

CONTENTS

Of Legends and Vines. xii

First Thoughts

1. To ‘*Foreign*,’ Let Us Say: ‘*Fooy*’ 1

Part One: The Pond, East

2. Speak Like a Proto-Indo-European with
These Ten Easy Terms! 7
3. The Earliest English Wasn’t English at All 13
4. The English Is Coming! The English Is Coming! 23
5. Bless Those Romans, They Finally Got Religion. 31
6. Comes a Norseman: Vikings Take Loot, Leave Language. . . . 39
7. What the Engisc Called Arabisc 47
8. It’s Greek to . . . Well, Just About Everybody. 57
9. Bonjour, Bayeux: English Channels French. 69
10. Why Can’t the English Teach Their
Children How to Spell? 79
11. Romancing the Renaissance 87
12. No Academy, Please: It’s English 101
13. The Empire Strikes 111

Part Two: The Pond, West

14. *Mabrika* to America 123
15. Side-by-Side-by-Spanish 139
16. And the Grammy Goes to . . . Gullah! 151
17. Beignets, Grief Bacon, and Bagels 163
18. “A Language Cannot Be Too Rich” 179

Last Words (for Now)

19. Bilenglish, or: What Language Can You Speak
When You Speak English? 189
- Bibliography 194
- Acknowledgments 227
- Index of Words 229
- About the Author 235

INDEX OF WORDS

A

admiral, 51
aficionado, 144
alcohol, 53
alfalfa, 50
algebra, 54
alkali, 50
alphabet, 59
amethyst, 66
amuse-bouche, 77
angel, 32
anime, 182
antipathy, 63
antiquity, 72
apathy, 63
arcane, 27
arithmetic, 62
ark, 27
armada, 88
armadillo, 143
armoire, 149
armor, 149

arriviste, 71
arsenal, 54
asperity, 91
auspicious, 107
avatar, 116
average, 54
avocado, 129

B

badlands, 183
bagel, 109
bail, 73
bailiff, 73
bain-marie, 185
banana, 158
banjo, 159
banshee, 19
baptism, 32
barbarian, 60
barbecue, 128
bask, 40
bayou, 165

beignet, 168
berserk, 44
bildungsroman, 172
bill, 33
bling, 161
bonanza, 143
bongo, 158
book-wrapt, 106
boondocks, 183
Brahman, 117
bread, 25
brioche, 168
brogue, 19
buckaroo, 142
bull, 33
bump, 105
bupkes, 102
butte, 163

C

cache, 163
cachet, 25

INDEX OF WORDS

cafeteria, 143
 cake, 43
 cakewalk, 156
 calamity, 72
 candy, 51
 canoe, 128
 canyon, 143
 cardigan, 18
 Caribbean, 114
 carte blanche, 77
 caters, 105
 catharsis, 63
 cay, 128
 c'est la vie, 77
 chaos, 59
 chaparral, 143
 chaps, 142
 chili pepper, 129
 chill, 156
 chipmunk, 127
 chocolate, 129
 choropleth, 63
 choux, 168
 chutzpah, 177
 cocoa, 129
 coffee, 55
 colonizing, 111
 come, 25
 conclave, 34
 condor, 129
 conjugal, 11
 consecrate, 32
 cookie, 118
 coracle, 18
 cordial, 11
 corgi, 18
 corral, 143
 cosmos, 59
 cosplay, 182
 courage, 11
 courtesy, 3
 cow, 105
 coyote, 129
 creole, 152
 crevasse, 163
 croissant, 168
 crooked, 41
 cruller, 118
 cuisine, 75
 curate, 190
D
 daisy, 28
 dank, 41
 de rigueur, 88
 decadent, 167
 déclassé, 71
 déjà vu, 71
 democracy, 59
 deracinate, 109
 desperado, 88
 deus ex machina, 63
 die, 43
 dissing, 155
 dog, 9
 doppelgänger, 172
 dreck, 176
 dreg, 41
 dunk, 171
 dystopia, 65
E
 echolalia, 61
 egg, 43
 élan, 71
 elbow, 109
 embargo, 88
 embrace, 109
 emoji, 182
 empathy, 192
 engine, 11
 enmesh, 105
 enthrall, 43
 equine, 9
 etiquette, 74
 étouffée, 168
 etymology, 62
 eucharist, 66
 evangelical, 32
 explore, 88
 extreme, 90
 extremity, 72
F
 fable, 190
 faithful, 32
 fasnacht, 170
 ferhoodle, 171
 flummery, 20
 foliage, 91
 foot, 25
 force majeure, 77
 foreign, 1
 fortnight, 28
 freckle, 44
 fricassee, 167
 furious, 61
 futz, 176
G
 galaxy, 61

