CAPITOLO

2

The Making of English

hwilum word be worde, hwilum andgit of andgiete — "sometimes word for word, sometimes sense for sense" (King Alfred, Preface to the Pastoral Care, c. 890; translation by the editors)

OBIETTIVI

1. I can describe the Viking invasions and Alfred's Wessex, from the raid on Lindisfarne (793) to Cnut and Edward the Confessor.
2. I can explain what Old English was: a Germanic, Indo-European language with inflections, grammatical gender, runes and loanwords from Latin and Norse.
3. I can read short Old English texts with a parallel translation and compare them with Modern English and with the Italian tradition.
4. I can talk about ability and necessity in the past with *could, managed to, was able to, succeeded in* and *needn't have / didn't need to*.
5. I can explain and clarify an idea, and write an article with a hook, topic sentences and rhetorical questions.

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English 3 · Parte I · Beginnings · versione 1.0
Capitolo 2: The Making of English · pagine 51–78 del volume completo · estratto per lo studio

In the summer of 793 a fleet from Scandinavia attacked the monastery of Lindisfarne, on a small island off the coast of Northumbria. For the next two centuries the Vikings raided, settled, ruled and finally became English. In the same years a king of Wessex, Alfred, decided that his people should read books in their own language. Both stories changed English for ever: the Vikings gave it some of its most ordinary words (*they*, *sky*, *egg*, *take*), and Alfred gave it a written prose that could do the work of Latin.

This chapter tells both stories, then looks closely at the language itself: what kind of language Old English was, where it came from in the great family of Indo-European languages, how it was written, and why a student of Italian and Latin can often guess the meaning of an Old English word. In the Language section you will learn how to talk about what people **could**, **managed to** and **needed to** do in the past.

2.1 History and Society: Vikings and Kings

Chapter 1 left England in the age of Bede, who finished his history of the English Church in 731. By then England was a land of Christian Anglo-Saxon kingdoms — Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, East Anglia and the smaller ones — with rich monasteries full of books. Figura 2.1 shows what happened in the next three hundred years.

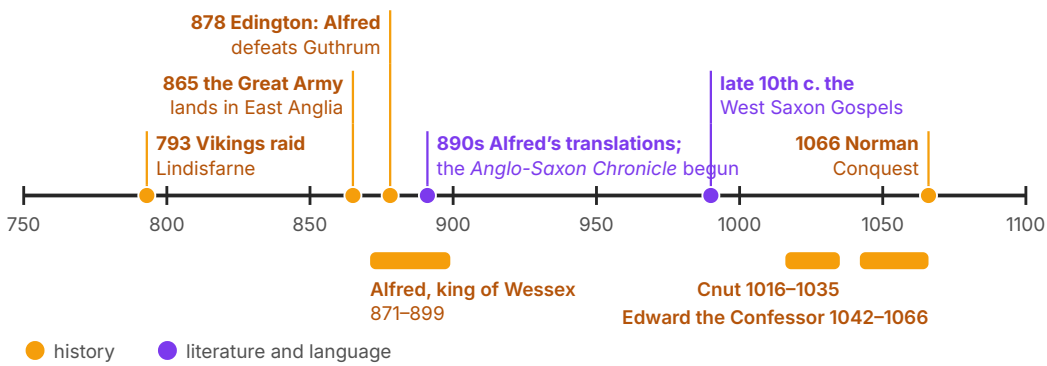


Figura 2.1 England from the first Viking raids to the Norman Conquest (750–1100). Amber: history; violet: literature and language. Bars show reigns.

2.1.1 The Northmen arrive

The **Vikings** came from what is now Norway, Denmark and Sweden. They were farmers, traders and excellent sailors, and their long, shallow ships could cross the North Sea and also sail

up rivers. The word *Viking* probably meant "a sea raider"; the English of the time usually called them "Danes", "Northmen" or simply "heathens", because they were not Christian.

The first great raid recorded in England struck **Lindisfarne** in **793**. The monastery was one of the most famous centres of learning in Europe, and the attack shocked the whole Christian world. You will read the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*'s entry for that year in the Texts section. For about seventy years the attacks were mostly hit-and-run raids on monasteries and coastal towns: monasteries were easy targets, full of gold, silver and food, and defended by monks.

2.1.2 The Great Army and Alfred

In **865** the raids turned into a conquest. A large force that the *Chronicle* calls "the great heathen army" landed in East Anglia and spent the next years moving from kingdom to kingdom. It took York in 866, and one by one Northumbria, East Anglia and most of Mercia fell. By 871 only Wessex, in the south and west, was still an independent English kingdom. That year a young man of about twenty-two became its king: **Alfred** (king of Wessex **871–899**). Later centuries called him "Alfred the Great".

In January 878 the Danish leader Guthrum made a surprise attack on Chippenham, in the middle of Wessex, just after the Christmas feast. Many West Saxons submitted or fled overseas, and Alfred hid with a small band in the marshes of Athelney, in Somerset. A few months later he gathered an army again, and in May 878 he defeated Guthrum at **Edington**, in Wiltshire. Guthrum agreed to leave Wessex and to be baptised, with Alfred as his godfather.

After Edington England was divided. A treaty between Alfred and Guthrum, probably made in the 880s, fixed a boundary that ran up the Thames and the river Lea, then to Bedford and up the river Ouse as far as **Watling Street**, the old Roman road, which probably marked the frontier further north (Figura 2.2). North and east of it was the area later called the **Danelaw**, where Danish law and custom ruled; the name itself is first recorded only in the early 11th century. York became the capital of a Viking kingdom, which lasted until 954.

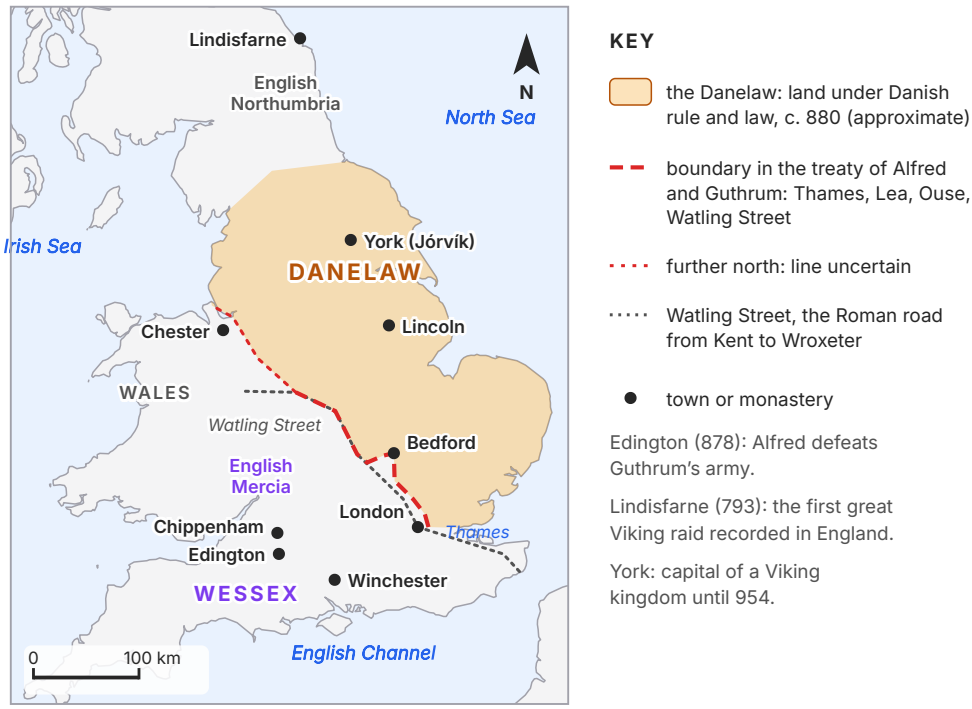


Figura 2.2 England after the treaty of Alfred and Guthrum, c. 880. The boundary of the Danelaw is approximate: the treaty describes it in the south-east, and its course further north is uncertain.

2.1.3 Alfred's kingdom: forts, laws and books

Alfred is famous not only as a soldier. To defend Wessex he built a network of around thirty fortified towns called **burhs** (the ancestor of the word *borough* and of place names ending in *-bury*): no village was far from a place of safety, and some burhs later grew into real towns. He reorganised the army so that half of the men were on duty while the other half farmed, he issued a law code, and in 886 he took control of London.

Most unusually for a king of his age, he also cared about books. He believed that the Viking wars were partly a punishment for the decline of learning, and he started a programme of education and translation that you will meet in the Literature section. Under his rule the **Anglo-Saxon Chronicle** was also begun in Wessex: a year-by-year record of events written in English, not in Latin, by authors whose names we do not know. It was begun in the 890s, copied and continued in several monasteries, and in its Peterborough version it goes on until 1154.

