fol. 5r (detail; PD)

Dictionaries Are Built on Citations

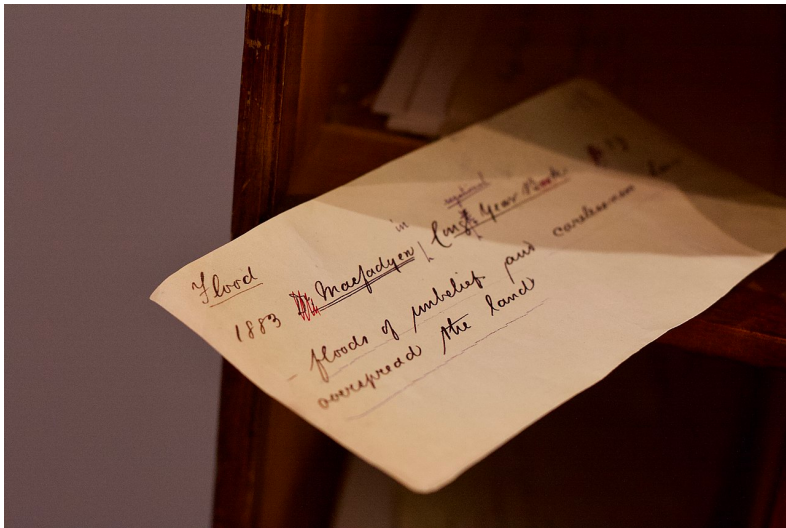


Figure: A citation slip used for the *NED/OED* (CC-BY-SA Daphne Preston-Kendal)

James Murray's 1879 Appeal

AN APPEAL
TO THE
ENGLISH-SPEAKING AND ENGLISH-READING PUBLIC
TO READ BOOKS AND MAKE EXTRACTS FOR
THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S
NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

IN November 1857, a paper was read before the Philological Society by Archbishop Trench, then Dean of Westminster, on 'Some Deficiencies in our English Dictionaries,' which led to a resolution on the part of the Society to prepare a Supplement to the existing Dictionaries supplying these deficiencies. A very little work on this basis sufficed to show that to do anything effectual, not a mere Dictionary-Supplement, but a new Dictionary worthy of the English Language and of the present state of Philological Science, was the object to be aimed at. Accordingly, in January 1859, the Society issued their 'Proposal for the publication of a New English Dictionary.'

Figure: The 1879 appeal (detail; full document [here](#))

Dictionary of Old English Citation Slips

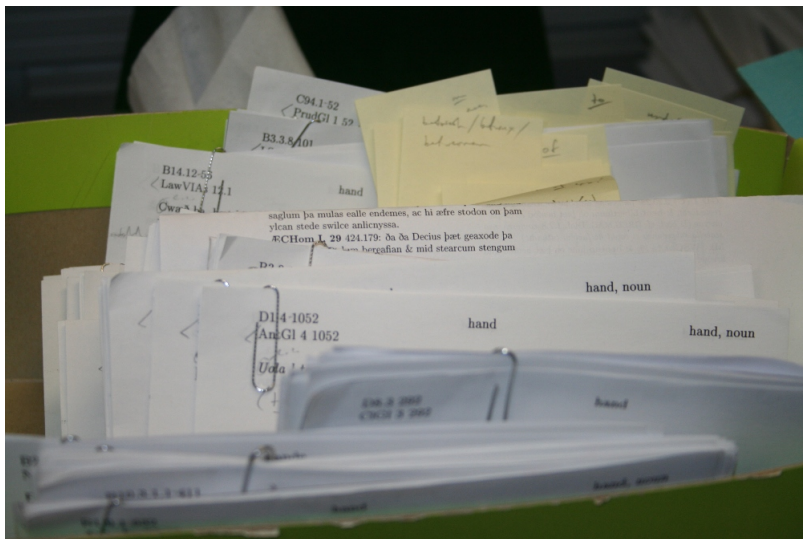


Figure: Citation slips for *hand* at the *Dictionary of Old English*

Historical Dictionaries

- ▶ *Dictionary of Old English* (VPN/campus)
- ▶ *Middle English Dictionary*
- ▶ *Oxford English Dictionary* (sign in)
- ▶ *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*

Dictionaries in Göttingen (Akademie der Wissenschaften)

- ▶ *Deutsches Wörterbuch* aka *Grimmsches Wörterbuch* 1838–1961, 1957–2016
- ▶ *Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*
- ▶ *Frühneuhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*
- ▶ *Goethe-Wörterbuch* (more of a concordance with citations)
- ▶ *Wörterbuch des Altuigurischen* (Old Uyghur, a Turkic language)





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CAMBRIDGE
CORPUS
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COLLEGE

MS473

CAMBRIDGE
AMBROKE
COLLEGE

VARIOUS
MSS

CAMBRIDGE TRINITY COLLEGE







17VI	[consortes X
2	[laudibus X
	[Habetis]
3	[perpetue X
1885	[uirginitatis X
4	[libidinum X
5	[tropheum X
	[uictoria]
	[de]
1890	[securitas X
6	[clangor]
	[uelut tonitruali fragore:]
	[concrepans]
7	[cohortatur X
1895	[rumorum X
8	[prosequitur X

