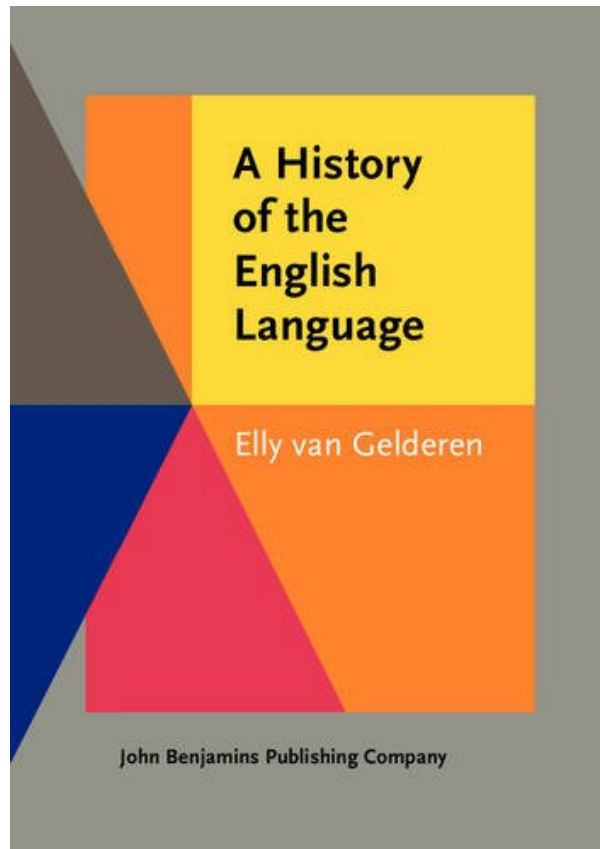
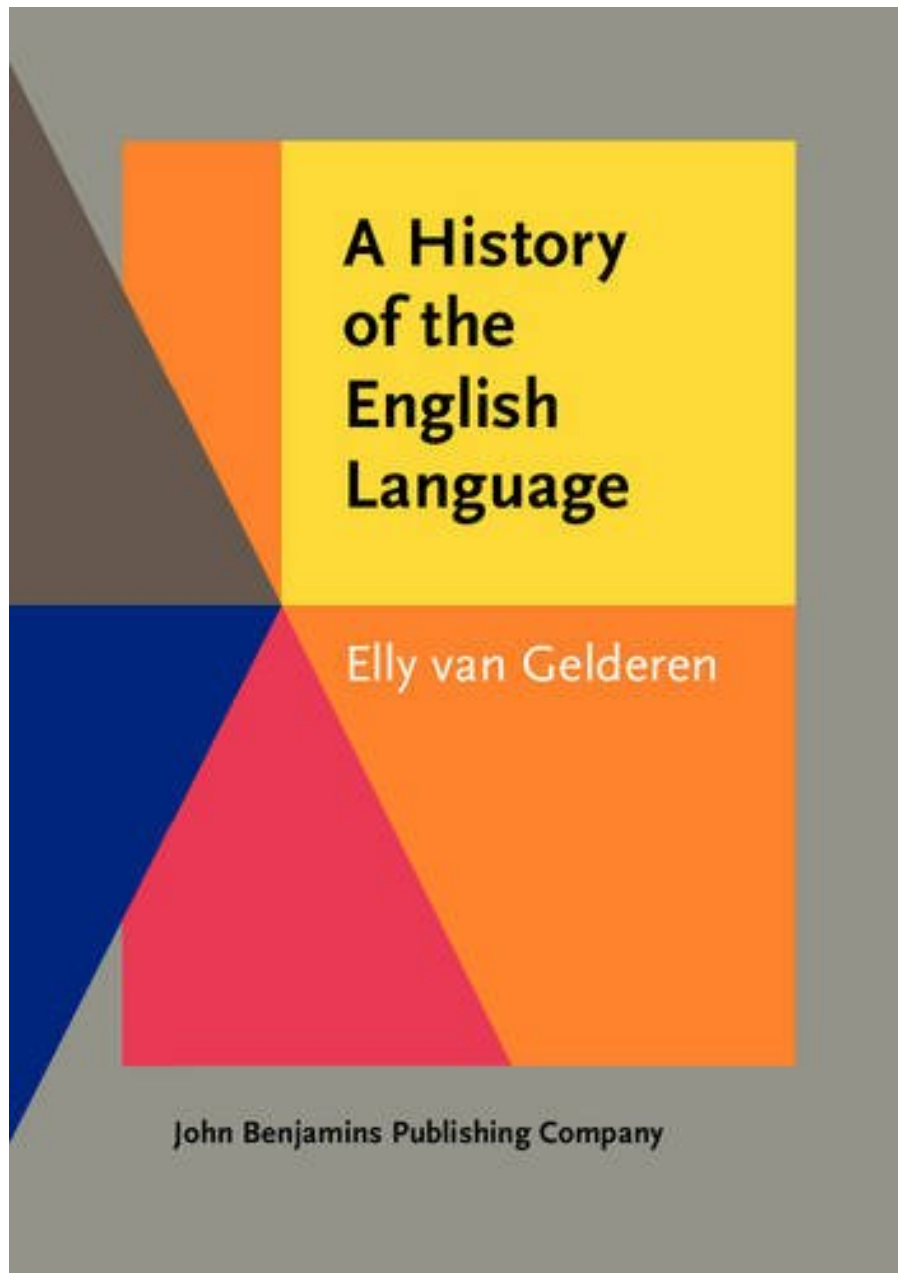