2.1.4 From the Danelaw to a Danish king

In the 10th century Alfred's children and grandchildren — his son Edward, his daughter Æthelflæd, "Lady of the Mercians", and his grandson Æthelstan — reconquered the Danelaw, and Æthelstan ruled as king of the whole English people from 927. But the Danes and Norsemen who had settled in the north and east did not leave: they became English Christians and farmers, and their language mixed with English, as place names like *Grimsby*, *Derby* and *Scunthorpe* still show (*-by* = "farm, village", *-thorpe* = "small settlement" in Old Norse).

At the end of the century new attacks began. King Æthelred II (978–1016) paid huge sums of silver to the raiders, but in 1013 the Danish king Sweyn Forkbeard conquered England, and in 1016 his son **Cnut** became king of England (**1016–1035**); later he also ruled Denmark and Norway. For a few years England was part of a North Sea empire. In 1042 the old English royal family returned with **Edward the Confessor** (1042–1066), the son of Æthelred and of a Norman mother, Emma, who had grown up in Normandy. His death in January 1066 opened the crisis that you will study in chapter 4.

> **APPROFONDIMENTO**
>
> **January or June?** The *Chronicle* dates the raid on Lindisfarne "the sixth day before the ides of January", that is, 8 January. Most historians prefer **8 June 793**. Viking fleets did not usually cross the North Sea in midwinter, and a later northern chronicle gives June; in Latin, *VI id. Iun.* (June) and *VI id. Ian.* (January) differ by one letter, so a copyist may have made a mistake. This is how historians work with medieval sources: they compare texts, think about what is possible, and say how sure they are.

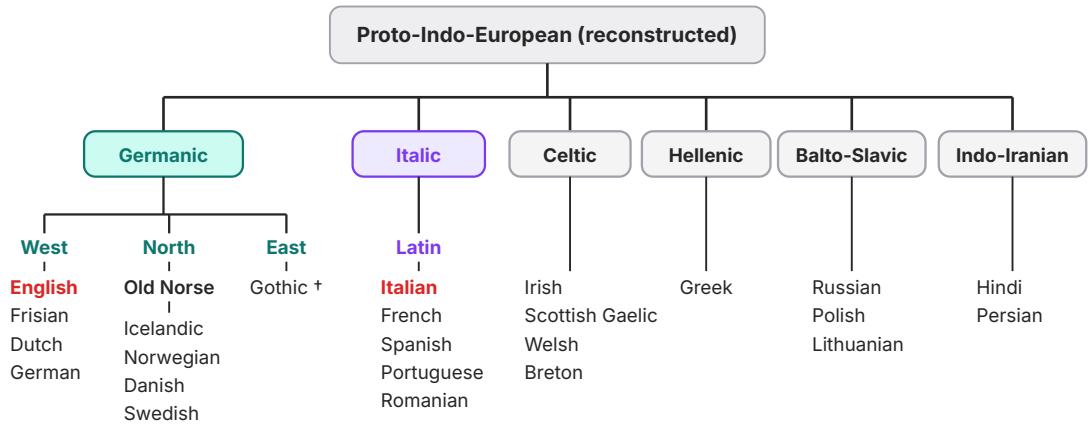
2.2 Literature and Language: What Old English Was

Old English (also called Anglo-Saxon) is the English language from the settlement of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, in the 5th century, until about 1100. The name is a modern label, and so are the dates: the people who spoke it simply called their language *Englisc*. It had four main dialects — Northumbrian, Mercian, Kentish and West Saxon — and, because Wessex became the leading kingdom after Alfred, most of the texts that survive are written in West Saxon.

2.2.1 A Germanic language in the Indo-European family

Old English belongs to the **Germanic** languages, together with Old Norse (the language of the Vikings), German, Dutch and Frisian. The Germanic languages are one branch of a much larger family, the **Indo-European** languages, which also includes Latin and its descendants (Italian, French, Spanish…), Greek, the Celtic languages (Irish, Welsh), the Slavic languages and many

languages of India and Iran (Figura 2.3). Nobody ever wrote down their common ancestor, *Proto-Indo-European*: linguists have reconstructed it by comparing its descendants.



One word through the branches:

English	German	Old Norse	Latin	Italian	Greek	Sanskrit
father	*Vater*	*faðir*	*pater*	*padre*	*patḗr*	*pitár*

† extinct language. Only some languages of each branch are shown.

Figura 2.3 The Indo-European family, simplified. English (Germanic branch) and Italian (Italic branch, through Latin) are distant relatives: the word for "father" shows the family resemblance.

So English and Italian are cousins, not sisters. English is not descended from Latin: it has *borrowed* thousands of Latin and French words, which is why an Italian recognises long, formal words (*nation*, *liberty*) but not short, everyday ones (*house*, *bread*, *child*). Those are Germanic, and most were already in Old English: *hus*, *hlaf* (loaf), *cild*.

2.2.2 Inflections and grammatical gender

Modern English has very few word endings. Old English, like Latin and German, had many. An **inflection** is an ending that shows the grammatical job of a word: subject, object, possession and so on. Old English nouns had four cases — nominative, accusative, genitive and dative — in the singular and in the plural, and the article *se* ("the") changed too (Tabella 2.1). Because the endings showed who did what, the word order could be freer than today.

Tabella 2.1 The Old English noun *stan* (“stone”) with the article, in the four cases

Case	Singular	Plural	Job in the sentence
nominative	*se stan*	*þa stanas*	subject
accusative	*þone stan*	*þa stanas*	direct object
genitive	*þæs stanes*	*þara stana*	possession (“of the stone”)
dative	*þæm stane*	*þæm stanum*	indirect object, after many prepositions

Two fossils survive: the genitive *-es* in the possessive *’s* (*the king’s*), and the plural *-as* in the plural *-s*. Most other endings disappeared between about 1000 and 1300, as unstressed vowels weakened in speech; contact with Norse speakers, who shared the words but not the endings, probably helped.

Old English also had **grammatical gender**: every noun was masculine, feminine or neuter, as in Latin, and the gender was often unrelated to meaning. *Wif* (“woman”, the ancestor of *wife*) was neuter; the sun, *sunne*, was feminine and the moon, *mona*, masculine — the opposite of Italian *il sole* and *la luna*. Modern English has lost grammatical gender completely: *the* is the same for every noun.

2.2.3 Letters and runes

The Anglo-Saxons who came to Britain wrote with **runes**, letters made of straight strokes, easy to cut into wood, bone or stone. Their runic alphabet is called the **futhorc**, from the sounds of its first six letters (Figura 2.4). After the conversion to Christianity, monks wrote English in the Latin alphabet, but they kept some extra letters for sounds that Latin did not have: **thorn** (*þ*, from a rune) and **eth** (*ð*) for the sound of *th*, used without much difference; **ash** (*æ*) for the vowel of modern *cat*; and *wynn*, a rune for *w*, which modern editions print as *w*.

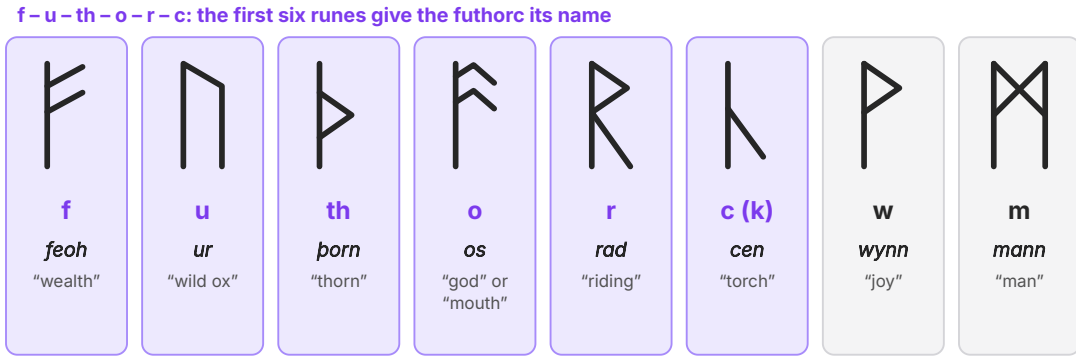


Figura 2.4 Eight runes of the Anglo-Saxon futhorc, with their sound values and Old English names (meanings as in the Old English Rune Poem).