¶ i. parta]	CD dælnimendras		
¶ praeconiis]	lm. R lofū	255,20	25,36
¶ habbe gvt			25,37
¶ æterne]	CD ces	255,21	26,1
¶ castitatis]	CD hades		26,2
¶ uoluptatum]	CD lusta	255,22	26,3
¶ signum uictorię]	lm. CD		
herelos			26,4
CD lean			
CD of			
¶ requies l quietudo]	CD		
stilnys		255,23	26,5
A swag, [sonitus]			
X swilce of þunera X d' alican X			
CD cerme : lm. C þunelicū			
cirme			
X bleoþringende X [resonans]		255,24	26,6
¶ ammonet]	s. apostolus : CD		
manab			26,7
X opiniorum]	lm. CD		
blisena		255,25	
X i. ducit l exponit]	i.		
þenað & tobæd]	¶ claudet]	R s.	
apostolus			26,8

C94.1-52
< PrudGl 1 52

B3.3.8/101

B14.12-55
< LawVIA 12.1

Cwa 12.1

hand

saglun þa mulas ealle endemes, ac hi æfre stodon on þam
ylcan stede swilce anlicnyssa.

ÆCHom I. 29 424.179: ða ða Decius þæt geaxode þa
þam hergafian & mid stearcum stengum

hand, noun

D14-1052
< AnGl 4 1052

Uola 1+

hand

hand, noun



Lemmatization: Problem

Spelling “ne”: 30,187 occurrences

ne, adverb

- ▶ “not”

nē, conjunction

- ▶ “neither”
- ▶ “nor”
- ▶ Næs he æþelboren. **ne** him naht to þam cynecynne **ne** gebyrode.
- ▶ Me ofhreow þæt hi **ne** cuðon **ne** næfdon ða godspellican lare on heora gewritum.
- ▶ Hi næfre **ne** mihto **ne** noldon syððan fram his willan gebugan. **ne** hi **ne** magon nu **ne** hi nellað nane synne gewyrcan.

Lemmatization: Simulation

Forms

ha
had
hada
hadas
hade
hades
hadgenne
hadige
hadlað
hadlicere
hadod
hador
hadre
hadswape
hadswæpa
hadum
hadunge

Occurrences II–20

[001400 (Ju 25, A.2)] Þæt wæs haliges **hades** fæmne on Rome, ac heo wæs gehergod fram ælpeodegum cyninge, se wæs on naman **Aceia**.

[004500 (52)] Gif þu þone mon lacnian wille, þænc his gebæra and wite hwilces **hades** he sie.

[000700 (7)] Gyf he fuglas geseog betwenan winnan, þæt byð, þæt rice **hades** winnað heom beotweonan.

[023800 (19(15).4)] & na gemyngende **hades** & na spede syndriende *Neque confundentes personas neque substantiam separantes*.

[026000 (19(15).26)] Ac ealle þrio **hades** euenece him beoð & euenlice *Sed tote tres persone coaetern sibi sunt et coequales*.

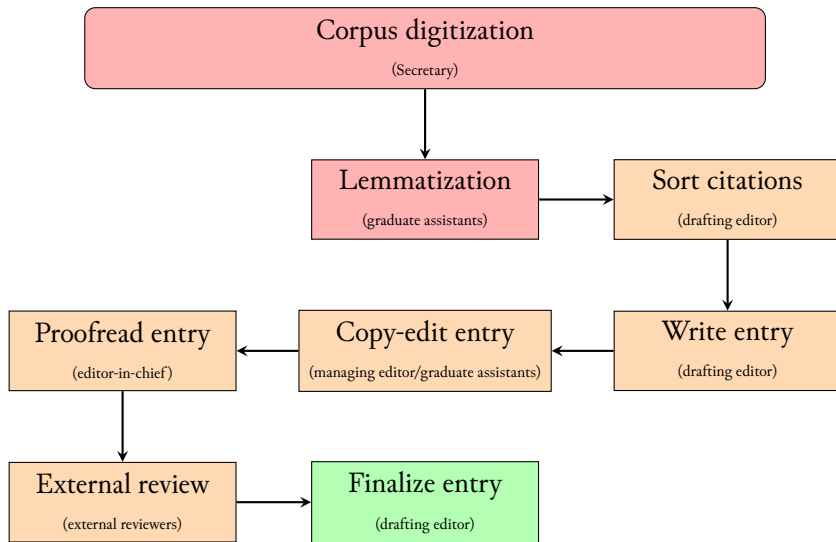
Assign headword

Assign all

Headwords

ha
habban
haca
hacce
haccian
hacele
hacine
hacod
had
hada
hadarung
hadbot
hadbreca
hadbryce
hadelice

DOE Workflow



Publication Format



Figure: Microfiche (CC-BY-SA Ianaré Sévi)