

# English Etymology

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# List 3:

- Two Syllable
- Housing Items
- Angles

Ax- Old English *æces* (Northumbrian *acas*) "axe, pickaxe, hatchet," later *æx*, from P.Gmc. *\*akusjo* (cf. Old Saxon **accus**, Old Norse *ex*, Old Frisian *axe*, German *Axt*, Gothic *aqizi*), from PIE *\*agw(e)si-* (cf. Greek *axine*, Latin *ascia*).



Bed- Old English **bedd** "bed, couch, resting place, garden plot," from P.Gmc. *\*badjam* "sleeping place dug in the ground" (cf. Old Frisian, Old Saxon *bed*, Middle Dutch *bedde*, Old Norse *beðr*, Old High German *betti*, German *Bett*, Gothic *badi* "bed"), from PIE root *\*bhedh-* "to dig, pierce" (cf. Hittite *beda-* "to pierce, prick," Greek *bothyros* "pit," Latin *fossa* "ditch," Lithuanian *bedre* "to dig," Breton *bez* "grave"). Both "sleeping" and "gardening" senses are in Old English. Meaning "bottom of a lake, sea, watercourse" is from 1580s.



Boot- footwear, early 14c., from **Old French** *bote* "boot" (12c.), with corresponding words in Provençal and Spanish, of unknown origin, perhaps from a Germanic source. Originally for riding boots only.



Bowl- Old English **bolla** "pot, cup, bowl," from P.Gmc. \*bul- "a round vessel" (cf. Old Norse bolle, Old High German bolla), from PIE \*bhl-, from root \*bhel- (2) "to blow, inflate, swell" (see bole).



Candle- Old English candel "lamp, lantern, candle," an early ecclesiastical borrowing from Latin candela "a light, torch, candle made of tallow or wax," from candere "to shine," from PIE root \***kand-** "to glow, to shine, to shoot out light" (cf. Sanskrit cand- "to give light, shine," candra- "shining, glowing, moon;" Greek kandaros "coal;" Welsh cann "white;" Middle Irish condud "fuel"). Candles were unknown in ancient Greece (where oil lamps sufficed), but common from early times among Romans and Etruscans. Candles on birthday cakes seems to have been originally a German custom. To hold a candle to originally meant "to help in a subordinate capacity," from the notion of an assistant or apprentice holding a candle for light while the master works. To burn the candle at both ends is recorded from 1730.



Cloth- Old English clað "a cloth, woven or felted material to wrap around one," hence, "garment," from P.Gmc. \***kalithaz** (cf. Old Frisian klath, Middle Dutch cleet, Dutch kleed, Middle High German kleit, German Kleid "garment"), of obscure origin. The cloth "the clerical profession" is from 17c.



Dish- Old English *disc* "plate, bowl, platter," from Latin *discus* "dish, platter, quoit," from Greek **diskos** "disk, platter" (see *disk*). A common West Germanic borrowing; Old High German borrowed the word as *tisc* "plate," but German *tisch* now means "table," in common with other later Romanic forms (e.g. Italian *desco*, French *dais*). Meaning "particular variety of food served" is first recorded mid-15c. Meaning "what one likes" is c.1900; that of "attractive woman" is 1920s. Meaning "concave reflector or antenna" attested from 1948.



House- O.E. *hus* "dwelling, shelter, house," from P.Gmc. **\*husan** (cf. O.N., O.Fris. *hus*, Du. *huis*, Ger. *Haus*), of unknown origin, perhaps connected to the root of *hide* (v.) [OED]. In Gothic only in *gudhus* "temple," lit. "god-house;" the usual word for "house" in Gothic being *razn*.

Meaning "family, including ancestors and descendants, especially if noble" is from c.1000. The legislative sense (1540s) is transferred from the building in which the body meets. Meaning "audience in a theater" is from 1660s (transferred from the theater itself, cf. *playhouse*); as a dance club DJ music style, probably from the Warehouse, a Chicago nightclub where the style is said to have originated. Zodiac sense is first attested late 14c. To play house is from 1871; as suggestive of "have sex, shack up," 1968. House arrest first attested 1936. On the house "free" is from 1889.

Land- O.E. *land*, **lond**, "ground, soil," also "definite portion of the earth's surface, home region of a person or a people, territory marked by political boundaries," from P.Gmc. \**landom* (cf. O.N., O.Fris. *Du.*, Ger., Goth. *land*), from PIE \***lendh-** "land, heath" (cf. O.Ir. *land*, Middle Welsh *llan* "an open space," Welsh *llan* "enclosure, church," Breton *lann* "heath," source of Fr. *lande*; O.C.S. *ledina* "waste land, heath," Czech *lada* "fallow land").