2.2.4 Words from Latin and from Norse

A **loanword** is a word that one language takes from another. Old English took words from Latin at three moments: on the Continent, before the migration, through trade with the Romans (*win*, “wine”; *stræt*, “street”, from chapter 1); from the Romanised Britons; and above all after the arrival of Christianity in 597, when the Church brought Latin words for its own world (Tabella 2.2). The Vikings brought words of another kind. Old Norse and Old English were close relatives, and the settlers of the Danelaw and their English neighbours could probably understand each other in simple conversations; so Norse gave English everyday words, even pronouns — something very rare in language contact.

Tabella 2.2 Loanwords in Old English and early Middle English

From Latin (mostly Church words)	From Old Norse (everyday words)
school < *scol* < Latin *schola*	*they*, *them*, *their* (OE had *hie*, *him*, *hiera*)
bishop < *biscop* < Latin *episcopus*	*sky* (Norse *ský*, “cloud”)
candle < *candel* < Latin *candela*	*egg*, *skirt* (a Norse cousin of English *shirt*)
monk < *munuc* < Latin *monachus*	*take* (it replaced Old English *niman*)
mass < *mæsse* < Latin *missa*	*window* (Norse *vindauga*, “wind-eye”), *law*

Norse words often begin with *sk-*, a sound that in native English had become *sh-*: hence both *shirt* and *skirt*, once the same garment. *Church* is a special case: it goes back to Greek *kyriakon*

("the Lord's house") and probably reached the Germanic peoples before they came to Britain.

2.2.5 The periods of English

Historians of the language divide English into four periods (Figura 2.5). The boundaries are conventional and are usually marked by events outside the language: the Norman Conquest of 1066 for the end of Old English, the arrival of printing in 1476 for the start of Early Modern English. Chaucer, in chapter 6, wrote Middle English; Shakespeare wrote Early Modern English.

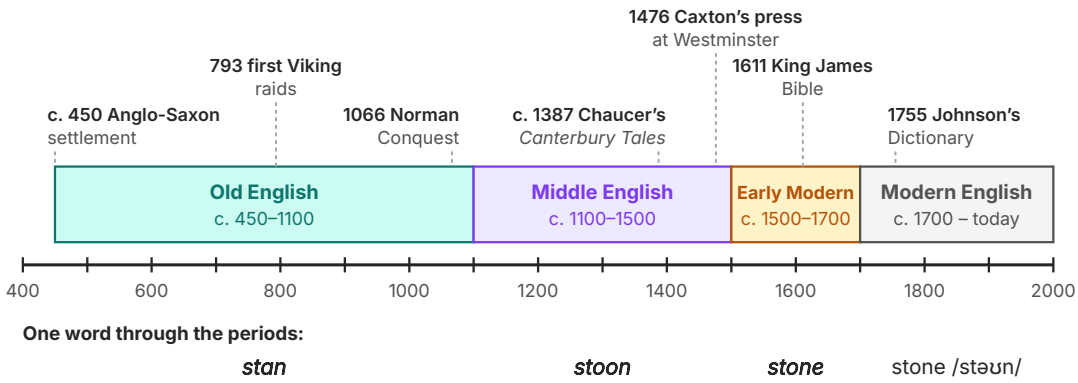


Figura 2.5 The four periods of English (conventional dates) with some landmark events, and the word *stone* through the centuries.

> **DA RICORDARE**
>
> **Old English** c. 450–1100 (*Beowulf*, Alfred) · **Middle English** c. 1100–1500 (Chaucer) · **Early Modern English** c. 1500–1700 (Shakespeare, the King James Bible) · **Modern English** from c. 1700. Shakespeare did **not** write Old English.

2.2.6 Alfred the translator

Alfred learned Latin as an adult, helped by scholars he invited to his court: Plegmund, later archbishop of Canterbury, the Welsh bishop Asser (who wrote a Latin life of the king), Grimbald from Saint-Bertin and John the Old Saxon. Together they made English versions of "the books that are most necessary for all men to know". The first was Pope Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care*, a handbook for bishops, translated around 890. Alfred is also credited with versions of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, Augustine's *Soliloquies* and the first fifty Psalms; an English Bede and Orosius's world history were probably made by scholars of his circle.

Alfred explained his plan in a preface sent with each copy to the bishops of his kingdom, and described his method in a famous phrase: "sometimes word for word, sometimes sense for

sense". The copy sent to Wærferth, bishop of Worcester, survives in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; its first line reads *Ðeos boc sceal to Wiogora ceastre*, "This book is to go to Worcester". A few lines of the Preface are your second text.

2.3 Texts: Old English Prayer, a King's Complaint, a Chronicle

2.3.1 T1 · The West Saxon Gospels, *The Lord's Prayer* (Matthew 6:9–13)

Context. The West Saxon Gospels, made from the Latin Bible in the late 10th century by an unknown translator, are the first English prose version of the four Gospels. The Lord's Prayer (*Padre nostro*) is the best place to start reading Old English, because you already know what it says.

Tabella 2.3 T1 — The Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9–13: West Saxon Gospels (text of J. W. Bright's edition, 1904; long-vowel marks omitted), King James Version (1611; standard modern spelling) and a Modern English translation by the editors

Old English (late 10th c.)	King James Version (1611)	Modern English (translation by the editors)
Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum,	Our Father which art in heaven,	Our Father, you who are in heaven,
si þin nama gehalgod.	Hallowed be thy name.	may your name be made holy.
Tobecume þin rice.	Thy kingdom come.	May your kingdom come.
Gewurþe ðin willa on eorðan swa swa on heofonum.	Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.	May your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us to dæg.	Give us this day our daily bread.	Give us today our daily bread.
And forgyf us urne gyltas, swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltendum.	And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.	And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
And ne gelæd þu us on costnunge, ac alys us of yfele.	And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:	And do not lead us into temptation, but free us from evil.
Soþlice.	For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.	Truly.

Glosses. *þu þe eart* "thou that art" · *si* "may be" · *gehalgod* "hallowed, made holy" · *rice* "kingdom" (compare German *Reich*) · *gewurþe* "may (it) happen" · *gedæghwamlican* "daily" · *syle* "give" · *gyltas* "sins" (modern *guilt*) · *gyltendum* "those who sin" · *costnunge* "temptation" · *alys* "release, free" · *soþlice* "truly" (*soþ* = truth: Shakespeare's *forsooth*).

Analysis

Form. Translation prose, close to the Latin (*Pater noster qui es in caelis*): *Fæder ure* keeps the Latin order noun + possessive. The Old English ends with *Soþlice* ("Truly", for "Amen"): the words of praise at the end of the King James Version (*For thine is the kingdom…*) were not in the Latin Bible the Anglo-Saxon translator used.

Language. Many words have survived with small changes of spelling and sound: *fæder* → *father*, *heofonum* → *heaven*, *nama* → *name*, *willa* → *will*, *eorðan* → *earth*, *hlaf* → *loaf*, *yfele* → *evil*. Others have disappeared: *costnunge* was replaced by *temptation*, a Latin word that came through French, and *rice* by the native compound *kingdom*; *rice* survives only at the end of *bishopric*. The endings carry the grammar: *heofonum* and *urum gyltendum* are dative plurals, *urne* is accusative.

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

Reading an Old English sentence step by step: *Urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us to dæg.*

1. **Sound it out.** Read every letter: *hlaf* has an *h* before the *l*, *dæg* has the vowel of *cat*.
2. **Find the modern cousins.** *urne* → our; *dæg* → day; *hlaf* → loaf; *us* → us; *to dæg* → today.
3. **Split the long word.** *ge-dæg-hwam-lic-an*: *dæg* "day" + *hwam* "each" + *-lic* (modern *-ly*): "each-day-ly" = daily.
4. **Find the verb and its subject.** *syle* is an imperative, "give"; the subject is "you", understood, as in Modern English.
5. **Put it in modern order.** "Give us today our daily bread." The Old English puts the object first, for emphasis: the ending *-ne* of *urne* tells you it is the object.

Questions. (1) Which Modern English words come from *fæder*, *nama* and *eorðan*? (2) In which line is the Old English word order furthest from Modern English? (3) Why does the King James Version have a longer ending? (4) Find a word in T1 that survives in Modern English with a different meaning.

2.3.2 T2 · King Alfred, Preface to the *Pastoral Care* (c. 890)

Context. In his letter to Bishop Wærferth, Alfred remembers the "happy times" when foreigners came to England to learn, and contrasts them with the present.

