

Words that English Has Borrowed from Other Languages.

A language borrows a word (and doesn't give it back, but keeps it) when it doesn't have a word of its own for something new or a new idea.

When the Vikings (who spoke Old Norse) came and settled in England, many words arrived with them:

Words from Old Norse:

Anger, bag, birth, bleak, both, cake, call, club, crooked, die, drag, egg, fellow, freckle, gaze, get, hit, husband, kid, kindle, knife, law, leg, lift, loose, meek, oaf, raft, rag, raise, reindeer, root, rug, same, scalp, scare, seem, skirt, sky, snare, take, they, Thursday, tight, troll, trust, ugly, want, wand, window, wrong, wise,

Half of English vocabulary came from Norman French because of the conquest in 1066.

Some examples:

archer, assault, bacon, bail, beef butcher, button, chivalry, comfort, court, courtesy, curfew, crime, custom, defeat, eagle, enemy, dungeon, elope, embezzle, evidence, eagle, error, fashion, gallon, felony, grammar, grief, grocer, honor, injury, joy, judge, jury, justice, lavender, leisure, liberty, lease, lever, majesty, manor, marriage, matrimony, mutton, noble, noun, nurse, occupy, odor, parliament, pedigree, perjury, pinch, platter, pleasure, pocket, pork, push, prison, quarter, question, quiet, rape, reason, recover, remedy, rent, repeal, reward, river, robe, royal, salary, salmon, search, sermon, sewer, sir, shop, slander, sail, spy, squirrel, suitor, surplus, surrender, survive, syllable, tax, toil, treason, uncle, usher, valley, veal, venison, vice, virgin, vulture.

Christian monks, and later scientists, brought in many Latin words

Words from Latin:

Abdomen, actor, agriculture, creditor, crisis, December, demonstrator, dictator, dilemma, diploma, distribute, doctor, dogma, drama, duplex, duplicate, echo, educator, ego, editor, elevator, emphasis, exterior, exit, enema, exterminate, extra, exterior, extreme, factor, favor, fetus, focus, formula, fungus, genius, gladiator, geranium, gusto, honor, horizon, horror, humor, icon, idea, ignoramus, illustrator, incubator, index, inertia, inferior, insomnia, instructor, inferior, inspector, investigate, janitor, labor, junior, legislate, liberate, major, minor, maximum, medium, minimum, minister, minus, minor, moderator, monitor, motor, museum, narrator, nausea, navigator, neuter, masculine, feminine, object, opera, orator, peninsula, perpetrate persecute, person, petroleum, platinum, possess, prospect, quantum, quota, radius, ratio, recipe, saliva, senator, senior, junior, simile, sinister, sinus, stadium,

status, stimulus, superior, tenor, terror, thesis, translate, trio, tuba, tumor, tutor, vacuum, vapor, verbatim, vertigo, veto, vice, versa, vigor, vim, virus.

Greek was most useful to provide words for ideas, medicine, drama, and government.

Words from Greek

Atlas, Bible, barbaric, biography, biology, captain, cardiac, catalyst, catastrophe, category, catholic, cell, cemetery, center, chaos, character, charisma, choir, chronic, classic, climate, code, coa comedy, comma, cost, crisis, criticism, cube, cycle, cylinder, democracy, demon, dialog, diagnosis, diagonal, diagram, diameter, cereal, cloth, echo, hypnosis, narcissus, panic, academic, acrobat, agony, air, allergy, alphabet, amnesia, amphibian, anatomy, apology, architecture, aristocrat, arithmetic, aroma, atheism, athlete, atmosphere, autobiography, dilemma, diploma, dogma, drama, dynamic, eccentric, echo, economic, ecstasy, elastic, electricity, energy, epidemic, epitaph, ether, eulogy, exodus, fable, genealogy, generosity, geography, gigantic, government, grammar, graph, gymnastics, harmony, helium, hero, hexagon, history, holocaust, homonym, horizon, hygiene, hypocrite, idea, irony, lesbian, mania, mathematics, mechanics, megaphone, melody, metaphor, meteorology, method, microbe, microscope, monogamy, monopoly, music, mystery, narcotic, neurotic, nostalgia, nymph, ocean, octagon, odyssey, octopus, orgy, orchestra, organ, organization, orphan, palm, panacea, pandemic, panic, paradise, paragraph, parallel, paralysis, parasite, patriot, pentagon, period, pharmacy, philanthropy, phlegm, phobia, photo, photosynthesis, phrase, physics, planet, pneumonia, political, practice, problem program, prophet, psalm, pseudonym, psychiatry, psychology, rhapsody, rhyme, sarcastic, scene, schism, schizophrenia, school, serial, sperm, sphere, star, statistic, stigma, stomach, strategy, syllable, symbol, sympathetic, synonym, system, talent, technical, telegram, telephone, theater, toxic, tropical, tyranny

