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Stone-Age English phrasebook a possibility

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27th February, 2009

THE ARTICLE

Some of the oldest words in the English language are "I", "we", "who", "two", "three" and "five". Strangely, the word "one" came some time after the word "two". This is what researchers from Reading University in England say. They used special computer software to analyze how old English words are and to track their changes. The software also predicted the words "dirty", "bad", "because", "smell" and "squeeze" might die out completely by the year 3000. Lead researcher Dr. Mark Page said that one day we might have a basic Stone-Age English phrasebook. He told Britain's 'The Times' newspaper: "If a time traveler wanted to go back in time...we could probably draw up a little phrasebook of the modern words that are likely to have sounded similar back then."

Dr. Page said that some English words are probably at least 15,000 to 20,000 years old. He believes the sounds used back then would still be understood today. His research on the evolution of words comes at a time when English is changing rapidly. The Internet, technology and globalization are having a huge impact on our vocabulary. The everyday words "blog", "podcast", and "gigabyte" were alien to most people at the turn of the century. Terms such as "global warming", "credit crunch" and "global village" would not have been understood several decades ago. It seems likely our modern methods of communication will continue to transform the English language. However, it still might be a while before language from text messages such as CUL8R (see you later) becomes accepted English.

WARM-UPS

1. ENGLISH: Walk around the class and talk to other students about English. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

English language / words / computer software / change / phrasebooks / time traveler / sounds / evolution / globalization / blog / alien / global village / text messages

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. WORDS: Write down the words you like and dislike below. Talk about them with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote.

Word	Why?
English favourite	
English most hated	
My language favourite	
My language most hated	
International favourite	
International most hated	

4. TEXT MESSAGING: Students A **strongly** believe text messaging will change all languages; Students B **strongly** believe text messages will not change language. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. WORDS OF THE YEAR: In pairs / groups, talk about the following Words Of The Year from the American Dialect Society. Click here for more information.

The 20th Century - *jazz*

2001 - *9-11*

1993 - *information superhighway*

2003 - *metro sexual*

1995 - *web*

2007 - *sub prime*

1998 - *e (as in e-mail)*

2008 - *bailout (bank rescue)*

6. EVOLUTION: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'evolution'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Researchers say the word "two" came before the word "one". T / F
- b. The word "because" may be extinct within 1,000 years. T / F
- c. Stone-Age man had a phrasebook of survival English. T / F
- d. Researchers say some English words have not changed their sounds. T / F
- e. Most of today's English words are over 15,000 years old. T / F
- f. Globalization has had very little impact on the English language. T / F
- g. People 50 years ago would not know what "global village" meant. T / F
- h. How we send mail by mobile phones is changing the English language. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 1. strangely | a. research |
| 2. analyze | b. as likely as not |
| 3. predicted | c. simple |
| 4. basic | d. likely |
| 5. draw up | e. forecasted |
| 6. probably | f. effect |
| 7. evolution | g. some time |
| 8. impact | h. curiously |
| 9. probable | i. make |
| 10. a while | j. development |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. the word "one" came some | a. by the year 3000 |
| 2. used special computer software to analyze | b. 20,000 years old |
| 3. "squeeze" might die out completely | c. sounded similar |
| 4. If a time traveler wanted to | d. turn of the century |
| 5. modern words that are likely to have | e. on our vocabulary |
| 6. at least 15,000 to | f. time after the word "two" |
| 7. His research on the evolution | g. a while |
| 8. having a huge impact | h. go back in time |
| 9. alien to most people at the | i. of words |
| 10. it still might be | j. how old English words are |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Some of the _____ words in the English language are "I", "we", "who", "two", "three" and "five". Strangely, the word "one" came _____ time after the word "two". This is what researchers from Reading University in England say. They used special computer software to analyze how old English words are and to _____ their changes. The software also _____ the words "dirty", "bad", "because", "smell" and "squeeze" might _____ out completely by the year 3000. Lead researcher Dr. Mark Page said that one day we might have a _____ Stone-Age English phrasebook. He told Britain's 'The Times' newspaper: "If a time traveler wanted to go back in time...we could probably _____ up a little phrasebook of the modern words that are likely to have sounded _____ back then."