Tabella 2.4 T2 — Alfred, Preface to the *Pastoral Care*, the decline of learning (text of the Hatton manuscript in H. Sweet's edition, 1871; manuscript accents and editorial brackets omitted; translation by the editors)

Old English	Translation by the editors
Swæ clæne hio wæs oðfeallenu on Angelcynne	So completely had it [learning] declined among the English
ðæt swiðe feawa wæron behionan Humbre	that there were very few on this side of the Humber
ðe hiora ðeninga cuðen understondan on Englisc,	who could understand their services in English,
oððe furðum an ærendgewrit of Lædene on Englisc areccean;	or even translate a letter from Latin into English;
& ic wene ðætte noht monige begiondan Humbre næren.	and I think that there were not many beyond the Humber.
Swæ feawa hiora wæron ðæt ic furðum anne anlepne ne mæg geðencean	There were so few of them that I cannot think of even a single one
besuðan Temese ða ða ic to rice feng.	south of the Thames when I came to the throne.

Glosses. *clæne* "clean, completely" · *oðfeallenu* "fallen away" · *Angelcynn* "the English people" · *behionan Humbre* "on this side of the Humber", i.e. south of the river (Alfred writes from Wessex) · *ðeninga* "services, prayers" · *cuðen* "could" (past of *cunnan*, "to know how") · *ærendgewrit* "letter" (*ærende* "message" + *gewrit* "writing") · *areccean* "translate" · *wene* "I think" · *anlepne* "single" · *Temese* "the Thames" · *to rice feng* "came to the kingdom". *&* stands for *ond*, "and".

Analysis

Form and purpose. A letter in the first person (*ic wene*). The passage is a climax in three steps — very few south of the Humber, not many north of it, not one south of the Thames — so the decline looks worst in Alfred's own kingdom. It is persuasion: Alfred wants the bishops to support his plan, so he may exaggerate.

Language. The passage is about ability: *cuðen understondan* "could understand" and *ne mæg geðencean* "cannot think of". *Cuðen* is the ancestor of *could* (the *l* was added later, by analogy with *would* and *should*), and *mæg* is the ancestor of *may*, which then meant "can". Notice also *Englisc*, *Lædene* (Latin) and *Angelcynn*: a king who thinks of "the English" as one people, at a time when they lived in several kingdoms.

Questions. (1) Which three areas does Alfred name, and in what order? (2) Which two skills had almost disappeared? (3) Why does Alfred mention the Thames last? (4) Find the Old English ancestors of *few*, *understand* and *English*. (5) Do you think Alfred's picture is exact? Why might he paint it so dark?

2.3.3 T3 · The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the year 793

Context. The *Chronicle* records each year in a short entry. This one, found in the versions of the *Chronicle* that used northern sources, records the raid on Lindisfarne, the "Holy Island". It is quoted in the translation of James Ingram (1823).

Tabella 2.5 T3 — *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, entry for 793, in James Ingram's translation (London, 1823), text as printed

> A.D. 793. This year came dreadful fore-warnings over the land of the Northumbrians, terrifying the people most woefully: these were immense sheets of light rushing through the air, and whirlwinds, and fiery dragons flying across the firmament. These tremendous tokens were soon followed by a great famine; and not long after, on the sixth day before the ides of January in the same year, the harrowing inroads of heathen men made lamentable havoc in the church of God in Holy-island, by rapine and slaughter. Siga died on the eighth day before the calends of March.

Glosses. *fore-warnings*, *tokens* "signs of what will happen" · *firmament* "the sky" · *inroads* "attacks into a territory" · *havoc* "destruction" · *rapine* "robbery with violence" · *Holy-island* = Lindisfarne · *Siga* a Northumbrian nobleman.

Analysis

Form. An annal: the year, then events in the order they happened, without explanation of causes — except one, implied: the terrible signs in the sky "were soon followed by" famine and attack, as if heaven had sent a warning. The last sentence returns to ordinary news (a death), which shows how a chronicle mixes great and small events.

Language and tone. Ingram's translation is formal and Latinate (*lamentable*, *rapine*, *firmament*), more dramatic than the plain Old English: *harrowing inroads* is a 19th-century gentleman's style. The attackers are *heathen men*: for a monk, what mattered was that they were not Christian.

Questions. (1) What three things happened before the raid? (2) How does the writer connect them to the attack? (3) Which words show the writer's feelings? (4) What date does the entry give, and why do historians doubt it (see the Approfondimento in the History section)?

2.4 Language: Ability and Necessity in the Past

Alfred complained that very few priests **could** understand Latin; yet he **managed to** learn it as an adult, and his scholars **were able to** translate whole books. Talking about the past, English separates two ideas that Italian often expresses with the same verb: a general ability that lasted for a period, and a single success on one occasion. It also has a special form for something that you did but that turned out to be unnecessary.

2.4.1 *could, was able to, managed to, succeeded in*

You met *could* and *be able to* in English 1 (Unit 6). Tabella 2.6 shows how they divide the work when we speak about the past.

Tabella 2.6 Ability in the past

Meaning	Form	Example
general ability over a period	**could** / **was able to** + base form	*Before 871 very few priests* ***could*** *read Latin.* · *Alfred* ***could*** *ride and hunt as a boy.*
ONE success on one occasion (often after effort)	**was able to** / **managed to** + base form · **succeeded in** + *-ing*	*In 878 Alfred* ***managed to*** *escape to Athelney.* · *He* ***was able to*** *gather a new army.* · *He* ***succeeded in*** *defeating Guthrum.*
no success (negative)	**couldn't** / **wasn't able to** / **didn't manage to** / **didn't succeed in** + *-ing*	*The monks* ***couldn't*** *defend the island.* · *They* ***didn't manage to*** *save the treasure.*
perception and understanding on one occasion	**could** + *see, hear, smell, feel, understand, remember*	*From the hill they* ***could see*** *the Danish ships.*

The key rule: for a **single achievement** in an affirmative sentence, *could* is wrong. ✗ *After a long fight, Alfred could defeat the Danes.* → ✓ *Alfred* ***managed to*** *defeat /* ***was able to*** *defeat /* ***succeeded in*** *defeating the Danes.* In the negative there is no problem: *couldn't* works both for a general inability and for a single failure (*He tried, but he couldn't open the door*).

Managed to stresses difficulty: the action was hard, but it happened. **Succeeded in** is more formal, and it is followed by the *-ing* form, never by *to*: ✓ *She succeeded in passing the exam*, ✗ *She succeeded to pass*. With *almost*, *nearly* and *only just*, use *managed to*: *We only just managed to catch the train.*

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Capacità nel passato (*could / was able to / managed to*). Per una capacità generale, che durava nel tempo, si usa *could* o *was able to* (it. *sapevo, potevo, ero capace di*): *At ten I could swim.* Per un risultato ottenuto in UNA occasione, in frase affermativa, si usa *was able to*, *managed to* (+ forma base) o *succeeded in* (+ *-ing*), mai *could*: *I managed to finish* = *sono riuscito a finire*.

Confronto con l'italiano. L'italiano distingue con il tempo verbale: *potevo* (imperfetto, capacità generale) ≠ *ho potuto / sono riuscito a* (passato prossimo, una volta). L'inglese distingue con il verbo: *could* ≈ *potevo, sapevo*; *managed to* ≈ *sono riuscito a*. Nelle frasi negative *couldn't* va bene in entrambi i casi (*non potevo / non sono riuscito*).

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *Yesterday I could finish my project before dinner.* → ✓ *Yesterday I* ***managed to*** *finish my project before dinner.* (un solo risultato: non *could*)

✗ *He succeeded to escape.* → ✓ *He succeeded* ***in escaping***. · ✗ *I managed finishing.* → ✓ *I managed* ***to finish***.

✗ *I could to read at five.* → ✓ *I could* ***read*** *at five.* (dopo un modale, forma base senza *to*)

2.4.2 *needn't have done* and *didn't need to do*

For necessity in the past, English 1 (Unit 11) gave you *had to* and *didn't have to*. B2 English adds an important difference (Tabella 2.7).

Tabella 2.7 Necessity in the past

Form	Meaning	Example
needn't have + past participle	I DID it, but it was not necessary (a wasted effort)	*You* ***needn't have brought*** *a dictionary: the text has glosses.* (You brought it.)
didn't need to + base form	it was not necessary — usually I did NOT do it	*I* ***didn't need to*** *take the bus: Dad gave me a lift.*
didn't have to + base form	no obligation (= *didn't need to*)	*Lay people* ***didn't have to*** *know Latin.*
had to + base form	it was necessary / an obligation	*Guthrum* ***had to*** *leave Wessex.*

Needn't have done is common in polite answers: *Oh, you needn't have bought me a present! Didn't need to* can occasionally describe an action that happened anyway (*I didn't need to wait, but I waited*); to make clear that an effort was wasted, use *needn't have done*.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

needn't have **+ participio passato** = *non c'era bisogno che lo facessi* (e invece l'hai fatto): *You needn't have waited for me* = *non c'era bisogno che mi aspettassi* (ma mi hai aspettato). ***didn't need to*** **+ forma base** = *non c'era bisogno di farlo* (e di solito non l'ho fatto): *I didn't need to wait* = *non ho dovuto aspettare*.