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This exceptionally clear text focuses on internal changes in the English language. It outlines the history of English from pre-Old English times to the present. Not only does it present the traditional morphological descriptions of the various stages of the language, it provides many example sentences, texts, and cartoons that are analyzed for the benefit of the student and which make this book ideal for class use. Some language-external topics are covered such as early printing and authorship debates. Tables and figures complement the material covered and exercises review the main points as well as ask further, more challenging, questions. Answers to the exercises are provided, as is a time line listing some of the external events, and some guidance on how to use the OED. Complementary web site information is provided throughout the book, and a companion web site accompanies the book.

This book has a companion website: www.historyofenglish.net

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Great textbook on the changes in the English language, from past-present

By Z Hayes

This was the prescribed text in a graduate class I'm taking, and I have found this to be a well-written, clear, and easy to understand text on the history of the English language. The text outlines the history of the English language from pre-Old English times till the present day. There is a concise introduction on the English language, tracing its origins, history, and the internal and external changes that have characterized the language's development. There is also a chapter which focuses on English spelling, sounds, and grammar.

The rest of the text covers the developments of the English language in greater detail, i.e. before Old English, the Old English period (450-1150), from OE to Middle English, the Middle English period (1150-1500), the Early Modern English period (1500-1700), the Modern English period (1700-present), and finally, the varieties of English around the world.

The text may not be comprehensive, but makes an excellent primer for those who are not linguistically-trained, and is practical for students who are taking an introductory course in the history of the English language. The language is easy to understand, the linguistics jargon is sufficient to promote understanding without confusing the reader, and the tables provided in each chapter summarize the main points, making this text easily accessible and user-friendly. I liked the exercises provided at the end of each chapter as the questions promote critical thinking and allow me to test my knowledge of the material I have learned. There are many texts provided for each of the period (not complete texts, but Van Gelderen provides weblinks as to where the full texts may be obtained online).

One criticism is that some of the weblinks provided could not be easily accessed, and this may be due to the fact that this text was written in 2006, and some of the links provided may no longer be active. Also provided are possible/suggested answers to the exercises (not detailed, but useful as a guide to check one's answers), suggestions on how to use the OED (most university students would be able to access the Online OED through their school's portal), and a chronology of historical events pertaining to the English language, as well as a list of references, and an index. Recommended for students who are interested in an introductory primer on the history of the English language.

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