basic

some

predicted

oldest

similar

draw

die

track

Dr. Page said that some English words are probably at _____ 15,000 to 20,000 years old. He believes the sounds used _____ then would still be understood today. His research on the evolution of words comes at a time when English is changing _____. The Internet, technology and globalization are having a _____ impact on our vocabulary. The everyday words "blog", "podcast", and "gigabyte" were _____ to most people at the _____ of the century. Terms such as "global warming", "credit crunch" and "global village" would not have been understood several _____ ago. It seems likely our modern methods of communication will continue to transform the English language. However, it still might be a _____ before language from text messages such as CUL8R (see you later) becomes accepted English.

back

huge

while

least

rapidly

turn

decades

alien

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

Some _____ in the English language are "I", "we", "who", "two", "three" and "five". Strangely, the word "one" _____ the word "two". This is what researchers from Reading University in England say. They used special computer software to analyze _____ are and to track their changes. The software also predicted the words "dirty", "bad", "because", "smell" and "squeeze" might _____ the year 3000. Lead researcher Dr. Mark Page said that one day we might have a basic Stone-Age English phrasebook. He told Britain's 'The Times' newspaper: "If a time traveler wanted to go back in time...we could probably _____ phrasebook of the modern words that _____ sounded similar back then."

Dr. Page said that some English words are probably at least 15,000 to 20,000 years old. He believes the sounds _____ still be understood today. His research on the evolution of words comes at a time when English _____. The Internet, technology and globalization are having _____ our vocabulary. The everyday words "blog", "podcast", and "gigabyte" _____ people at the turn of the century. Terms such as "global warming", "credit crunch" and "global village" _____ been understood several decades ago. It seems likely our modern methods of communication will continue to transform the English language. However, it still _____ before language from text messages such as CUL8R (see you later) becomes accepted English.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'English' and 'language'.

English	language
----------------	-----------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• who• strangely• analyze• squeeze• basic• draw	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• probably• evolution• impact• alien• decades• while
--	---

STUDENT ENGLISH SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about English in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

LANGUAGE DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'English'?
- c) Is English a big influence on your language?
- d) What do you know about the history of your language?
- e) What do you think Stone Age people talked about?
- f) Why do you think the word "two" came before the word "one"?
- g) Why do you think the words "bad", "because", "smell" and "squeeze" might die out completely by the year 3000?
- h) What English words would you like to see disappear?
- i) How often have you used a phrasebook? Are they useful?
- j) What do you think of the sounds of English?

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LANGUAGE DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What new words have entered your language on the past decade?
- c) Does your language use the English version of new technology words (blog, podcast, etc.) or does your language have different terms?
- d) How different is your language to English?
- e) What words in your language would you like to become internationally-used words?
- f) Do you do anything special to remember new words?
- g) How do you think modern communication changes language?
- h) Do you think grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation is changing fastest?
- i) Do you think text messages will change your language?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Dr. Mark Page?

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LANGUAGE

Some of the oldest words in the English language are "I", "we", "who", "two", "three" and "five". (1) _____, the word "one" came some time after the word "two". This is what researchers from Reading University in England say. They used special computer software to (2) _____ how old English words are and to track their changes. The software also predicted the words "dirty", "bad", "because", "smell" and "squeeze" might (3) _____ out completely (4) _____ the year 3000. Lead researcher Dr. Mark Page said that one day we might have a (5) _____ Stone-Age English phrasebook. He told Britain's 'The Times' newspaper: "If a time traveler wanted to go back in time...we could probably (6) _____ up a little phrasebook of the modern words that are likely to have sounded similar back then."