Confronto con l'italiano. In italiano la frase *non avevo bisogno di comprarlo* resta ambigua: l'ho comprato o no? L'inglese lo dice con la forma del verbo. Attenzione: *needn't* qui è un modale (niente *to*, niente *did*).

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *I didn't need to buy bread, so I bought two loaves.* → la frase si contraddice. ✓ *I* ***needn't have bought*** *bread: there were already two loaves at home.* (l'ho comprato, inutilmente)

✗ *You needn't to have come.* / ✗ *You needn't have came.* → ✓ *You needn't* ***have come****.* (niente *to*; *have* + participio passato)

2.4.3 *had to* or *must have*? (recall)

Do not confuse obligation and deduction. **had to** + base form is a past obligation: *The monks* ***had to*** *carry Saint Cuthbert's body away from Lindisfarne.* **must have** + past participle is a deduction about the past (English 2, Unit 6): *The monks* ***must have been*** *terrified.* = I am sure they were terrified. In chapter 3 you will complete the past modals of deduction.

IN SINTESI

Tabella 2.8 Ability and necessity in the past at a glance

	Affirmative	Negative
general ability	*could / was able to* + base form	*couldn't / wasn't able to*
one success	*managed to / was able to* + base form · *succeeded in* + *-ing*	*couldn't / didn't manage to / didn't succeed in*
necessity	*had to* + base form	*didn't have to / didn't need to* + base form
done, but unnecessary	—	*needn't have* + past participle

2.5 Skills: Explaining Languages

2.5.1 Vocabulary

Language and languages. Tabella 2.9 collects the words you need to talk about languages and how they change.

Tabella 2.9 Talking about language

Word	Meaning	Example
loanword (n.) / **borrow** (v.)	a word taken from another language / to take it	*English **borrowed** sky from Old Norse.*
spelling (n.)	the way a word is written	*English **spelling** is full of history.*
pronunciation (n.)	the way a word is said	*The **pronunciation** of knight has changed.*
dialect (n.)	a regional variety of a language, with its own words and grammar	*Alfred wrote in the West Saxon **dialect**.*
accent (n.)	a way of pronouncing a language, typical of a place or group	*She speaks English with an Irish **accent**.*
native speaker (n.)	someone who learnt the language as a child	*Native speakers* often can't explain their own grammar.
mother tongue (n.)	your first language	*Giulia's **mother tongue** is Italian.*

A **dialect** differs from the standard in words and grammar as well as sounds; an **accent** is only a matter of pronunciation, and everybody has one. Careful: *pronunciation* /prəˌnʌnsiˈeɪʃn/ has no *o* after the *n*, although the verb is *pronounce*.

Word formation: compounds

English builds words by joining two words (compound nouns, English 1, Unit 14). Old English did the same — *ærendgewrit* "message-writing" = letter, *leorningcniht* "learning-servant" = disciple — and so does Modern English: **noun + noun** (*bookcase*, *toothbrush*, *shipwreck*) and **adjective + noun** (*blackbird*, *greenhouse*). Compounds may be one word, two words or hyphenated (*bus stop*): check a dictionary.

The main stress falls on the **first** element: *a BLACKbird* (a species; the female is brown) but *a black BIRD* (any black bird); *a GREENhouse* (for plants) but *a green HOUSE* (painted green).

2.5.2 Listening

Before you listen. What do you know about the Irish language from English 2 (Unit 1)? Listen (books closed) while two classmates read the script. Then answer: (1) Which branch of Indo-European does Irish belong to? (2) What is Ogham? (3) What did Aoife manage to do at the museum? (4) Which three Irish words does she give?

Tabella 2.10 Listening script — Aoife's project: two languages, two alphabets

Giulia	Hi, Aoife! Can you hear me? Prof.ssa Rossi says I can write up our chat for the class page, if that's OK with you.
Aoife	Hi, Giulia! Yes, I can hear you. Go ahead.
Giulia	So, your Fifth Year project is about Old Irish and Old English. Why both?
Aoife	Because in Ireland we study two languages from the start: English and Irish. Irish is a Celtic language. It isn't closely related to English at all — they're both Indo-European, but on different branches.
Giulia	Different branches… what do you mean, exactly?
Aoife	What I mean is that English is Germanic, like German and Dutch, while Irish is Celtic, like Welsh. In other words, they're very distant cousins.
Giulia	OK. And how old is written Irish?
Aoife	The oldest writing in Irish is Ogham. It's an alphabet of lines and notches cut along the edge of a standing stone. Most of the stones are from about fifteen hundred years ago, and they usually just give a person's name.
Giulia	Lines and notches? I don't quite follow.
Aoife	Let me put it another way. Imagine the corner of a stone as a line. Each letter is a group of short strokes — one to five — on the left, on the right, or across the corner. And you read it from the bottom up.
Giulia	That's amazing. Did you manage to see a real one?
Aoife	Yes! Our class went on a trip to see an Ogham stone last month, and I managed to read one name on my own. It took me ages, though.
Giulia	And Old English? You didn't need to learn that at school, surely.
Aoife	No, I'm doing it for fun. What surprised me is that Irish monks taught in Northumbria. Lindisfarne was founded by monks from Iona. And in Irish monasteries they wrote little notes in Irish between the lines of Latin books, so they could explain the hard words.
Giulia	Like our glosses in the Texts section!
Aoife	Exactly. And English has borrowed Irish words too: *galore*, from *go leor*, "enough"; *smithereens*, from *smidiríní*, "little pieces"; and *bog*.
Giulia	So is Irish still spoken every day?
Aoife	In the Gaeltacht, yes — you remember, west of Galway, in Connemara. Most of us learn it at school. I needn't have worried so much about Irish this year, actually: my first Fifth Year test went really well.
Giulia	Brilliant. Thanks, Aoife. Sláinte!
Aoife	Ha! That's for when you raise a glass, Giulia. To say goodbye, just say *slán*!

Language in context. Find two sentences with *managed to* and one with *needn't have*. Which two phrases does Aoife use when she has to explain something again?

2.5.3 Speaking: explaining and clarifying

Good explainers **rephrase**: they say the same thing more simply, give an example and check that the listener has followed. In English 2 (Unit 5) you learnt to *ask* for clarification; now you *give* it (Tabella 2.11).

Tabella 2.11 Useful language — explaining and clarifying

Function	Phrases
rephrasing	*What I mean is… · In other words… · Let me put it another way. · To put it simply…*
giving an example	*For example… · Take the word sky, for instance. · Imagine…*
checking understanding	*Does that make sense? · Is that clear? · Do you see what I mean?*
asking the speaker to explain (recall)	*Sorry, I don't quite follow. · What do you mean by…? · So are you saying that…?*

1. **Task 1 (pairs).** Student A explains one idea from this chapter (the Danelaw, grammatical gender, a loanword, runes) in one minute. Student B interrupts twice with a phrase from the last row of the table; A must rephrase each time. Then swap.
2. **Task 2 (groups of three).** Explain to an English-speaking guest an Italian expression that does not translate word for word (*in bocca al lupo*, *magari*, *dai!*, *boh*). Use at least one example and one checking question.

2.5.4 Writing: an article

In English 2 (Unit 6) you wrote a short magazine article. A B2 article is longer and better organised: an **eye-catching title**; a **hook** (a question, a surprising fact, a short scene); **rhetorical questions**, which expect no answer but make the reader think; paragraphs that open with a **topic sentence** stating the main idea; and a **closing line** that leaves a thought or a smile. The register is semi-formal: lively, not careless.

Tabella 2.12 Model text — an article for the Bristol–Turin Literature Trail blog (210 words)

Why Is English Spelling So Strange?
Have you ever wondered why *knight* has a silent *k* and a silent *gh*? Or why *through*, *though* and *tough* don't rhyme? If English spelling drives you mad, you are not alone — and the good news is that there are reasons.
First of all, English spelling is old. A thousand years ago *cniht*, the ancestor of *knight*, was pronounced exactly as it was written, *k* and all. Over the centuries the sounds changed, but the letters stayed where they were. In other words, many "silent" letters are fossils of lost sounds.
Secondly, printing arrived at the worst possible moment. When William Caxton set up his press in 1476, English pronunciation was in the middle of a huge change: between about 1400 and 1700 the long vowels moved, so that a word like *name*, once pronounced like Italian *"nahm-e"*, gradually took its modern sound. Printers fixed the spellings, but the sounds went on moving.
Finally, scholars made things worse. In the 15th and 16th centuries some of them added letters to show where words came from: the *b* in *debt* (Latin *debitum*), and the *s* in *island*, borrowed from *isle* (Latin *insula*) — although *island* is an Old English word and has nothing to do with Latin.
So is English spelling hopeless? Not quite. Once you know its history, every strange letter tells a story. Next time you misspell *Wednesday*, blame the Anglo-Saxons — and smile.

