

DID YOU KNOW?

1 Read the text.

How English is English?

English is the second most-spoken language in the world. The first is Mandarin, spoken by more than a billion people. English has the largest vocabulary and English words come from many different languages, places and people.



Before AD5 the main language in Britain was Celtic. Then the Angles, Saxons and Jutes from Germany and Scandinavia invaded Britain. Anglo-Saxon became the main language with some words from Latin (*street, kitchen, cheese and wine*) and some from the Scandinavian languages (*husband, egg, give and sky*).

In 1066, the Normans from France invaded Britain. They used French words for expensive things, like meat (*beef, mutton, pork and bacon*). The British also started to use the French form of the plural – they added an *-s* to the end of a word.

From the 17th century onwards, the British travelled around the world, and more words from different countries came into the English language. *Pyjama* is from the Hindi word *Kurta-pajama*. *Canoe* comes from the language of the Arankawa, a Caribbean people. English travellers in Malaysia loved a traditional sauce made out of fish called *catsup*. They took the recipe home, added tomato and called it ketchup! The words *karate* and *karaoke* are both from Japan. *Kara* means *empty*. *Kara-te* means *empty hand* (no weapon) and *kara-oke* means *empty orchestra*. The English language is still growing and changing, but the simplest words you know probably come from Anglo Saxon.

2 Look at the words below. Match the words on the left with their country of origin or language on the right. Check your answers in the text.

- | | |
|---------|---------------|
| karaoke | Malaysia |
| pyjama | Caribbean |
| sky | Latin |
| bacon | Japan |
| canoe | Hindi (India) |
| ketchup | Scandinavia |
| kitchen | France |

3 Do you know any foreign words in your language? Where do they come from?