



## The words of English

### Borrowed words

The English we use today includes words that come from many different languages.

Words such as **house**, **woman**, **man**, **love** were introduced by Anglo-Saxons invaders about 1,500 years ago.

When the Vikings later invaded the country they brought words such as **egg**, **cake**, **skin**, **angry**.

The Norman Conquest in 1066 brought French words such as **government**, **justice**, **fashion** and **beauty** into the language.

Contact with other countries (via trade, for example) gave us words such as **lager** (from Germany), **opera** (from Italy), **guitar** (from Spain), **mattress** (from Arabic) and **tea** (from China).

Britain also colonised other countries and words from their languages entered into English. For example: **cot** (from India), **hurricane** (from the Caribbean), **voodoo** (from Ghana) and **bamboo** (from Malaysia).

### Words from French

Because English has borrowed so many words from other languages this affects how we say the words and how we spell them.

For example, words coming from French often end in **-et** and when we read them, we pronounce that sound in the French way (as in the 'a' in 'day'):

**ballet buffet valet crochet sachet duvet gourmet bouquet cabaret**

Another ending from the French is **-que** (pronounced as 'k', as in 'rock'):

**antique plaque boutique cheque technique mosque opaque**

Not so common, but also from the French, are words that contain the letter group 'eau'. This is usually pronounced as 'o' (as in 'toe'). When the 'eau' is at the end of the word, the plurals are also made in the French way, by adding an 'x':

**gateau (two gateaux) tableau (two tableaux) plateau (two plateaux) bureau (two bureaux)**

But note that the 'eau' in the middle is pronounced differently in some words:

**beauty beautiful bureaucracy**