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

Analyse the model.

1. **Title**: a question that the reader has asked too (rhetorical).
2. **Hook**: two concrete examples and a direct address (*Have you ever wondered…?*).
3. **Body**: three paragraphs, three reasons, three topic sentences, signposted by *First of all*, *Secondly*, *Finally*.
4. **Explaining and rephrasing**: *In other words, many "silent" letters are fossils* — the article explains, then says it again more simply.
5. **Ending**: a rhetorical question, a short answer and a joke.

Checklist. (1) Is the title short and intriguing? (2) Does the first paragraph contain a hook? (3) Does every paragraph start with a clear topic sentence? (4) Have you used at least one rhetorical question and one rephrasing (*in other words*, *what this means is*)? (5) Is the ending memorable? (6) Did you check facts and dates?

Your task. Write an article (180–220 words) for the Literature Trail blog: "Five words the Vikings gave us" or "Why learn about Old English?". Check one extra fact in a reliable online source (an etymological dictionary, a university or British Library page) and say where you found it.

2.6 Connections: Two Families, One Continent

2.6.1 The first written Italian

By the year 1000 England had laws, chronicles, sermons, Gospel translations and great poems written in English. Italy at the same time wrote almost everything in Latin. The document usually taken as the first certain record of Italian is the **Placito capuano** (Capua, March 960), the record of a court case about land claimed by the abbey of Montecassino. The record is in Latin, but the witnesses' formula is in the vernacular of the area:

«Sao ko kelle terre, per kelle fini que ki contene, trenta anni le possette parte sancti Benedicti.»

"I know that those lands, within those boundaries that are described here, have been held for thirty years by the side of Saint Benedict [the abbey]." (translation by the editors) In modern Italian: *So che quelle terre, entro quei confini che qui si descrivono, le ha possedute per trent'anni la parte di San Benedetto.*

Why did written English come so much earlier? One reason often given is that English was obviously not Latin, so teaching and governing required written English, as Alfred saw. In Italy the spoken language was felt to be a "low" form of Latin, and Latin stayed the written language: Italian literature began only in the 13th century, with Saint Francis's *Cantico delle creature* and the Sicilian poets of Frederick II.

2.6.2 Cognates and false friends

Cognates are words in different languages that come from the same origin: *father* / *padre* (from Indo-European), *nation* / *nazione* (both from Latin *natio*). Many cognates help an Italian learner, but some are **false friends**: words that look alike but mean different things, because the English and the Italian word developed differently from the same Latin source.

Tabella 2.13 False friends from Latin

English	means	Italian look-alike	means
actually	in fact, really	*attualmente*	*currently, at present*
eventually	in the end, after a long time	*eventualmente*	*if necessary, possibly*
sensible	reasonable, practical	*sensibile*	*sensitive*
library	a place where you borrow books	*libreria*	*bookshop*

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *Actually I live in Turin, but next year I'll move to Milan.* → ✓ ***At the moment*** *I live in Turin…* (*attualmente = at the moment, currently*; *actually = in realtà*)

✗ *Shakespeare scriveva in Old English.* → ✓ Shakespeare scriveva in **Early Modern English**. L'*Old English* (anglosassone) è la lingua di Alfredo e del *Beowulf*: senza traduzione, oggi non si capisce.

LEARNING TO LEARN

Guess meaning from word families across languages. When you meet an unknown English word, ask three questions:

1. **Does it look like an Italian or Latin word?** *manuscript* ← Latin *manu scriptus* "written by hand" → *manoscritto*. But check the context: it may be a false friend.
2. **Is it Germanic?** Then try the regular sound changes that separate Germanic from Latin: Latin *p* = English *f* (*pater* / *father*, *piscis* / *fish*, *pes* / *foot*), Latin *t* = English *th* (*tres* / *three*), Latin *c* (k) = English *h* (*cornu* / *horn*, *centum* / *hundred*).
3. **What is its family?** Write the word with its relatives: *write, writer, writing, written*; *scribere, scriba* → *scrivere, scrittore* → *describe, script*. One root opens a whole family in three languages.

COLLEGAMENTI

Linguistics and biology: family trees. In 1786 the British judge William Jones, who had studied Sanskrit in India, observed that Sanskrit, Greek and Latin were so alike that they must "have sprung from some common source". In the early 19th century Rasmus Rask and Jacob Grimm showed that the sound differences between the languages are regular (the *p* → *f* of *pater* / *father* is part of what is called Grimm's law). In the 1850s, before Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* (1859), the linguist August Schleicher drew the Indo-European languages as a branching tree.

Biologists draw **phylogenetic trees** in the same way: the more inherited features two species share, the closer their branches. Linguists compare cognate words as biologists compare genes or bones, and some now use the computer methods of evolutionary biology to estimate when language families split.

Discuss. Italian borrowed from Germanic too: *guerra* (English *war*), *guardare* (*ward*). Today it borrows from English (*weekend*, *computer*). Are loanwords a danger for a language, or a sign that it is alive?

SINTESI

- The Vikings raided Lindisfarne in 793; from 865 the Great Army conquered most English kingdoms.
- Alfred, king of Wessex (871–899), defeated Guthrum at Edington (878); England was divided by a boundary along the Thames, the Lea, the Ouse and Watling Street, with the Danelaw to the north and east.
- Alfred built burhs, reorganised the army, made laws and started a programme of education and translation into English; the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was begun in the 890s.
- In the 10th century Wessex reconquered the Danelaw; Cnut ruled England 1016–1035; Edward the Confessor reigned 1042–1066.
- Old English (c. 450–1100) is a Germanic language of the Indo-European family, with inflections, four cases and grammatical gender; English is a cousin of Italian, not a daughter of Latin.
- Old English was written first in runes (the futhorc), then in the Latin alphabet with þ, ð and æ.
- Latin gave Old English Church words (*school*, *bishop*, *candle*); Old Norse gave everyday words and even pronouns (*they*, *sky*, *egg*, *take*).
- T1: the Lord's Prayer shows the continuity of English words (*fæder*, *heofonum*, *nama*); T2: Alfred describes the decline of learning; T3: the *Chronicle* records the raid of 793.
- Past ability: *could* for general ability; *managed to / was able to / succeeded in* + *-ing* for one success; *couldn't* for both in the negative.
- Past necessity: *needn't have done* (done, but unnecessary) vs *didn't need to do* (not necessary, usually not done); *had to* (obligation) ≠ *must have* (deduction).
- Compounds take the stress on the first element (*BLACKbird*); an article needs a hook, topic sentences and rhetorical questions.
- The Placito capuano (960) is the first certain record of Italian, when English already had a written literature; beware of false friends such as *actually* / *attualmente*.

ESERCIZI

History and Literature

1. ● In which year did the Vikings raid the monastery of Lindisfarne?

   A. 731

   B. 793

   C. 865

   D. 878

2. ● Where did Alfred defeat Guthrum's army in 878?
   - **A.** at Chippenham
   - **B.** at York
   - **C.** at Edington
   - **D.** at Athelney

3. ● Which of these words came into English from Old Norse?
   - **A.** *school*
   - **B.** *bishop*
   - **C.** *father*
   - **D.** *they*

4. ●● True or false? Correct the false sentences. a) Old English is the language of Shakespeare. b) Old English had grammatical gender. c) The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was written in Latin. d) Cnut was king of England and later also of Denmark and Norway. e) English is descended from Latin. f) The futhorc is a runic alphabet.

5. ●● Complete the timeline with the correct date: 865 · 871 · 878 · 890s · 1016 · 1042. a) Alfred becomes king of Wessex. b) The Great Army lands in East Anglia. c) Battle of Edington. d) The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is begun. e) Cnut becomes king of England. f) Edward the Confessor becomes king.

6. ●● Explain each term in one or two sentences: a) inflection; b) grammatical gender; c) loanword; d) Danelaw; e) burh.

7. ●●● Why did Alfred want books translated into English? Answer in 40–60 words, using the chapter and T2.

Text Analysis

8. ● T1. Find in the Old English text the words that became: a) *father*; b) *heaven*; c) *name*; d) *earth*; e) *loaf*; f) *evil*.

9. ●● T1. Compare the Old English and the King James Version. a) In which two lines does the Old English put a possessive after its noun, or an object before its verb? b) Why does the King James Version have a longer last line? c) Which Old English word survives only inside the modern word *bishopric*?

