Foreign words used in English

Topic

What other languages have contributed to the English language

Learning outcomes

- Give examples of words that English has borrowed from other languages
- Read a text about the origins of the English language and understand details
- Explain why spelling and pronunciation rules in English can feel very arbitrary
- Spell some commonly misspelled words accurately

Age and level

13-17, Adults (B2+)

Time

Approximately 60-75 minutes

Materials

- Presentation

Introduction

The lesson begins with a short quiz about the English language, which makes sure that the students understand what a hybrid language English is, and the concept of loan words. They then look at some common loan words and try to decide which language they originally came from, before reading a short text to check their ideas.

The point is made in the text that English spelling (and pronunciation) seems very irregular because so many words come from different languages. The students then look at some commonly misspelt words and learn to spell them correctly.

There are versions available for both face-to-face and online contexts.

Procedure

Lead-in (10-15 minutes)	• Tell students that you are going to do a quick quiz about the English language. Read out and show the students the four questions on **slide 2** and ask them, individually, to write down which answer they think is correct. • Then put the students into breakout rooms, in groups of 2s or 3s, depending on the class size. You might need to make a copy of slide 1 to share in the chat, so that students can share it in the breakout room, as some platforms do not allow screen sharing from the teacher in breakout rooms – this is something you should check before the start of your class. • Set a time limit (5 minutes), for students to compare and check answers and reach agreement. Ask them to nominate one speaker from each group. • Bring the students back into the main room, and then ask the spokesperson from each group to give their answer to each question. After each question, give the correct answer and award points to the teams that got it right. • Ask students if any of the answers surprised them. **Answer key** 1. A: The Anglo-Saxons originally came to Britain from West Germany, The Netherlands and West Denmark between the mid 5th century and the 7th Century. 2. B: It is estimated to be more than a million words, though this is of course changing all the time. This large number does include a lot of words which are almost never used, however. There are about 170,000 words in common use (answer A) and most native speakers have a vocabulary of between 20,000 and 30,000 words. 3. C: Over 60% of English words have Greek or Latin roots 4. B: (although most words come from Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, Italian and German)

Task 1: **Speaking** **(10-15 minutes)**	• Show students **slide 3**. Tell them you are going to give them some time to discuss the questions in their breakout rooms. Give an example for each question to get them started. The idea here is to get them thinking about loan words that they already know. You might want to consult this page if you need help with giving students examples: https://tinyurl.com/2udwpatb • Put the students into small groups in breakout rooms. After 5 minutes, move them back into the main room and ask them to either write their examples in the chat, or nominate students to tell you the words they thought of. If the platform you are using has a whiteboard feature, you could write them up there, or use a collaborative document. Give students time to practise pronunciation of the words.
Task 2: **Vocabulary** **(10-15 minutes)**	• Show students **slide 4** with the table on it. Again, you might need to make a copy of this slide so that you can upload it to the chat, so students can access it in the breakout rooms. First go through the words and check that students understand them. Encourage them to write any words they don't know in the chat and help with definitions. • Put students into breakout rooms in pairs or groups of 3. Ask them to try and guess the original language of the loan words in the box. Ask them to write their answers down on a piece of paper / in their notebooks. Set a time limit, then move them back into the main room. Don't give them the answers at this stage, as they are in the text they are about to read.
Task 3: **Reading** **(10 minutes)**	• Show students **slide 5**. Tell them you are going to give them 5 minutes to skim read the text to find the answers to the vocabulary task. You can ask students to turn off their cameras (you could do the same) and explain that in five minutes you will ask them to turn their cameras back on as you go through the answers. • Show **slide 6** for students to check their answers. Get feedback on how many words students guessed correctly. **Answer key** Arabic: admiral, candy, caravan French: café, entrepreneur, beef German: rucksack, delicatessen

	Hindi and Urdu: pyjamas, bungalow, khaki, shampoo
	Italian: broccoli, graffiti
	Japanese: anime, tsunami, rickshaw
	Spanish: cockroach, guerrilla
	Yiddish: glitch, bagel
Task 4: Spelling focus (20 minutes)	• Ask students if they know any spelling rules in English. You can ask them to either put up their hands (most platforms have a "hands up" function) and nominate or ask them to write any rules they know in the chat. If they don't know any, give them the following example: For example, 'i' before 'e' except after 'c'. You could point out that when this doesn't 'work' it is often because it is a loanword, such as beige, caffeine (both from French). • Show **slide 7** with the list of words. Again, put students together into breakout rooms and ask them to correct any words that they think are misspelt. Explain that these are loanwords and for that reason have irregular spellings. Again, make a copy of the slide to share in the breakout rooms if necessary, and then set a time limit. You could ask students to write their answers on a collaborative document, if this option is available to you. • Bring the students back into the breakout room, ask one person from each group to write the correct spelling in the chat. Use the whiteboard to write the final correct answers. If you like, you can award points for each correct spelling. **Answer key** 1. embarrass 2. occasion 3. accommodation 4. acquiesce 5. recommend 6. responsible (Latin based words tend to end -ible, not -able) 7. necessary 8. pronunciation 9. professional

10. immediately

11. foreign (French, so 'i' before 'e' doesn't apply)

12. accessible (Latin based words tend to end -ible, not -able)

13. aficionado (Spanish)

14. anniversary (Latin based words tend to end -ary, not ery)

15. ingenious

- Ask students to test themselves on any they got wrong until they are confident that they know them.

Optional activity	• If you have time, you could ask students to practise the spellings they have just learnt. In the chat or on the white board, choose 4-5 of the words from the table from the reading, or from the list that they have just looked at. • Tell students that they have 3 minutes to write an interesting sentence that includes all of those words. Remind students that the sentence should be grammatically correct, even if it doesn't make logical sense. • For example, with the words pyjamas, rickshaw, admiral and immediately, they could write something like: 'The admiral immediately ordered a rickshaw and drove away in his pyjamas.' • After 3 minutes ask students to write their sentences in the chat – focus on spelling here and comment on any particularly original sentences.
Homework options	• If there is time, ask students to look back through their work and find any other words they often misspell, and write them out correctly. • Direct students to the questions on **slide 8**. Ask them to re-read the text for homework and answer the questions on the slide. You can correct them in the next lesson. You can direct them to the text and questions on the Teaching English website. **Answer key** 1. That many French words came into the language as a result of the Normal Conquest- when French became the official language of the country. 2. Because many English people spent a lot of time in India when it was a colony of Britain.

| | 3. That the rules often follow the systems of other languages, rather than the original English language. |

Contributed by

Rachael Roberts