INDEX OF WORDS

gallant, 75
 gallimaufry, 75
 galore, 18
 garble, 55
 gargle, 74
 gargoyle, 74
 gasp, 44
 gazelle, 49
 gelato, 9
 gemütlichkeit, 172
 generous, 108
 genteel, 74
 geometry, 62
 gerbil, 49
 gestalt, 172
 get, 41
 ghosted, 162
 gift, 44
 giraffe, 49
 give, 41
 glamour, 18
 glitch, 170
 go, 25
 go-between, 105
 goober, 155
 gospel, 32
 granite, 11
 green-eyed monsters, 105
 grill, 156
 grime, 41
 guacamole, 129
 guano, 184
H
 haiku, 181
 haint blue, 158
 halogen, 11
 hamartia, 63
 hammock, 128
 hand, 25
 hant, 158
 Hellenic, 58
 hermit, 66
 hilarious, 64
 hippocampus, 64
 hominy, 138
 honcho, 181
 hosanna, 32
 hubris, 63
 humor (v.), 108
 hurricane, 128
 hyperbola, 62
 hyperbole, 62
 hysterical, 63
I, J
 imprimatur, 33
 infidel, 32
 ingenious, 11
 inkhorn, 91
 jacaranda, 183
 jail, 73
 jambalaya, 168
 jaunty, 74
 je ne sais quoi, 76
 jerky, 129
 jeroboam, 185
 joie de vivre, 77
 joust, 11
 juggernaut, 117
 juke, 159
K
 kaput, 173
 keen, 19
 ken, 28
 kerfuffle, 18
 ketchup, 184
 kilt, 45
 kindergarten, 147
 kitchen, 156
 klutz, 176
 knee, 9
 kumbaya, 152
 Kummerspeck, 174
 kumquat, 184
 kvell, 176
 kvetch, 176
L
 lagniappe, 129
 lasso, 142
 leitmotif, 172
 levee, 169
 llama, 130
 looseleft, 106
 loot, 116
 lothario, 144
M
 Madeira, 11
 magazine, 55
 maize, 128
 marchpane, 186
 marzipan, 186
 mattress, 48
 maven, 177
 mayonnaise, 75
 mellifluous, 9

INDEX OF WORDS

mesa, 143
miniature, 98
mission, 35
mocha, 55
mogul, 112
mojito, 145
mojo, 158
mollify, 99
monsoon, 55
monumental, 109
Moors, 49
moose, 127
mot juste, 71
muck, 41
muskrat, 127
mustang, 142

N, O

nabob, 117
nausea, 66
nebbish, 176
noblesse oblige, 77
nom de guerre, 77
nom de plume, 77
noodge, 176
nose, 9
nosh, 176
nostalgia, 66
ocelot, 129
old, 10
ouch, 171
outlaw, 44
over, 10

P

pagan, 32
pajama, 117

palimpsest, 181
pander, 109
panicked, 61
parable, 62
parablepsis, 99
parabola, 62
pareidolia, 99
pasty, 20
pathos, 63
peasant, 73
pemmican, 138
penguin, 18
pentagon, 62
phobia, 61
phronesis, 63
picaresque, 144
pinochle, 173
plotz, 176
poet, 97
poetaster, 97
pogrom, 175
poltergeist, 172
pomegranate, 11
pope, 33
poplin, 33
poppycock, 119
possum, 127
potato, 128
prairie, 163
praline, 167
Presbyterian, 10
propaedeutic, 63
propaganda, 34
psalm, 32
puma, 130
pundit, 116

Q, R

queue, 74
quinine, 129
quinoa, 129
quixotic, 145
raccoon, 127
ransack, 44
ranting, 105
red-letter day, 97
remorseless, 108
Renaissance, 87
restaurant, 76
rhapsodic, 80
rhubarb, 60
ring shout, 160
rodeo, 142
rosary, 35
rotisserie, 167
rotunda, 91
rubrication, 98
rutabaga, 115

S

sabotage, 73
sacred, 32
sacrosanct, 36
saffron, 48
salad days, 105
salami, 11
salvation, 32
sanctuary, 36
savagery, 108
savannah, 128
scab, 41
scant, 42
scare, 42
schadenfreude, 172

scherenschnitte, 171
schlemiel, 177
schlemizal, 177
schlep, 177
schmaltz, 177
schmear, 176
schmooze, 176
schnoz, 177
schtick, 177
scorch, 42
scot, 45
scrapple, 170
scrub, 42
scuffle, 105
scup, 138
scuppernong grape, 138
seersucker, 117
senate, 10
senescence, 10
senile, 10
senior, 10
seven, 9
sherbert, 51
sherbet, 51
shogun, 181
shout-out, 160
shtikl, 175
side hustle, 156
sierra, 143
siesta, 146
skate, 43
skeuomorph, 99
skill, 42
skillet, 42
skosh, 183
skunk, 127

INDEX OF WORDS

sky, 42
slaughter, 44
sleuth, 44
slew, 18
smitten, 90
smuggle, 88
snollygoster, 171
snoop, 118
sofa, 3
sprit, 171
squash, 138
stampede, 142
stoops, 115
strange bedfellows, 105
sugar, 51
surrender, 25
swede, 115
sympathy, 63
synecdoche, 63
syrup, 51

T

take, 44
tango, 158
tantalized, 61
taps, 142
tariff, 56
ten-gallon hat, 143
thou, 9
ticket, 74
tomato, 129
tradition, 74
treason, 74
trifle, 20
triskaidekaphobia, 63

truncate, 11

U, V

ultracrepidarian, 97
utopia, 65
verse, 11
versus, 11
vicuna, 129
vignette, xiii
vulgar, 33
vulgate, 33

W

waffle, 118
wanderlust, 172
wassail, 29
water, 25
Weltanschauung, 172
werewolf, 29
wild goose chase, 105
woke, 161
wood, 11
wrong, 41

Y, Z

yam, 158
zeitgeist, 172