

# 299 Readings in English Culture



**Why should we learn about other culture?**

**What is Culture all about?**

We should learn about other culture:

- 1- to learn about the world.
- 2-to look at issues in different way.
- 3-to establish a certain intellectual distance from his or her own national values.

Culture is all about the people of country & way they recieve as well as the way other perceive them too.

**What is Language?**

**Why Language is Important to us as  
people?**

**What is Society ?**

**Language** : is a "human system of communication that uses signals, such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols." Also it considered as "windows of opportunity" for acquiring language--written, spoken, or signed--that exist within the first few years of life . language is that we express thoughts with words.

**Society**: an extended social group having a distinctive cultural and economic organization, who live in any region or at any period; any community of individuals who are united together by a common bond of nearness or intercourse; those who recognize each other as associates, friends, and acquaintances

## •Who are the Cultivated People?

• well-educated: a civilized and cultivated man, polished; refined .

Now days, the Cultivated People are conscious of their deficiencies in their educations, lack of some knowledge of economics ,medieval history, they also want to discover something of nature & development of a language, civilization & culture. By communicating their thoughts & feeling to their follow, the tool with which conduct their business & the vehicle by which have been transmitted to their sciences.

# Brief History of English Language

The English language today reflects many centuries of development, in both Political and Social events, which profoundly affected the English people life.

## For Example:

- 1- The Christianizing of Britain in 597 brought England into contact with Latin civilization & made significant additions to the vocabulary
- 2- The Scandinavian invasions resulted in considerable mixture of the two peoples & their languages.

When English regained supremacy as the language of all elements of population, it was an English greatly changed in both Form & Vocabulary from what it had been in 1066. (How that happen?) by:

1- the rise of the middle class (the Renaissance)

2- the development of England as a maritime power.

3- the expansion of the British Empire.

4- the growth of commerce & industry , of science & literature

Contributed to make English language what it is today, in short, English language reflects in its entire development the political, social, culture



# What's Dead Language?

Dead language: is a language, such as Latin, that is not changed in nearly two thousand years as well no longer learned as a native language by a speech community.

Changing in a living language is most seen in the vocabulary, that means old words die out, new words are added & existing words change their meaning.

For Example:

NICE in Shakespeare's day meant FOOLISH  
signified a cold in the head

What's the relationship  
between People & Language?

Why English Language  
considered as an important  
Language?

Intimate is the relation between People & Language ,because, language lives only so long as there are people who speak it.& use it as their native tongue.

\*English Language is important because:

1- the people who speak it are important .Politically, culturally, commercially, socially.

2- it's spoken by more than 340 million people as a first language in the United Kingdom, United States & the Former of British Empire.

3- it's the largest of the occidental languages but not the largest language in the world.

What's the largest language in the world? 😊

**4-** it's spoken as 2nd language for most people around the world.

**\*\***In some of the developing countries which are experiencing the greatest growth, English is one of the official languages. . Bring some Examples 😊

**In Short English important because :**

English is the mother tongue of nations whose combined political influence, economic soundness, commercial activity, social well being & scientific & cultural contributions to civilization give impressive support to its precedence.

Can we considered English, Arabic,  
French & German important Languages?

What about Romanian, Serbian & Malay  
languages can we consider them  
important language ,also & why?

What does an **Ethnic Group or  
Nation?**

**Yes**, English , Arabic , French & German language considered important because they are languages of an important people. Whereas Romanian, Serbian & Malay languages are not important now days.

They belong to the an Ethnic Group or nation , which means : a group or nation has at some time been so great that their language remains important among cultivated people long after it has ceased to represent political, commercial or other greatness.

**Fore Example:**

Greek language studied in its classical form because of the great civilization which its literature preserves the most

What's the Global Language?

Should we have a Global Language?

What are the six Official languages  
for the United Nation?



A Global Language or Universal Language : is a language intended to further communication and goodwill among peoples speaking different languages without necessarily replacing their native tongues.

-it's an auxiliary language that is used and understood everywhere.

The Official Languages for the United Nation are English, Arabic, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese.

- Why French & Germany languages over century ago considered as i.m.p languages?

-Because, French was a diplomatic language & enjoyed considerable popularity in literary & scientific circle, during 19thc, it was the prestige, though still great gradually declined. whereas, the prominence of Germany in all fields of scientific & scholar activities made German a **serious competitor**. but now most the scientific researches published in English.

The Revolution in communications during this century has contributed to the spread of several European languages, but English become the major broadcasting & motion picture industries in the United States & Great Britain.

What are Germanic & Romance languages mean?

## Germanic languages

Some languages, sharing similar grammatical structure , many common words.

### Examples:

English, German, Scottish, Swedish, Dutch, Flemish, Danish, Norwegian

## Romance languages

Romance languages are descended from Latin.

### Examples:

French, Italian, Spanish & Portuguese.

English Language classified as a Germanic language. it belongs to the group of languages to which German, Dutch, Flemish, Danish, Swedish & Norwegian. sharing similar grammatical structure , many common words, also more than half of its vocabulary are derived from Latin language.& some of these borrowings have been direct a great many from French language.

Why English presents a somewhat familiar appearance to any one who speaks a Germanic or Romance language?

# Copying with Stereotypes

Coping with Stereotypes : An image or idea has become fixed by repetition or acceptance the point of Cliché.

