“Sensorveiledning”: General assessment guidelines for

**ENG2156: History of the English Language**

Textbooks:

- Hogg, R. & D. Denison (eds.) 2006. A History of the English Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Quirk, R. & C.L. Wrenn.1990. An Old English Grammar. London: Routledge.

Compendium with notes, texts and article:

Notes:

* Notes on OE and ME language; note on ‘the Great Vowel Shift’

Primary texts:

* Old English: ‘The Battle of Ashdown’, ‘The Voyage of Ohthere’, ‘The Nativity of Christ’
* Middle English: ‘The Nativity of Christ’, the Ormulum (extract), The Wife of Bath’s Tale (Chaucer; extract)
* Early Modern English: ‘Seeing the Wind’ (Ascham), ‘Inkhorn Terms’ (Wilson), Pandosto (Greene; extract)

Article:

* Cameron, K. 1996. ‘Ch. 6: Scandinavian place-names’; pp. 73-87. In: English place names. London: BT Batsford.

The written exam tests the below learning outcomes as specified in:

 https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/ilos/ENG2156/

* have a fair knowledge of the main lines of development of written English from approximately 700 AD to modern times.
* know the most important changes in the fields of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics.
* know the basic structure of Old English, Middle English and Early Modern English grammar; to this end, you will have studied the most central characteristics of the language of the syllabus texts.
* be able to describe and date linguistic changes.

The examination format is a final 4-hour unsupervised written test. The test consists of three questions. Questions 1 and 2 test the student’s familiarity with the internal history of the English language in relation to phonology, morphology, orthography, and syntax. Question 3 tests the student’s familiarity with the external history. The student has been instructed to write a minimum of two sentences per subquestion for questions 1 and 2 and a minimum of 500 words for question 3. The student has additionally been instructed always to write in grammatically complete sentences and to refrain from producing single-word answers. The questions are not weighted.

A strong answer will be nuanced. It will use correct and appropriate terminology and refer to descriptive/analytical models in contextualising the phenomenon or concept under discussion. For example, (presupposing an appropriate topic) the answer will conceptually distinguish between Central French, Norman French, and Anglo-French; use terms such as High/Low language, codification, creolisation, Romance Stress Rule, and standardisation; and demonstrate the student’s familiarity with key events in the external history such as the Norman Conquest (1066) and the loss of Normandy (1204). The answer may show awareness that the types of sources that survive from the various periods determine the kinds of questions that can be asked of them. The student’s written English proficiency contributes to the final mark. It is usually employed in an adjusting function if the examiners are in doubt about the most suitable mark for the contents, such that a high level of proficiency will raise the mark and a low level of proficiency will lower the mark.

The internal features being tested in question 1 are:

a) Orthography. OE <cw> vs French-derived ME <qu>. b) Phonemicisation of voiced fricatives. OE diphthongs (less important). c) i-mutation, ME levelling of the mutated vowel. d) Great Vowel Shift, diphthongisation of high vowel. e) Great Vowel Shift, diphthongisation of high vowel. f) Loss of infinitival -an suffix as a part of synthetic-to-analytic shift. g) Derivation. Adverbial -e suffix > Adverbial -ly suffix. h) Present participle suffix. A strong answer may comment on the possible origins of the -ing suffix, noting that -ende > -ing is phonologically less likely.

The internal features being tested in question 2 are:

i) Reflexive pronoun without -self. A strong answer will remark on how reflexive pronouns with -self arose in ME. ii) EModE adverb with Ø-suffix where PDE would have a -ly suffix. iii) Weak and strong verbs.

The aspects of external history being tested in question 3 are:

a) Standardisation, specifically functional elaboration and beginning codification and lexical elaboration. Also selection, with English being redefined as a High language.

b) Distribution of functions among English, French, and Latin in the Middle English period. A strong answer will differentiate between varieties of French and may comment on demography and text-type.

c) Standardisation. A strong answer will treat standardisation of pronunciation, spelling, punctuation, etc. as separate from one another.

d) Types of processes characteristic of present-day English in England, i.e. dialect levelling taking place alongside innovation along urban-rural lines. A strong answer may reflect on the definition of “dialect” and whether it is merely a geographical matter, or other variables too select variants. A strong answer may reflect on methodology and how sociolinguistics originated as urban dialectology.

e) The nature of the contact between English and Scandinavian in Old English times: Conqueror and conquered or peaceful coexistence? Mutual intelligibility. (Late) West Saxon as the variety furthest removed from Scandinavian in geographical terms. Examples mentioned in class: h-/þ- forms for the third-person plural personal pronoun, palatalised stops, TAKE.

Marks are awarded according to the national qualitative descriptions of letter marks:

https://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/grades/index.html

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Letter mark | Description | General, qualitative description of evaluation criteria |
| A | Excellent | An excellent performance, clearly outstanding. The candidate demonstrates excellent judgement and a high degree of independent thinking. |
| B | Very good | A very good performance. The candidate demonstrates sound judgement and a very good degree of independent thinking. |
| C | Good | A good performance in most areas. The candidate demonstrates a reasonable degree of judgement and independent thinking in the most important areas. |
| D | Satisfactory | A satisfactory performance, but with significant shortcomings. The candidate demonstrates a limited degree of judgement and independent thinking. |
| E | Sufficient | A performance that meets the minimum criteria, but no more. The candidate demonstrates a very limited degree of judgement and independent thinking. |
| F | Fail | A performance that does not meet the minimum academic criteria. The candidate demonstrates an absence of both judgement and independent thinking. |