

SPANISH WORDS USED IN ENGLISH.

Lesson plan

Topic: What Spanish words have contributed to the English language.

Aims:

- develop reading skills through reading a text about the origins of the English language
- expand knowledge of the origins of the English language
- help students learn to spell some Spanish loan words accurately

Level: B1 upwards

Time: 45 min.

The lesson begins with a short quiz about the English language, which makes sure that the students understand what a hybrid language English is, and the concept of loan words.

Ex. 1 Quiz - What do you know about the English language?

1. Where did the English language originate?

- A. Germany and the Netherlands B. Wales C. England

2. Approximately how many words are there in the English language?

- A. 170,000 B. More than a million C. between 20,000 and 30,000

3. What percentage of English words actually have their origin in a different language?

- A. 20% B. 45% C. 80%

4. How many languages is it estimated English has “borrowed” words from?

- A. 55 B. 380 C. 126

Answer key:

1. A: The Anglo-Saxons originally came to Britain from West Germany, The Netherlands and West Denmark between the mid 5th century and the 7th Century.

2. B: It is estimated to be more than a million words, though this is of course changing all the time. This large number does include a lot of words which are almost never used, however. There are about 170,000 words in common use (answer A) and most native speakers have a vocabulary of between 20,000 and 30,000 words.

3. C: Over 80% of English words have Greek or Latin roots

4. B: (although most words come from Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, Italian and German)

Ex. 2 Do you know any words that English has borrowed from Spanish?

Ex. 3. Put the loan words into the correct column.

caldera *candy* *caravan* *café* *macho*
chilli con cane *anime* *barbecue* *potato* *savvy* *guerrilla*
cockroach *tsunami* *admiral* *entrepreneur* *mortgage*

Arabic	French	Japanese	Spanish

Answer key:

Arabic	French	Japanese	Spanish
<i>admiral</i>	<i>café</i>	<i>anime</i>	<i>cockroach (cucaracha)</i>
<i>candy</i>	<i>entrepreneur</i>	<i>tsunami</i>	<i>guerrilla (guerrillear)</i>
<i>caravan</i>	<i>mortgage</i>		<i>barbecue (barbacoa)</i>
			<i>caldera</i>
			<i>chilli con cane</i>
			<i>macho</i>
			<i>savvy (saber)</i>
			<i>potato</i>

Ex.4. Look at the Spanish loan words and correct the spelling when necessary:

hammok

hurricane

vannila

aligator

bizarr

canyon

machete

maize

anchovy

Answer key

hammock

hurricane

vanilla

alligator

bizarre

canyon

machete

maize

anchovy

Ex. 5. Read the text and answer these questions:

1. What explanation does the writer give for the prevalence of English words borrowed from French?
2. Why does the writer think the English language uses words from Hindi or Urdu?
3. What explanation does the writer give for the difficulty of English spelling and pronunciation?



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Foreign words used in English



English was originally brought to what is now called Britain by Anglo-Saxon settlers from northwest Germany, West Denmark and the Netherlands. But the language that we nowadays call English has been changed almost out of recognition by the passing of time, and even more influentially, the impact of other languages. It is estimated that words borrowed from other languages make up around 80% of the English language. As the author James D. Nicoll has noted: *"We don't just borrow words; on occasion, English has pursued other languages down alleyways to beat them unconscious and rifle their pockets for new vocabulary."*

One of the reasons why English has such a huge vocabulary- estimated to be more than two million words, though not all are in current use- is that English has borrowed words from up to 350 other languages. Some of the biggest contributions come from Latin and Greek, and French- via the Norman invasion of 1066.

We easily recognise such words as *café* and *entrepreneur* as being French, but a lot of much older words are too. For example, most of the words for meat, such as *beef*, *mutton* and *pork* come from French, and this explains why they are so different from the words we use to describe the animals themselves.

Arabic has given the language many words that most people would not recognise as anything but English. For example, *admiral*, *caravan* and *candy*. And the time the British spent in India, as a colonial power, has given the language words Hindi or Urdu words such as *bungalow*, *pyjamas*, *khaki* and *shampoo*.

And then there are more modern borrowings, such as *anime*, *tsunami* and *rickshaw* from Japanese, *guerrilla* and *cockroach* (*cucaracha*) from Spanish, *rucksack* and *delicatessen* from German, *broccoli* and *graffiti* from Italian and *glitch* and *bagel* from Yiddish.

It is often remarked that English spelling and pronunciation is confusing and unpredictable, but once we start to recognise what a *hotchpotch* (derived from French) the language actually is, it all starts to make more sense.