**\*\* the use of a double collection of Stereotypes ,drawing the attention to the fundamental differences between two cultures, the principle danger of such an approach lies in the destruction of empathy & the development of a real antipathy to the other culture.**

*Can Humor reflect the culture  
of a country?*



In learning a language ,people reach a point where they are comfortable to start using word games, puns & idioms in joking, such the use of short puzzles called Riddles, which are a luxury in any language.

**\*\*** They were posed to generate introspection & to teach lessons. They were used as part of sacred rituals, prophecies & matters of life & death. And solving the Riddle is as much a part of the fun as asking the riddle.

One of the most ancient riddles that has come down to us is the riddle of the Sphinx, a mythological creature. stood guard over the gates of the city of Thebes & asked the following riddle to all who passed:

“ What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, & three legs at night?” & those who couldn't answer the riddle were killed.

A man named **Oedipus**, solved the riddle & destroyed the Sphinx.

He correctly interpreted. "**Morning**" means a infancy period, "**Noon**" represents the period of life as adults. "**Night**" refers to our old age.

"**Humor** is a way of communication with a specific goal. The way it is used in different countries, in different ways, reflects a people's way of thinking particular to a certain country, reflects a certain culture."

“ Why do surgeons wear masks during an  
operation?” 😊

The nature of riddles has changed, today in  
America, riddles are used to mislead, trick &  
amuse

- **WHERE IN THE WORLD  
IS ENGLAND ?**



- **England** along with **Scotland, Wales, & Northern Ireland**, form **the United Kingdom** ( a Northern European country).
- It consists of two main zones:
- **1- The Lowlands** which extend across the Midlands (South- East Anglia).
- **2-The Pennines & the Lake District** in the north & the granite uplands of **Dartmoor & Exmoor** in the south-west.

# 2000 YEARS OF ART & INVENTION

**Over the past twenty centuries, the English have played an important role in the development of the world culture by making major in scientific discoveries & producing great works of art & literature.**

**Could you bring some examples?**



## 1st - 8th Century

\* Around A.D.670 : the earliest known Christian English poet **C'dmon**, produces “ a hymn on the Creation”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lahDaUHMil>

## 9th Century

\* A.D.878-99: **Alfred the Great** (849-899) establishes schools for English nobles' sons.

## 11th Century

\* A.D.1086: Domesday book compiled.



## 12th Century

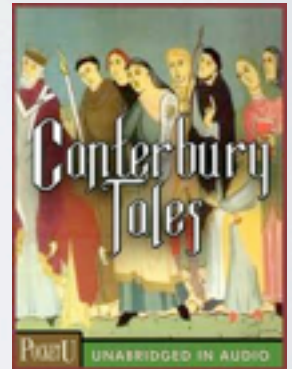
- \* A.D. 1150 - 1200: **Oxford University founded.**

## 13th Century

- \* A.D. 1209: **Cambridge University founded.**

## 14th Century

- \* A.D. 1387-1400: **Poet, Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400) writes Canterbury Tales.**



## 15th Century

\*A.D. 1476: **William Caxton (1421-91)** sets up **printable press at Westminster. (learnt in Germany then bring it to England).**

## 16th Century

\* A.D. 1531: **Diplomat & Scholar, Thomas Elyot (1490- 1546),** publishes “ **The Covernor**”, the first **modern handbook on the education of children.**

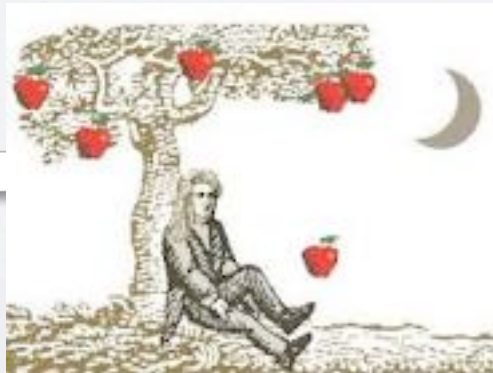
\*A.D. 1590-2: **William Shakespeare** writes his first **play: Henry VI parts 1,2&3 and love's labour lost.**

## 17th Century

\* A.D. 1622: Mathematician, **William Oughtred** invents circulation of the blood.



\* A.D. 1668: Physicist & Mathematician, **Isaac Newton** invents the reflecting telescope & publishes 'Philosophia natuarlis principia mathematic', which includes his law of motion & gravity.



## 18th & 19th Century

- \* **A.D. 1774:** The Scientist, *Joseph* discovers Oxygen.
- \* **A.D. 1792:** The feminist & member of the English Jacobins, *Mary Wollstonecraft* publishes “A vindication of the Rights of Women”.
- \* **A.D. 1868:** the world's first traffic lights are installed near London's house of Commons.
- \* **A.D. 1865-6:** Antiseptic surgery introduced by *Joseph Lister*.



## 20th Century

- \* A.D. 1906: Biochemist, **Frederick Hopkins** discovers “Accessory food factors” Vitamins”.
- \* A.D. 1909: The **First motion pictures in color** are shown in a London Theater.
- \* A.D. 1922: Crime writer , **Agatha Christie** publishes her first novel, The Mysterious Affair at Styles.
- \* A.D. 1926: Scholar & author, **Henry Fowler** publishes Modern English Usage.
- \* A.D. 1930: Aviator & engineer, **Frank Whittle** patents jet engine aircraft.

## 21st Century

**\* A.D.2002: Scientists from Cambridge University weigh the lightest known particle in the universe, unlocking the secret of one of the greatest mysteries in cosmology.**

16-25

