

Worksheet 2.2 The Lord's Prayer over the years: How has it changed?

Old English (Ælfric c.990)

Du ure fæder, þe eart on heofonum, sý þin nama gehalgod. Cume þin rice. Sý pin willa on eorþan swaswa on heofonum. Syle us todæg urne dæghwamlican hlaf. And forgyf us ure gyltas swaswa we forgyfab þæm þe wip us agyltaþ. And ne læd þu na us on costnunge, ac alys us fram yfele.

Middle English (Wycliffite Bible c.1385)

Oure fadir, þat art in heuenys, halewid be þi name. Þi kyngdom come to. Be þi wille don as in heuene and in erþe. Zive to us þis day oure breed ouer oþer substaunse. And forzive to us oure dettes, as we forziuen to oure dettouris. And ledde us not into temtacioun, but delyuere us from yuel.

Early Modern English (Authorised Version 1611)

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Activity 2.2 – Read and answer the following questions about the 3 prayers. Highlight your answers in the text using different colours when picking out similarities

1. What words are the same from Old English to Modern English?
2. What words are more or less the same from Old English to Modern English but might have a slight spelling change.
3. What do you think this letter 'þ' sounds like?
4. The letter 'æ' is no longer found in modern spelling, although it would make pronunciation of the vowels in English words a lot easier. Which of the following words use this sound today?

Taste Family Rain Happy Thank David

5. How has the verb 'will' changed over time?
6. Write the prayer out in your own English, reflecting the words and phrases that you like to speak.

*The printout of the prayers were found for free at www.teachit.co.uk Copyright 2000 Teachit. Activity created by Wilma Slevin. Solutions on the Historical Linguistics slides.