10. ●● T2. Answer. a) Which three areas does Alfred mention, and in what order? b) What could very few people do? c) What does *behionan Humbre* mean, and why does Alfred use "this side"? d) Why might Alfred exaggerate the decline?

11. ●● T2. Find the Old English words that are the ancestors of: a) *few*; b) *understand*; c) *English*; d) *Latin*; e) *Thames*; f) *could*.

12. ●● T3. a) Which signs appeared before the raid? b) What came between the signs and the raid? c) Who were the "heathen men"? d) Which words in the translation express the writer's horror? Find three.

13. ●●● Compare T2 and T3 in a paragraph of 80–100 words: who speaks, why the text was written, and the tone.

14. ●●● Rewrite T3 in plain Modern English for a 12-year-old reader (60–80 words). Keep all the events, change the style.

Language

15. ● Choose the correct option. a) When I was six I *could / managed to* read quite well. b) The door was locked, but we *could / managed to* open it with a knife. c) I looked everywhere, but I *couldn't / didn't manage* find my keys. d) From the top of the tower they *could / managed to* see the coast of Denmark. e) After three attempts Sam finally *could / was able to* pass his driving theory test. f) Before Alfred, very few priests *could / succeeded in* understand Latin.

16. ● Complete with *needn't have* + past participle or *didn't need to* + base form. a) You _____ (cook) — I had already ordered a pizza! b) It was a sunny day, so I _____ (take) an umbrella. I left it at home. c) We _____ (hurry): the train was twenty minutes late, and we waited on the platform for ages. d) Giulia _____ (buy) the book, because the school library lent her a copy. e) Callum _____ (print) the map: Sam had it on his phone, so the paper copy stayed in Callum's bag all day.

17. ●● Rewrite the sentences with the word in brackets. a) Alfred escaped to Athelney after a lot of difficulty. (managed) b) In the end the Danes captured York. (succeeded) c) We managed to finish the project on time. (able) d) The monks didn't manage to save the library. (succeed) e) It wasn't necessary for me to translate the text, but I did. (needn't)

18. ●● Find and correct the mistake in each sentence (✗). a) ✗ *After a long search, Marta could find her glasses.* b) ✗ *He succeeded to finish the marathon.* c) ✗ *You needn't to have waited for me.* d) ✗ *I didn't need to buy milk, so I bought two bottles.* e) ✗ *They managed finding a solution.* f) ✗ *She needn't have came so early.*

19. ●● *had to* or *must have*? Complete with the right form of the verb in brackets. a) Guthrum _____ (leave) Wessex after his defeat: it was part of the agreement. b) The people of Lindisfarne _____ (be) terrified when they saw the ships. c) Alfred _____ (learn) Latin as an adult — there were no teachers when he was a boy. d) The scribe _____ (make) a mistake: the raid can't have happened in January. e) In the Middle Ages most books _____ (be) copied by hand.

20. ●● Build sentences about the chapter, using the prompts and the structure in brackets. a) Alfred / hide / in the marshes / then / gather a new army (managed to). b) Guthrum's army / not / take / all of Wessex (didn't succeed in). c) a few priests / read Latin / in 871 (could). d) the Anglo-Saxons / use / runes / before the conversion (could — general ability). e) the monks / take / the saint's body / with them (had to).

21. ●●● Translate into English. a) Da bambino sapevo nuotare, ma ieri non sono riuscito ad attraversare il lago. b) Non c'era bisogno che mi portassi un regalo, ma grazie! c) Alla fine Alfredo riuscì a sconfiggere i Danesi, ma non poté cacciarli da tutta l'Inghilterra.

22. ●● "You ____ come to the station. I could have walked."
    - **A.** needn't to have
    - **B.** needn't have
    - **C.** mustn't have
    - **D.** couldn't

23. ●● "The exam was really hard, but in the end I ____ pass it."
    - **A.** could
    - **B.** succeeded to
    - **C.** managed to
    - **D.** needn't

Vocabulary

24. ● Complete with: accent · borrowed · dialect · mother tongue · native speakers · pronunciation · spelling. a) Aoife's _____ is English, but she also speaks Irish. b) English has _____ thousands of words from French. c) The _____ of *Wednesday* is very different from its _____ . d) In Newcastle people speak a _____ called Geordie, with its own words. e) He's Scottish: you can hear it in his _____ . f) Even _____ make spelling mistakes.

25. ●● Form compounds from the two lists and mark the stress (capitals): *black, green, tooth, book, ship* + *brush, case, bird, wreck, house*. Then explain the difference between *a blackbird* and *a black bird*, and between *a greenhouse* and *a green house*.

26. ●● Word families across languages. For each English word, write an Italian word and a Latin word of the same family: a) *manual*; b) *script*; c) *nation*; d) *portable*. Then write the English Germanic cousin of each Latin word: e) *pater*; f) *tres*; g) *piscis*.

Writing and Speaking

27. ●●● Write an article (180–220 words) for the Literature Trail blog: "Five words the Vikings gave us". Include an eye-catching title, a hook, at least one rhetorical question, three paragraphs with topic sentences and a memorable ending. Use the checklist in the Writing section.

28. ●● Speaking. Explain to a partner, in about one minute, why English and Italian are "cousins, not sisters". Your partner interrupts twice (*Sorry, I don't quite follow…*); rephrase each time.

Towards B2

29. ●● Multiple-choice cloze. Choose the best word (A, B, C or D) for each gap. *Most Viking settlers in England were farmers, not warriors. Within two generations many of them had (1) ____ Christianity and married English partners. Because Old English and Old Norse were (2) ____ related, neighbours could (3) ____ understand each other. In this way hundreds of Norse words (4) ____ their way into English, and many place names still (5) ____ the presence of the settlers. Without them, English would (6) ____ a very different language today.* 1 A taken B adopted C made D got · 2 A closely B nearly C hardly D strictly · 3 A probably B certain C likely D possible · 4 A did B found C went D took · 5 A show B say C tell D point · 6 A be B make C have D do

30. ●● Open cloze. Write ONE word in each gap. *Alfred was not (1) ____ a soldier: he was also a scholar. He learnt Latin as an adult, (2) ____ was rare for a king. With the help of scholars from Mercia, Wales and the Continent, he (3) ____ able to translate several books. His aim was to make the books "most necessary for all men to know" available (4) ____ English. He sent a copy of the first one to (5) ____ bishop of his kingdom, (6) ____ a letter explaining his plan.*

31. ●● Word formation cloze. Use the word in capitals to form a word that fits the gap. a) The *Chronicle* describes the raid in a very ____ way. (DRAMA) b) Alfred's ____ of the Pastoral Care was finished around 890. (TRANSLATE) c) English ____ is often different from its spelling. (PRONOUNCE) d) The Danes were not ____ at Edington. (SUCCESS) e) Many words that ____ in Old Norse begin with *sk-*. (ORIGIN) f) After the raid of 793 many monks felt ____: what could they do against the Vikings? (HOPE)

32. ●●● Key-word transformation. Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using the word in capitals. Use between two and five words, including the word given. a) It wasn't necessary for you to wait for me, but you did. NEED → You ____ for me. b) In the end we found the right house. MANAGED → In the end we ____ the right house. c) He passed the test after many attempts. SUCCEEDED → After many attempts he ____ the test. d) I didn't have to pay for the ticket. NECESSARY → It ____ me to pay for the ticket. e) I'm sure the scribe made a mistake. MUST → The scribe ____ a mistake.

PER APPROFONDIRE

- [BAU] A. C. Baugh, T. Cable, *A History of the English Language*: the chapters on Old English and on the Scandinavian influence.
- [CRY] D. Crystal, *The Stories of English*: the chapters on the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings.
- [MOR] K. O. Morgan (ed.), *The Oxford History of Britain*: the chapter on the Anglo-Saxon period.
- [NOR] S. Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. A: the introduction to the Middle Ages and Old English prose.
- [SWA] M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*: the entries on *could*, *be able to* and *need*.

Glossario del capitolo

Accent
accento (pronuncia) — a way of pronouncing a language, typical of a place or a social group

Burh
borgo fortificato — one of the fortified towns built by Alfred to defend Wessex; the ancestor of *borough*

Cognate
parola affine — a word with the same origin as a word in another language: *father / padre*

Danelaw
Danelaw — the north and east of England under Danish rule and law after c. 880

Dialect
dialetto — a regional variety of a language, with its own words, grammar and pronunciation

False friend
falso amico — a word that looks like a word in another language but means something different: *actually ≠ attualmente*

Futhorc
futhorc, alfabeto runico anglosassone — the runic alphabet of the Anglo-Saxons, named after its first six letters

Grammatical gender
genere grammaticale — the class (masculine, feminine, neuter) of a noun, often unrelated to its meaning

Indo-European
indoeuropeo — the family of languages that includes the Germanic, Italic, Celtic, Hellenic, Slavic and Indo-Iranian branches

Inflection
flessione, desinenza — an ending that shows the grammatical job of a word

Loanword
prestito linguistico — a word taken from another language: *sky* from Old Norse

Manage to (do)
riuscire a (fare) — to succeed in doing something difficult: *He managed to escape.*

Mother tongue
lingua madre — the first language you learn as a child

Needn't have (done)
non c'era bisogno di (e invece l'ho fatto) — You needn't have waited.