Words from Spanish:

adios, albino, alfalfa, alligator, avocado, banana, barracuda, barbecue, bronco, burro, cafeteria, canary, cannibal, canyon, chihuahua, chili, chocolate, cigar, cocaine, cockroach, comrade, embargo, fiesta, filibuster, guacamole, guerrilla, hammock, hacienda, hurricane, iguana, jaguar, lasso, llama, machete, macho, maize, margarita, matador, marijuana, mesa, mosquito, negro, oregano, papaya, patio, pimento, pinata, pina colada, plaza, poncho, potato, pueblo, puma, ranch, rodeo, rumba, salsa, savanna, savvy, shack, siesta, sombrero, spaniel, stampede, stevedore, tobacco, taco, tango, tequila, tomato, toreador, tornado, tortilla, tuna, vamoose, vanilla, vigilante, yucca.

Words from Arabic:

Admiral, adobe, albatross, alcohol, alkaline, almanac, alfalfa, amber, arsenal, assassin, azure, borax, caliber, candy, chemistry, cipher, coffee, cotton, crimson, divan, gauze, gazelle, gerbil, ghou, giraffe, harem, hashish, hazard, henna, jar, lilac, lemon, lime, loofah, macramé, mafia,

magazine, mattress, mocha, monsoon, mummy, muslin, nadir, orange, racket, safari, safflower, sash, sherbet, soda, sofa, sugar, tahini, talc, tariff, zero.

Words from American Indian languages:

Chipmunk, igloo, kayak, moccasin, moose, papoose, pecan, powwow, squash, succotash, tepee, toboggan, tomahawk, totem, wampum, wigwam

Words from Russian:

Cosmonaut, babushka, intelligentsia, mammoth, pogrom, ruble, tchotchke, kalishnikov, borsch, kasha, kefir, pirogy, glasnost, MIR, perestroika, tsar, Rodinia,

Words from German:

Alzheimer's disease, aspirin, blitz, concertmeister, dachshund, delicatessen, diesel, Doberman pinscher, dreck, Fahrenheit, fest, flak, frankfurter, Geiger counter, gesundheit, glitz, hamburger, hamster, kindergarten, liverwurst, Neanderthal, poltergeist, quartz, reich, Rottweiler, sauerkraut, strudel, uber, verboten, waltz, wunderbar, wunderkind, zeppelin.

Words from Chinese

Chop chop, chow, feng shui, ginkgo, ginseng, go, gung ho, hoisin, kanji, ketchup, kow tow, kumquat, kung fu, lo mein, mahjong, mu shu, shanghai, silk, soy, tai chi, tangram, tao, tea, tofu, tycoon, typhoon, wok, wonton, yen, Zen.

Words from Japanese

Bonsai, haiku, ikebana, kabuki, karaoke, manga, origami, kimono, zori, bento, daikon, dashi, ginkgo, hibachi, miso, nori, sake, sashimi, shiitake, shoyu, soba, sensei, shiatsu, soy, sukiyaki, sushi, Sudoku, tsunami, tamari, tempura, teriyaki, wasabi, Shinto, zen, akita, geiha, honcho, koi, sayonara

Words from Italian

Artisan, balcony, bronze, cameo, caricature, carpet, cartoon, dilettante, dome, façade, figurine, fresco, gallery, graffiti, grotesque, indigo, Madonna, magenta, mask, mascara, masquerade,

medal, mezzanine, model, mosaic, muslin, pastel, porcelain, replica, saloon, sienna, studio, tempera, villa, virtue, virtuoso, al dente, antipasto, bologna, broccoli, calamari, cappuccino, cauliflower, caviar, coffee, confetti, espresso, fettuccini, gusto, lasagna, linguini, lottery, macaroni, maraschino, marinara, Panini, parmesan, pasta, pepperoni, pesto, pizza, pistachio, ravioli, salami, scampi, soda, spaghetti, tiramisu, tortolini, tutti frutti, zucchini, novel, canto, parasol, pilot, pistol, brilliant, buffalo, bulletin, cannon, caress, carnival, cash, casino, monster, nostalgia, pants, ditto, debt, disaster, extravaganza, fiasco, finale, ghetto, inferno, jeans, lottery, magazine, mafia, ballot, fascism, incognito, Machiavellian, propaganda, algebra, granite, influenza, lagoon, lava, bank, bomb, bravo, malaria medico, race, rocket, scalpel, torso, volcano, alarm, archipelago, attack, balloon, fantasia, fugue, harmonica, libretto, maestro, mandolin, oboe, opera, orchestra, piano, piccolo, pun, sonnet, stanza, alto, bassoon, cadenza, cello, diva, presto, segue, serenade, solo, sonata, trombone, tuba, violin viola, sedan, sequin, tariff, tarot, traffic, trampoline, umbrella, vista, viva, zero.

