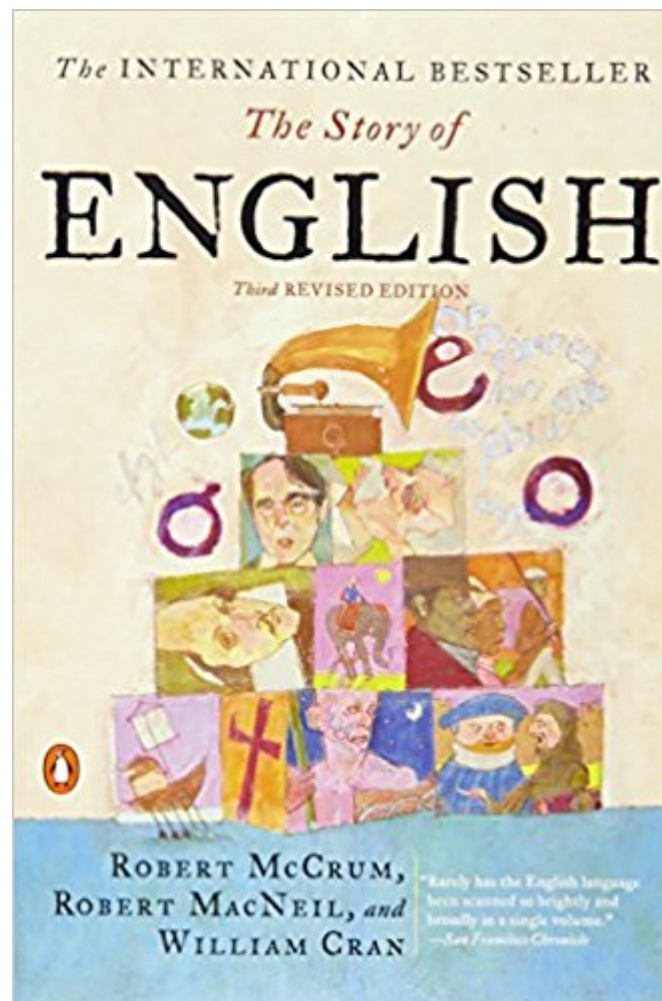


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The Story Of English: Third Revised Edition



Synopsis

Now revised, *The Story of English* is the first book to tell the whole story of the English language. Originally paired with a major PBS miniseries, this book presents a stimulating and comprehensive record of spoken and written English—from its Anglo-Saxon origins some two thousand years ago to the present day, when English is the dominant language of commerce and culture with more than one billion English speakers around the world. From Cockney, Scouse, and Scots to Gullah, Singlish, Franglais, and the latest African American slang, this sweeping history of the English language is the essential introduction for anyone who wants to know more about our common tongue.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A tie-in for a nine-part television series to be broadcast over PBS beginning in September, this is a wide-ranging account of the travels and changes of the English tongue from its beginnings to tomorrow, from England to America to Australia to Africa and India and the Pacific. Despite an occasionally perceptible British bias, the authors have tried hard to paint a colorful, vivid picture of the many faces and varieties of English. The text is never dull, but is enlivened by innumerable examples and by interviews with representative individuals: a minister in Scotland, a couple from the Appalachians, a storekeeper in Newfoundland, a Philadelphia shoeshine man, a cockney fruitseller, an Australian farm family, the president of Sierra Leone, a writing professor in India. A readable book that all public libraries should have. BOMC alternate. Catherine V. von Schon, SUNY, Stony Brook

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"Highly enjoyable...A first-rate introduction to one of the most fascinating of subjects." —The New York Times
"Rarely has the English language been scanned so brightly and broadly in a single volume." —The San Francisco Chronicle

(The cover is different than the one I got and it says May 2011, so this may be a newer edition than what I read in Mar 2011) I will review this book by introducing who I am and what I wanted. I speak several languages and teach English in a foreign country. However I did not study linguistics or Eng. Hist. at school, so while I have a reasonable grasp of language and language quirks and workings, not an actual expert on those subjects. Then one day I got interested in English, the history of the language, and linguistics, really bit by a bug, and went out and got all sorts of books on the subjects. This was one of those books. Of the 10 or more books I have read on this subject in the last 6 mos, this and the similarly titled "The Stories of English" by David Crystal are the best as being an overview, introduction to English and its history. The Story of English, from the US tv series, and the Stories of English have similar titles but are very different books. Well, a lot of the same ground is covered by them, but some differences and with different aims. "Story" gives the history with a self-congratulatory isn't-English-great? backdrop (it's not too overbearing), and focuses a lot on pronunciation and dialect differences. It is a little more US-centered, a little shallower and just a little easier to read. Crystal's Stories while addressing accents and dialects in depth also talks about structure a little more and literature as well and has a bit more on the relations between Eng and various other languages. He also takes as a theme the need to recognize the legitimacy of dialect grammar differences. The last 300 yrs have seen the proscriptivism of a standard grammar, calling others mistakes. It is important to accept other grammars not just to be nice, but because all are based on the original dialects of the Angles, Saxons, Jutes. Story while talking about dialect, especially pronunciation differences, touches on grammar proscriptivism and its roots only in passing. Also Crystal certainly explains what Old English was in a more in-depth and understandable way than Story, including charts and excerpts etc. Overall I would say go with Crystal's Stories if you have to choose; I really got a lot out of it, but it was not a waste reading both.

For anyone who speaks English, or has tried to master its unruly and spelling and grammar this book is a must. It explains WHY the English language is a linguistic hodgepodge as we know it today, and why we still use those crazy silent "gh"s as in laugh, taught, etc., and other assorted

spellings and pronunciations that frustrate even native speakers. If you're interested in word origins & idioms, you'll learn about the many authors writing in English who "invented " thousands of new words over the past 500 yearswords and expressions we use every day. There is even a chapter on American English which clears up the mystery:" Why don't we sound British?" Why does English in Boston sound so different in Dallas or New Orleans? Yet, with hundreds facts and factoids, you don't have to be a history or linguistics scholar to make this a good read.

Although previous reviewers had nothing but negative comments, I bought this 3rd edition. WHAT A DISAPPOINTMENT!! Cheap paper (newsprint) , illustrations missing from the original edition. So I searched and found the original edition on the AL LIBRIS site. It came in pristine condition; I'm happy to have my old friend back. DO NOT BUY THE REVISED 3rd EDITION!

This is one of those truly precious books that should be read not only by those interested in linguists, poets, writers, etc., but by every English-speaking person. How did English evolve in some widely different cultures? How did it come to be the most widely spoken language in the world? Why does it remain the most dynamic language in the world?

Incredible explanations as compiled by magnificently credentialed McCrum, MacNeil and Cran, folded into intriguing stories about the earth's linguistic diaspora as it relates to the English language and its global evolution with ongoing change. The latest edition available, this one is twelve years old and I eagerly await the next update.. But this third revision is amazing in itself and definitely worth reading! Thanks

I had this book a couple of decades ago but a friend took off with it. I was so pleased to find it again! When you remember a book that long, no doubt, it made an impression on you. Very interesting!

I had read the original 1986 (hardback) edition but wanted an updated version. This edition is fine for content, but as a paperback, the print is quite small and the book lacks the wonderful illustrations of the larger text.

Several years ago I enjoyed the PBS presentation of the Story of English. The book (revised edition) reminds me as to why I found the television version so captivating. The book is more than a pedantic rehash of the evolution of our language. It brings the entire history of the development of

the English language from pre-Roman days to the present offshoots of rap and ebonics. In other words, a highly informative walk through the history of the western world.

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