

## LANGUAGE IS

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## TODAY

1. A little Exercise
2. Homework: Attendance List;
3. RE-VIEW the class blog and upcoming assignments;
4. OVER-VIEW of the course structure;
5. WORLD-VIEW: Language and Context;
6. PRE-VIEW: Indo-European and Anglo-Saxon Roots of English;
7. HOMEWORK: AWAKE EXERCISE

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## LANGUAGE IS

1. TEAM UP in groups of 3 or 4;
  2. BRAINSTORM as many ways as you can to finish this sentence: "LANGUAGE IS \_\_\_\_\_."
  3. WRITE your answers on the chart paper provided; TAPE your paper up;
  4. GALLERY WALK to see what other people said.
- CONSIDER:**
- The exercise we did last class;
  - The chapters you read in *The Story of English*;
  - Your own experience with language.

**ANALYSE:**

What patterns do you notice in the responses? What do they tell you about the role language plays in our lives?

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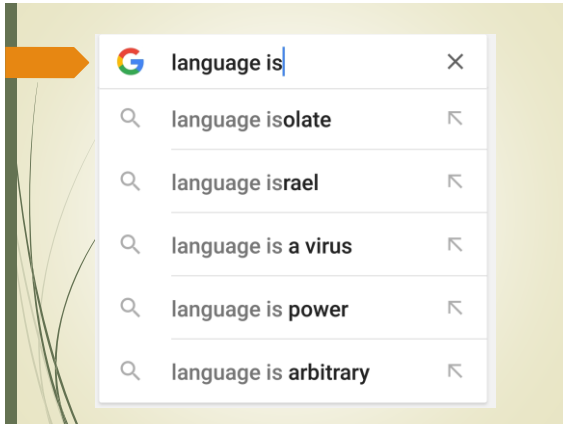
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## OVER-VIEW: UNITS

1. HISTORY OF ENGLISH: Anglo-Saxon (Old English); Middle English; Early Modern English;
2. CODIFICATION: lexicon, etymology, morphology and grammar (nuts, bolts, moving parts); semiology;
3. LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL EXPERIENCE: political and social uses of modern language in a range of contexts; language and power.
4. CURIOSITY PROJECTS: student research projects and presentation.

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## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How does language shape our relationship to reality, our perceptions, our behaviour as social beings?
- How does the study of language, its history and structure illuminate and deepen our understanding of "texts"?
- How does language instigate and record political, social, intellectual change within its very form, sound, vocabulary and meaning?
- Who are we? How do we know? How do we SAY who we are? How do we talk to ourselves about ourselves?

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## LANGUAGE AS ALCHEMY

- ALCHEMY: the science of transforming matter, particularly base metals into gold; a magical process of transformation, creation, combination.
- In what ways do the following examples represent the alchemical nature of language?

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## Henry V: Upon St. Crispin's Day

<https://youtu.be/A-yZNMWFqvM>

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## World War II: Internment of Japanese Canadians

The girl with the long ringlets who sits in front of Stephen said to him, "All the Jap kids at school are going to be sent away and they're bad and you're a Jap." And so, Stephen tells me, am I.

"Are we?" I ask Father.

"No," Father says, "We're Canadian."

It's a riddle, Stephen tells me. We are both the enemy and not the enemy.

(Joy Kogawa, *Obasan*)

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## BENGALI: Post-Colonial India

In my childhood no male in my world spoke of Bengali literature as a serious and high-calibre achievement.

In my class world, older women and servants (male and female) and small children, who did not go to school, belonged to an interior world of home, hearth and Begali. The public world outside held the serious business of earning money, achievement, success and English.

(Himani Bannerji, "The Sound Barrier")

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## WHAT'S AT STAKE

In a time when people don't understand the language that they use and which is used to shape their reality, "how can the man-in-the-street be expected to resist the black magic of the propagandists, commercial and political?" (W.H. Auden)

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## THE RISE OF ENGLISH: POWER

- ▶ 1 billion speakers worldwide (native speakers, 2<sup>nd</sup> language, foreign language)
- ▶ *Lingua franca*: language of NATO, UNESCO, UN, EU, air traffic control, internet.

"If English today is a global phenomenon, **this is due to non-linguistic forces**, not because it has unique or special qualities. Despite the myths, English is, from some points of view, a spectacularly *bad* choice as the world's alternative language." (SE xx, my emphasis)

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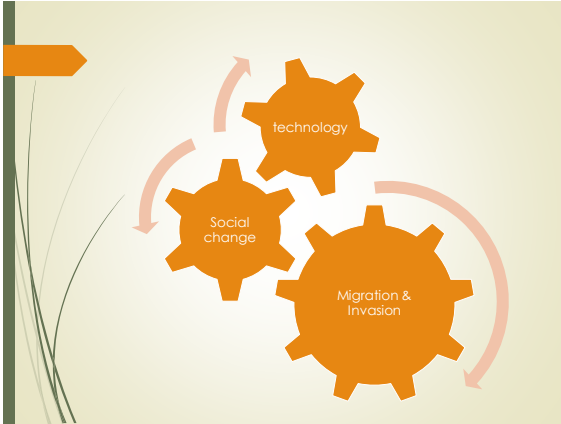
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### The Clock and World Domination

What is the relationship between a naval clock and the global power of the English Language?



19th-century marine chronometer by William Frodsham, used on HMS Beagle

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### Two models of Indo-European Language spread:

- Turkish Origin Model: Mode of Dissemination: Farming:  
<https://youtu.be/KdQwalCPNAs>
- Russian Steppes Model: Mode of Dissemination: Domestication of Horses:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YGZ-AAYZg>

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## A Homework Challenge: AWAKE EXERCISE

- For the next week, NOTICE how language is used around you;
- BE AWARE of variations that reflect CONTEXT: class, gender, age, ethnicity, location, environment, technology;
- NOTICE your own responses to these variations:
  - ▶ What JUDGMENTS do you make when hearing language varieties around you?
  - ▶ What CHOICES do you make about how you use language in different situations?
- WRITE at least 3 (THREE) examples and bring them to class.

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