Words from Polish

Babka, pierogy, doodle, horde, kielbasa, knish, mazurka, polonaise, polka

From Hungarian

Czardas, goulash, itsy bitsy, paprika, puli, vizsla,

From Indian

Avatar, bandanna, bangle, Brahmin, bungalow, calico, cheetah, chutney, cot, cushy, guru, jungle, karma, khaki, loot, mugger, pundit, pajamas, sentry, shampoo, toddy

Words from Korean

Kimchi, taekwondo, Hyundai, Samsung

Words from African languages:

Banana, banjo, basenji, bongo, bwana, chigger, chimpanzee, cola, coffee, dengue, fandango, gnu, goober, gumbo, jambolaya, jamboree, jazz, jive, jumbo, juke, kwanzaa, impala, marimba, mamba, meringue, mumbo jumbo, okra, safari, sambo, tango, tse tse, trek, voodoo, yam, zebra, zombie.

Words from Dutch

Aardvark, ahoy, aloof, bamboo, bazooka, beaker, blink, blister, block, blow, bluff, Boer, boodle, boom, booze, boss, bow, brandy, brawl, bully, Brooklyn, bundle, bumpkin, buoy, bush, caboose, cockatoo, coleslaw, cookie, crimp, cruise, deck, decoy, dike, dock, domineer, dope, dredge, drug, drive, easel, etch, excuse, filibuster, freight, frolic, gas, geek, gherkin, gin, golf, grab, gruff, howitzer, hoist, hooky, kill, kink, knapsack, knickerbocker, landscape, leak, loafer, loiter, luck, mannequin, mart, measles, pickle, pinkie, pit, plug, pump, poppycock, roster, Santa Claus, schooner, scow, skate, sketch, skipper, sled, slim, sloop, slurp, smuggler, snack, snoop, splinter, split, spook, stoop, stove, tickle, trigger, tulip, walrus, wagon, wiggle, yacht, Yankee.

Words from Portuguese

Baroque, breeze, buccaneer, caramel, caste, cashew, china, cabin, cobra, coconut, cougar, creole, dodo, embarrass, fetish, flamingo, junk, marmalade, molasses, Negro, piranha, savvy, tapioca, teak, veranda, yam.

Words from Yiddish:

Babel, blintz, bris, bubkes, chutzpah, dreck, ganef, gelt, glitch, goy, haimish, kibitz, klutz, kosher, kvell, kvetch, lox, maven, mazel tov, megillah, mensche, meshuga, minyan, mishpocha, naches, nebbish, noodge, nosh, nu, nudnik, oy vey, schlemiel, schlep, schlimazel, schlock, schlub, schmaltz, schemer, schmo, schmooze, schmuck, schmaltz, schnook, shegetz, shiksa, shmendrick, shtik, shpiel, tsuris, tukhus, yarmulke, yenta, zaftig

Words are still entering English. Sometimes people know they are loan words. Other times, they do not. Here are some phrases from modern French that can still be recognized as French:

a la carte, a la mode, adieu, au jus, au pair, avant-garde, ballet, belle, bon appetit, bon vivant, bon voyage, bourgeois, brica a brac, Brunette, bureau, cafe, carte blanche, c'est la vie, c'est magnifique, c'est la vie! chauffeur, chic, cliché, clique, coquette, crepe, croissant, critique, cul-de-sac, decoupage, deja-vu, de jour, éclair, esprit de corps, faux pas, fiancée, fiancée, gauche, genre, hors d'oeuvres, laissez faire, layette, liaison, mardi gras, nom de plume, rapport, RSVP, repondez, s'il vous plait, sabotage, savant, savoir-faire, vinaigrette, vis-à-vis, connoisseur, debut, encore, expose, forte, naive, passe, potpourri, premier, premiere, resume, rendezvous, risque, vignette.