

History of the English and Southern Paiute Languages

The English Language

The English language has been through several stages of development in the past 1500 years (approx.), which are identified below.

- Old English: The roots of the English language are heavily influenced by Germanic immigrants and Roman occupation of Britain from 43-410 AD. Anglo and Saxon immigrants to the British Isles (from present-day Germany and Denmark) came between 400-700. The Roman alphabet and Latin roots were an important role in the development of language, as it was the language of the Roman Catholic Church, and most scribes (or literate members of society) were monks or clergymen (*Beowulf* comes from this time period).
 - In the 800s, King Alfred pushed back Viking invaders and regained control of many kingdoms in England. He was the first to promote literacy in the English language, educating the children of nobility and freemen in English as well as Latin, and commissioning translations of some texts into English.
- Middle English: After the Norman conquest in 1066, French became the language of the learned, and English started taking on some French vocabulary and developing more grammar rules and conjugations (Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* come from this time).
 - Use of the Printing Press began in England around the 1470s, which helped standardize and distribute English literature.
 - As it continued to develop, Early Modern English became distinct around 1500 which is most recognizable as the language of Shakespeare and Elizabethan England (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*). Another significant development around this time is "The Great Vowel Shift," which lasted until about 1700 and solidified the use of longer vowel sounds.
- Modern English: In 1755 Samuel Johnson published the *Dictionary of the English Language*, which helped to standardize the spelling and use of words in the English language.
 - Some archaic letters and symbols have fallen out of use, in addition to changes in spelling (i.e. æ, j [s], θ [theta]).
- (Late) Modern English continued to develop off of this foundation in Britain and expanded along with the British Empire and through settlers to the Americas. In the latter half of the 20th century, English surpassed French as the lingua franca (common language) in Europe. With the globalization of English, there are many different English dialects and accents—primarily regional—that have their own vocabulary, grammar, pronunciations, and colloquialisms (slang).
- Resources:
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_the_Great, "Advocacy of Education in English"
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_English
 - https://www.thehistoryofenglish.com/history_early_modern.html
 - <https://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk/learning-activities/languages/words/timeline-english-language-2/> Kid-Friendly timeline of the English Language (can be used as visuals for the English Language Mapping activity).
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire

Southern Paiute Language

The origins of the term “Paiute” is disputed, but came out of their relationship with the Ute tribe, which has a similar language and occupied neighboring lands. The first syllable “paa” means water, and “ute” refers to them as people, so ‘paiute’ is thought to mean “the water people.” The Paiute language is linguistically related to the Commanche and Hopi tribes, but they were not mutually intelligible, and so sign language and symbols were often used to convey messages. The Northern Paiute tribe’s language and culture is distinctly different from the Southern Paiute tribe, and they live mainly in northern parts of Nevada.

There are five officially recognized Southern Paiute bands in the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah today: Cedar, Indian Peaks, Kanosh, Koosharem, and Shivwits. The name of a native band is usually based on the characteristics of the land that they inhabited. Southern Paiutes have also lived in areas of Arizona, New Mexico, and Southern Nevada. The Southern Paiutes share some similar legends and historical stories, but each band may have their own way of telling it, or unique details that they include. The Southern Paiutes do not have a written language, but have used rock writing symbols to convey meaning, instructions, directions, and ideas for hundreds of years. The Paiute tribe was federally recognized by the US in 1980, but its people and culture have been around for thousands of years.

Resources:

- <https://www.nps.gov/para/learn/education/upload/Total-Final-Curriculum.pdf> NPS Curriculum Guide, includes links to potentially useful resources.
- Martineau, LaVan. *The Southern Paiutes: Legends, Lore, Language, and Lineage*. Las Vegas, NV: KC Publications, 1992.
 - Martineau explains in the Preface his connection (as an orphan adopted by a Paiute family in his teens) to the culture and language of the Paiute and how this book started with his compilation of notes spanning 1940-1990s. The book is broken up into several different sections that fall under the categories in the subtitle of the book, legend, lore, language, and lineage. The last sections of the book include an English-to-Paiute dictionary. This book has useful information for understanding specific traditions and researching supplemental history and vocabulary.
- <https://www.washk12.org/esl/indian-education/paiute-language> Links to videos of Paiute lessons being taught and some language resources.
- Martineau, LaVan. *The Rocks Begin to Speak*. Las Vegas, NV: KC Publications, 1973.
 - The purpose of the book is to describe and decipher how pictographs left by Natives can be read, and how use of pictographs (Rock Writing [not art], or Tūm-pe pō-ōp) and sign language are being lost as forms of communication for Native Tribes. These forms of communication were mutually intelligible between most tribes, and so were convenient for trading and recording histories. Part II of the book functions as a guide to the background of researching and recording pictographs, while Part I is more focused on explaining existing symbols and panels and their importance. Martineau values consistency in understanding rock writing as a language, and so keeps track of the number of times a symbol is interpreted in the same way. Several of the charts compare symbols found in a specific area to those of other known tribes, and other parts of the world including the Egyptian and Aztec people. There are strong connections between some symbols and the sign language, which helps decipher meaning and show both as legitimate forms of communication.

- <https://indian.utah.gov/paiute-indian-tribe-of-utah/>; gives the legal information for the Southern Paiute tribe in Utah, including geographic and leadership information.
- <https://www.utahpaiutes.org/>; the official website for the Paiute Tribe.

Some vocabulary that may be used respectfully in context:

Tookwee'nup: a legend or story, tales specifically told in the winter

Nawduh'gwenup: a story or historical account, history

Soonungwuv, Suhnuv, or Yohovuhts: Coyote

Wee Noonts: people who lived the old ways or long ago (Old people)

Noonts or Nengwoonts: people (or Indians), what Utes and Paiutes called themselves

Toongwuv`ugai: sound or noise

Kaw, Ka-haw`: sing; **Kaw`num uhd**: your singing; **hun`eun kai**: "How do I sing?"

Kwepoy`unump: drum

Toodoov: paint, especially that comes from a location near Overton, NV and used for pictographs