*Etymological evidence and Gothic use indicates the original sense was "a definite portion of the earth's surface owned by an individual or home of a nation." Meaning early extended to "solid surface of the earth," which had been the sense of the root of Modern English earth. Original sense of land in English is now mostly found under country. To take the lay of the land is a nautical expression. In the American English exclamation land's sakes (1846) land is a euphemism for Lord.*

Roof- O.E. *hrof* "roof, ceiling, top," from P.Gmc. \**khrofaz* (cf. O.Fris. *rhoof* "roof," M.Du. *roof* "cover, roof,"  
*Du. roef* "deckhouse, cabin, coffin-lid,"  
M.H.G. *rof* "penthouse," O.N. *hrof* "boat shed").

No apparent connections outside Germanic. "English alone has retained the word in a general sense, for which the other languages use forms corresponding to OE. *þæc* thatch" [OED]. Roof of the mouth is from late Old English. Raise the roof "create an uproar" is attested from 1860, originally in U.S. Southern dialect.



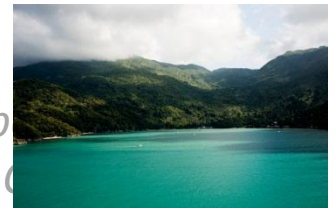


Pot- "vessel," from late Old English **pott** and Old French pot, both from a general Low Germanic and Romanic word from Vulgar Latin \*pottus, of uncertain origin, said by OED to be unconnected to Late Latin potus "drinking cup" (c.600).



Celtic forms are said to be borrowed from English and French. Slang meaning "large sum of money staked on a bet" is attested from 1823. Pot roast is from 1881; phrase go to pot(16c.) suggests cooking. In phrases, the pot calls the kettle black-arse is from c.1700; shit or get off the pot is traced by Partridge to Canadian armed forces in World War II.

Sea- O.E. sæ "sheet of water, sea, lake," from P.Gmc. \***saiwaz** (cf. O.S. seo, O.Fris. se, M.Du. see), of unknown origin, outside connections "wholly doubtful" [Buck]. Germanic languages also use the general Indo-European word (represented by English mere (n.)), but have no firm distinction between "sea" and "lake," either by size or by salt vs. fresh. This may reflect the Baltic geography where the languages are thought to have originated.



The two words are used more or less interchangeably, and exist in opposition (e.g. Goth. saiws "lake," marei "sea;" but Du. zee "sea," meer "lake"). O.N. sær "sea," but Dan. sø, usually "lake" but "sea" in phrases. Ger. See is "sea" (fem.) or "lake" (masc.). Meaning "dark area of the moon's surface" is attested from 1660s (see mare (n.2)).

# List 4:

- One Syllable
- Actions
- Interactions
- Angles'  
necessary  
actions



Cook- late 14c., from cook (n.); the figurative sense of "to manipulate, falsify, doctor" is from 1630s. Related: Cooked, cooking. To cook with gas is 1930s jive talk.

Drink- Old English drincan "to drink," also "to swallow up, engulf" (class III strong verb; past tense dranc, pp. druncen), from P.Gmc. \***drengkan** (cf. Old Saxon drinkan, Old Frisiandrinka, Dutch drinken, Old High German trinkan, German trinken, Old Norse drekka, Gothic drigkan "to drink"), of uncertain origin, perhaps from a root meaning "to draw." **Not found outside Germanic.**

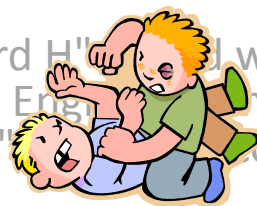


Eat- Old English *etan* (class V strong verb; past tense *æt*, pp. *eten*) "to eat, devour, consume," from P.Gmc. **\*etan** (cf. Old Frisian *ita*, Old Saxon *etan*, Middle Dutch *eten*, Dutch *eten*, Old High German *ezzan*, German *essen*, Old Norse *eta*, Gothic *itan*), from PIE root *\*ed-* "to eat" (see **edible**).



Fight-Old English *feohtan* "to fight" (class III strong verb; past tense *feaht*, pp. *foh*) from P.Gmc. **\*fekhtanan** (cf. Old High German **fehtan**, German *fechten*, Middle Dutch and Dutch *vechten*, Old Frisian *fiuhta* "to fight"), from PIE *\*pek-* "to pluck out" (wool or hair), apparently with a notion of "pulling roughly" (cf. Greek *pekein* "to comb, shear," *pekos* "fleece, wool;" Persian *pashm* "wool, down," Latin *pectere* "to comb," Sanskrit *paksman-* "eyebrows, hair").

Spelling substitution of *-gh-* for a "hard H" was a Middle English scribal habit, especially before *-t-*. In some late Old English examples, the middle consonant was represented by a **yoqh**. To fight back "yoqh" recorded from 1890.



