

Teaching notes on 1.01 Origins of English

Slide 1

Intro slide. The guy is the course mascot, called Lucundus ('Yu-kun-dus'), which means 'happy chap'. This slide also incorporates the learning objective.

Slide 2

A kick-starter to engage the pupils and give them a taste of some of the elements of the course. Pupils often have good understanding of Ancient Greece and Rome, but these pictures help jog their memories and open up discussion. The course consistently tries to draw parallels between the ancient and modern, and these pictures all have a modern reference point (or more).

Clockwise (with modern connections in parentheses), we have:

Roman soldiers (parallels with modern military techniques and armour, as well as the European landscape totally ruled by the fact that the Romans were able to conquer it and make it an Empire);

Gladiators (we still have sports where we watch people fight, albeit not to the death);

Greek hoplites [soldiers] (the parallel here is more to do with the lovely 'meander' pattern they have on their tunics, which is a decorative device used today);

The Trojan Horse (the myth of Troy is based in the epic poetry of Homer, which in many ways forms the basis of all Western literature. We also call seemingly benign computer viruses 'trojans');

Diana/Artemis, goddess of the moon and hunting (Diana is the name of Wonder Woman, and links still exist between the moon and magic), and;

The Flavian Amphitheatre, or Colosseum, in Rome (still standing today, the shape still copied by sports stadia, and we still use the word 'colossal').



Whenever you see this icon on the slides, it means there's a good opportunity for pupils to contribute their knowledge or opinions.

Slide 3

Helps contextualize where Ancient Greece and Rome sit in the history timeline. On each click, we travel back in time. There are two aims to this slide: to situate Ancient Greece and Rome on the history timeline, but also to encourage pupils to use their 'historical detective' skills to deduce what in the pictures may give a clue as to what period of history is being shown.

There are various ways to use this slide as a stimulus, but one way is, after each new picture, ask the pupils, “Are we in Ancient Roman or Ancient Greek times yet?” See if they can deduce which period of history the pictures represent.

Slide 4

This map shows the Roman Empire at its height to show just how huge it was. However, there’s a second purpose to this slide – to focus pupils on linguistic inheritance.



Can they find two countries whose names are still the same today as their Roman names, two countries that are slightly different, and two countries that are totally different?

Point out Britannia. Many of the pupils will be aware that the Romans founded London (Londinium) and many other cities in Britain.

Slide 5

We saw on the previous slide that we still use Roman words for countries in the same – or slightly changed – form. But Romans left Britain in the 5th Century CE. The first map and picture represent Rome at its height, and in Britain you would find written and spoken the Latin we study today. In the 5th Century, the Roman Empire started to contract and the Romans left Britain (and other outlying provinces) behind. Roman culture and language remained in places like Gallia (France). In England, the indigenous Brittonic languages were largely supplanted by Anglo-Saxon and Norse of settlers and raiders from the West of the island. Back on the continent, Latin had evolved into many different languages such as early forms of Italian, Spanish and French. Then, in 1066 the Norman French, led by William, conquered England and imposed their language on the Anglo-Saxons population.

Slide 6

Modern English, therefore, is made up of many different languages. Greek, Hindi and Arabic give us loan words, but the most important contributors to our language are Anglo-Saxon and French, which ultimately is an evolved form of Latin. Anglo-Saxon influences are especially felt on many ‘everyday’ words, and also are the strongest shaper of how we construct our grammar and syntax (how we put words together to create grammatical sense). Latinate French words, originally being the language of the ruling class, tend to be more ambitious, technical and polysyllabic – what we might classify as Tier 2 vocabulary.

Slide 7

Shows the students that as English speakers they are already quite good Latin translators, just as they could work out the names of countries on the map of the Roman Empire. As each word comes up, ask what the students think it means. If they need an extra clue, there’s a picture.

villa – Latin for house, but we still use the same word today to describe (usually) a holiday house. It also gives us the word ‘village’.

schola – school (actually a word borrowed from Ancient Greek, which accounts for the ‘ch’ sound)

finis – just add an ‘h’ to the end to get ‘finish’, gives us words like final and finite

bestia – beast, which is why the adjective is ‘bestial’ and not ‘beastial’



This icon indicates that it is time to complete the written exercise. Pupils will need coloured crayons and can work individually or in pairs. There are two sheets - the second can be given as an extension. The animated answer sheet can be used on the whiteboard for class marking. As an added extension, pupils can think of more derivative words from the Latin words on the worksheet.

Slide 8

The plenary which takes the form of a set of questions:

Question 1 After the Romans left Britain, who brought a form of the Latin language back here when they conquered England? [The Normans/Norman French led by William the Conqueror] Can you remember which year this happened? [1066]

Question 2 What English word do we get from the Latin word ‘bene’ meaning ‘well’? [benefit] Can you think of any more? [beneficial, benevolent – and more!]

Question 3 What other languages’ influence can be found in English? [Anglo-Saxon, Norse, Hindi, Ancient Greek, Arabic]