Dr. Page said that some English words are (7) _____ at least 15,000 to 20,000 years old. He believes the sounds used back then would still be understood today. His research on the evolution of words (8) _____ at a time when English is changing rapidly. The Internet, technology and globalization are having a huge impact on our vocabulary. The (9) _____ words "blog", "podcast", and "gigabyte" were alien to most people at the (10) _____ of the century. Terms such as "global warming", "credit crunch" and "global village" would not have been understood (11) _____ decades ago. It seems likely our modern methods of communication will continue to transform the English language. However, it still might be a (12) _____ before language from text messages such as CUL8R (see you later) becomes accepted English.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) Strange | (b) Stranger | (c) Strangers | (d) Strangely |
| 2. | (a) analysis | (b) analyze | (c) analyzed | (d) analyzing |
| 3. | (a) die | (b) death | (c) dead | (d) deceased |
| 4. | (a) for | (b) on | (c) by | (d) at |
| 5. | (a) basilica | (b) basically | (c) basic | (d) basics |
| 6. | (a) sketch | (b) draw | (c) doodle | (d) paint |
| 7. | (a) probably | (b) probability | (c) probable | (d) probables |
| 8. | (a) reaches | (b) moves | (c) goes | (d) comes |
| 9. | (a) daytime | (b) everyday | (c) daily | (d) daydream |
| 10. | (a) tone | (b) tern | (c) tune | (d) turn |
| 11. | (a) few | (b) couple | (c) several | (d) numerous |
| 12. | (a) while | (b) whiling | (c) whilst | (d) whiled |

WRITING:

Write about **English words** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about how English is changing. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. NEW WORDS: Make a poster about different words that didn't exist ten years ago. What do you think about these words? Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. EVOLUTION: Write a magazine article about how your language has changed. Include imaginary interviews with someone who hates English entering your language and someone who likes English words in your language.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Dr. Mark Page. Ask him three questions about his research. Ask him for three pieces of advice about how to remember vocabulary. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. T c. F d. T e. F f. F g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. strangely | a. curiously |
| 2. analyze | b. research |
| 3. predicted | c. forecasted |
| 4. basic | d. simple |
| 5. draw up | e. make |
| 6. probably | f. as likely as not |
| 7. evolution | g. development |
| 8. impact | h. effect |
| 9. probable | i. likely |
| 10. a while | j. some time |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. the word "one" came some | a. time after the word "two" |
| 2. used special computer software to analyze | b. how old English words are |
| 3. "squeeze" might die out completely | c. by the year 3000 |
| 4. If a time traveler wanted to | d. go back in time |
| 5. modern words that are likely to have | e. sounded similar |
| 6. at least 15,000 to | f. 20,000 years old |
| 7. His research on the evolution | g. of words |
| 8. having a huge impact | h. on our vocabulary |
| 9. alien to most people at the | i. turn of the century |
| 10. it still might be | j. a while |

GAP FILL:

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Some of the **oldest** words in the English language are "I", "we", "who", "two", "three" and "five". Strangely, the word "one" came **some** time after the word "two". This is what researchers from Reading University in England say. They used special computer software to analyze how old English words are and to **track** their changes. The software also **predicted** the words "dirty", "bad", "because", "smell" and "squeeze" might **die** out completely by the year 3000. Lead researcher Dr. Mark Page said that one day we might have a **basic** Stone-Age English phrasebook. He told Britain's 'The Times' newspaper: "If a time traveler wanted to go back in time...we could probably **draw** up a little phrasebook of the modern words that are likely to have sounded **similar** back then."

Dr. Page said that some English words are probably at **least** 15,000 to 20,000 years old. He believes the sounds used **back** then would still be understood today. His research on the evolution of words comes at a time when English is changing **rapidly**. The Internet, technology and globalization are having a **huge** impact on our vocabulary. The everyday words "blog", "podcast", and "gigabyte" were **alien** to most people at the **turn** of the century. Terms such as "global warming", "credit crunch" and "global village" would not have been understood several **decades** ago. It seems likely our modern methods of communication will continue to transform the English language. However, it still might be a **while** before language from text messages such as CUL8R (see you later) becomes accepted English.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a