Help- Old English *helpan* (class III strong verb; past tense **healp**, pp. *holpen*) "help, support, succor; benefit, do good to; cure, amend," from P.Gmc. **\*helpan** (cf. Old Norse *hjalpa*, Old Frisian *helpa*, Middle Dutch and Dutch *helpen*, Old High German *helfen*), from PIE root *\*kelb-* "to help" (cf. Lithuanian *selpiu* "to support,



Recorded as a cry of distress from late 14c. Sense of "serve someone with food at table" (1680s) is translated from French *servir* "to help, stand, avail," and led to **helping** "portion of food." Related: Helped (c.1300). The Middle English pp. *holpen* survives in biblical and U.S. dialectal use.

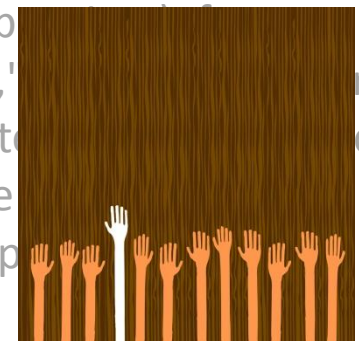
Live- O.E. **lifian** (Anglian), *libban* (W.Saxon) "to be, to live, have life; to experience," also "to supply oneself with food, to pass life (in some condition)," from P.Gmc. *\*liben* (cf. O.N. *lifa* "to live, remain," O.Fris. *libba*, Ger. *leben*, Goth. *liban* "to live"), from PIE root *\*leip-* "to remain, continue" (cf. Gk. *liparein* "to persist, persevere;" see leave). Meaning "to make a residence, dwell" is from c.1200. Related: *Lived*; living.



According to the Dutch proverb ... *Leuen ende laetan leuen*, To liue and to let others liue. [Malynes, 1622]

To *live it up* "live gaily and extravagantly" is from 1903. To *live up to* "act in accordance with" is 1690s, from earlier *live up* "live on a high (moral or mental) level" (1680s). To *live (something) down* "outwear (some slander or embarrassment)" is from 1842. To *live with* "cohabit as husband and wife" is attested from 1749; sense of "to put up with" is attested from 1937. Expression *live and learn* is attested from c.1620.

Rise- O.E. **risan** (usually **arisan**; class I strong verb; past tense *ras*, p P.Gmc. *\*us-risanan* "to go up" (cf. O.N. *risa*, Goth. *urreisan* "to rise, flow," Ger.*reisen* "to travel," originally "to rise for a journey"). Related meaning "upward movement" is from 1570s; the meaning "a piece" is from 1630s. Phrase to *get a rise out of (someone)* (1834) is a metaphor (1650s).



Speak- O.E. **specan**, variant of *sprecan* "to speak" (class V strong verb; past tense *spræc*, pp. *sprecen*), from P.Gmc. **\*sprekanan** (cf. O.S. *sprecan*, O.Fris. *spreka*, M.Du. *spreken*, O.H.G. *sprehhan*, Ger. *sprechen* "to speak," O.N. *spraki* "rumor, report"), cognate with L. *spargere* "to strew" (speech as a "scattering" of words; see **sparse**).



The *-r-* began to drop out in Late West Saxon and was gone by mid-12c., perhaps because of Dan. *spage* "crackle," in a slang sense of "speak" (cf. **crack** in slang senses having to do with speech, e.g. *wisecrack*, *cracker*, *all it's cracked up to be*). Rare variant forms without *-r-* also are found in M.Du. (*speken*) and O.H.G. (*spehhan*).

Not the primary word for "to speak" in Old English (the "Beowulf" author prefers *mapelian*, from *mæpel* "assembly, council," from root of *metan* "to meet;" cf. Gk. *agoreuo* "to speak," originally "speak in the assembly," from *agora* "assembly").

Walk- O.E. *wealcan* "to toss, roll," and **wealcian** "to roll up, curl, muffle up," from P.Gmc. **\*welk-** (cf. O.N. *valka* "to drag about," Dan. *valke* "to full," M.Du. *walken* "to knead, press, full," O.H.G. *walchan* "to knead," Ger. *walken* "to full"), perhaps ultimately from PIE root **\*wel-** "to turn, bend, twist, roll" (see **walk**). Meaning shifted in early Middle English, perhaps from "to knead" to "to go away" (Rarely is there so specific a word as NE *walk* distinguished from both *go* and *leave* [luck]). Meaning "to go away" is recorded from 14c. Transitive meaning "to exert (a horse)" is from late 15c. The surname *Walker* probably preserves the cloth-fulling sense.



Work- a fusion of O.E. *wyrcan* (past tense **worhte**, pp. *geworht*), from P.Gmc. **\*wurkijanan**; and O.E. *wircan* (Mercian) "to work, operate, function," formed relatively late from P.Gmc. noun **\*werkan** (see **work** (n.)). Related: *Worked*; *working*. *Working class* is from 1789 as a noun, 1839 as an adjective.