Old English
inglese antico, anglosassone — the English language from c. 450 to c. 1100

Rune
runa — a letter of the alphabet used by Germanic peoples before the Latin alphabet, made of straight strokes

Succeed in (doing)
riuscire a (fare) (formale) — She succeeded in passing the exam.

Thorn
thorn — the letter þ, taken from a rune, for the sound *th*

Topic sentence
frase chiave (del paragrafo) — the first sentence of a paragraph, which states its main idea

Soluzioni

1. B — 793.

2. C — at Edington (Wiltshire), in May 878. Chippenham is where Guthrum attacked in January; Athelney is where Alfred hid.

3. D — *they*. *School* and *bishop* come from Latin; *father* is a native Germanic word.

4. a) F — Shakespeare wrote Early Modern English; Old English is the language of c. 450–1100. b) T. c) F — it was written in English (Old English). d) T. e) F — English is a Germanic language; it has borrowed many Latin words, but it is not descended from Latin. f) T.

5. a) 871 · b) 865 · c) 878 · d) 890s · e) 1016 · f) 1042.

6. a) An ending that shows the grammatical job of a word (subject, object, possession…), e.g. *stan / stanes / stane*. b) The division of nouns into masculine, feminine and neuter, often unrelated to meaning (OE *wif* "woman" was neuter). c) A word taken from another language (*sky* from Old Norse). d) The part of England north and east of the boundary along Watling Street, under Danish rule and law after c. 880. e) One of the fortified towns that Alfred built to defend Wessex; ancestor of *borough*.

7. Model answer: Alfred thought that learning had almost disappeared: very few priests could understand their services or translate Latin (T2). He believed this decline had brought the Viking disasters, so he wanted the books "most necessary for all men to know" in English, the language people understood, so that young free men could learn to read it first and then Latin. (≈ 60 words)

8. a) *fæder* b) *heofonum* c) *nama* d) *eorðan* e) *hlaf* f) *yfele*.

9. a) Line 1, *Fæder ure* (noun + possessive, as in Latin *Pater noster*), and line 5, *Urne … hlaf syle us* (the object before the verb). Line 2 (*si þin nama gehalgod*) also differs, with the verb first. b) It adds a doxology, *For thine is the kingdom…*, which was not in the Latin Bible that the Anglo-Saxon translator used; the Old English ends with *Soþlice* ("Truly" = Amen). c) *rice* ("kingdom"), modern *-ric*.

10. a) South of the Humber, beyond (north of) the Humber, south of the Thames — from the general to his own kingdom, Wessex. b) Understand their church services in English, or translate a letter from Latin into English. c) "On this side of the Humber", i.e. south of it: Alfred is writing in Wessex, in the south. d) The Preface is persuasive: a dark picture of the present makes his programme of translation and schooling look necessary; he also compares the present with an idealised "golden age".

11. a) *feawa* b) *understondan* c) *Englisc* d) *Lædene* e) *Temese* f) *cuðen* (past of *cunnan*).

12. a) Huge sheets of light rushing through the air, whirlwinds and fiery dragons flying across the sky. b) A great famine. c) The Vikings (called heathens because they were not Christian). d) Any three of: *dreadful*, *terrifying*, *most woefully*, *tremendous*, *harrowing*, *lamentable havoc*, *rapine and slaughter*.

13. Model answer: In T2 a king speaks in the first person (*ic wene*) to a bishop; in T3 an anonymous chronicler records the events of a year. Alfred writes to persuade: he wants support for his plan of education, so he builds a climax from "very few" to "not a single one". The chronicler writes to remember, and links signs, famine and raid as if they were warnings from God. Both texts are gloomy, but Alfred's gloom leads to a programme of action, while the Chronicle's horror (*harrowing inroads*, *lamentable havoc*) has no answer. (≈ 95 words)

14. Model answer: In 793 terrible signs frightened the people of Northumbria: great flashes of light in the sky, strong winds and what looked like fiery dragons. Soon there was a famine. Then, a short time later, pagan raiders from the sea attacked the

church on Lindisfarne, the Holy Island. They stole its treasures and killed people. In the same year a nobleman called Siga died. (≈ 65 words)

15. a) could (general ability) b) managed to (one success) c) couldn't (with *didn't manage* the verb would need *to*: *didn't manage to find*) d) could (perception verb) e) was able to (one success) f) could (general ability; *succeeded in* would need *-ing*).

16. a) needn't have cooked b) didn't need to take c) needn't have hurried d) didn't need to buy e) needn't have printed.

17. a) Alfred managed to escape to Athelney. b) In the end the Danes succeeded in capturing York. c) We were able to finish the project on time. d) The monks didn't succeed in saving the library. e) I needn't have translated the text.

18. a) Marta **managed to find / was able to find** her glasses. b) He succeeded **in finishing**. c) You needn't **have waited** (no *to*). d) I **needn't have bought** milk — or: I didn't need to buy milk, so I **didn't buy** any. e) They managed **to find** a solution. f) She needn't have **come**.

19. a) had to leave b) must have been c) had to learn d) must have made e) had to be.

20. a) Alfred managed to hide in the marshes and then (managed to) gather a new army. b) Guthrum's army didn't succeed in taking all of Wessex. c) In 871 only a few priests could read Latin. d) Before the conversion the Anglo-Saxons could use runes. e) The monks had to take the saint's body with them.

21. a) As a child I could swim, but yesterday I didn't manage to / couldn't / wasn't able to swim across the lake. b) You needn't have brought me a present, but thank you! c) In the end Alfred managed to / was able to defeat the Danes, but he couldn't / wasn't able to drive them out of the whole of England.

22. B — *needn't have* (the person came; it was unnecessary). A is never correct: no *to* after *needn't*.

23. C — *managed to* (one success after difficulty; *could* is wrong here, *succeeded* needs *in passing*).

24. a) mother tongue b) borrowed c) spelling … pronunciation (or pronunciation … spelling) d) dialect e) accent f) native speakers.

25. *BLACKbird, GREENhouse, TOOTHbrush, BOOKcase, SHIPwreck*. A *blackbird* is a species of bird (the female is brown); a *black bird* is any bird that is black. A *greenhouse* is a glass building for growing plants; a *green house* is a house painted green. In the compound the stress is on the first element; in adjective + noun the stress is on the noun.

26. a) *manuale*, *mano* / Latin *manus* b) *scritto*, *scrivere* / *scribere*, *scriptum* c) *nazione* / *natio* d) *portare*, *portatile* / *portare*. e) *father* f) *three* g) *fish*.

27. Guidance. Title: e.g. "Thank a Viking!" Hook: a scene ("You wake up, look at the sky, eat an egg…"). Body: one paragraph on the Vikings in England (raids from 793, the Danelaw); one on everyday words (*sky, egg, take, window, law*) with their Norse meaning (*vindauga* "wind-eye"); one on pronouns (*they, them, their*) and why they are surprising. Ending: a rhetorical question or a joke. Check: topic sentences, linkers (*first of all, what is more, finally*), at least one rephrasing (*in other words*), facts from the chapter, 180–220 words.

28. Model answer: "English and Italian are cousins, not sisters. What I mean is that they belong to the same big family, Indo-European, but to different branches. — Sorry, I don't quite follow. — Let me put it another way. Italian comes from Latin, so it's a 'daughter' of Latin, like French and Spanish. English comes from the Germanic branch, like German and Dutch. — So are you saying that English has nothing from Latin? — Not exactly. English borrowed lots of Latin words, like *nation*, but its everyday words — *father, house, bread* — are Germanic. In other words, the family resemblance is there, but it's distant. Does that make sense?"

29. 1 B (adopted) · 2 A (closely) · 3 A (probably) · 4 B (found their way) · 5 A (show) · 6 A (be).

30. 1 only/just · 2 which · 3 was · 4 in · 5 every/each · 6 with.

31. a) dramatic b) translation c) pronunciation d) successful e) originated f) hopeless.

32. a) needn't have waited b) managed to find c) succeeded in passing d) wasn't necessary for e)

must have made.