

## Some cognates illustrating Grimm's Law and the High German sound shift.

These are English and German words whose *initial* consonants illustrate Grimm's Law, and the much later consonant shift which only German underwent. Developments of other sounds in these words are not explained on this handout (though most of them can be explained).

\*p > f (no later shift in German, though /f/ is sometimes spelled v):

Engl. *father*, Germ. *Vater* (cf. Lat. *pater*, Gk. πατήρ /paté:r/, Skt. *pitá*)

Engl. *foot*, Germ. *Fuß* (cf. Lat. *pēs*, Gk. πούς /pó:s/, Skt. *pāt*)

Engl. *full*, Germ. *voll* (cf. Lat. *plēnus*, Skt. *pūrṇás*)

Engl. *five*, Germ. *fünf* (cf. Gk. πέντε /pénte/, Skt. *pāñca*)

Engl. *fire*, Germ. *Feuer* (cf. Gk. πῦρ /pû:r/)

Engl. *fish*, Germ. *Fisch* (cf. Lat. *piscis*)

\*t > \*þ (Engl. *th*) > Germ. *d*:

Engl. *three*, Germ. *drei* (cf. Lat. *trēs*, Gk. τρεῖς /trê:s/, Skt. *tráyas*)

Engl. *that*, Germ. *das* (cf. Gk. τό /tó/, Skt. *tád*) [the English initial consonant was voiced in the 15th c. because the word is often unstressed]

Engl. *thin*, Germ. *dünn* (cf. Lat. *tenuis*, Skt. *tanús*)

\*k̑, \*k > h (no later shift in German):

Engl. *hundred*, Germ. *hundert* (cf. Lat. *centum*, Gk. ἑκατόν /he-katón/, Skt. *śatám*)

Engl. *heart*, Germ. *Herz* (cf. Lat. *cor*, *cord-*, Gk. καρδίᾱ /kardía:/)

Engl. *hound*, Germ. *Hund* (cf. Gk. κύων /kúo:n/, Skt. *śvā*)

Engl. *hear*, Germ. *hören* (cf. Gk. ἀκούειν /akóue:n/)

Engl. *horn*, Germ. *Horn* (cf. Lat. *cornū*)

Engl. *hide*, Germ. *Haut* (cf. Lat. *cutis* 'skin')

\*k<sup>w</sup> > \*hw (Engl. *wh*) > Germ. *w*:

Engl. *what*, Germ. *was* (cf. Lat. adjective & relative *quod*, Skt. *kád*)

Engl. *wheel* (cf. Gk. κύκλος /kúklos/, Skt. *cakrám*)

\*b > \*p (so rare that there are no word-initial examples).

\*d > \*t (Engl. *t*) > Germ. *z*:

Engl. *two*, Germ. *zwei* (cf. Lat. *duo*, Gk. δύο /dúo/, Skt. *dvā*)

Engl. *ten*, Germ. *zehn* (cf. Lat. *decem*, Gk. δέκα /déka/, Skt. *dása*)

Engl. *tooth*, Germ. *Zahn* (cf. Lat. *dēns*, Gk. ὀδούς /odós:/, Skt. *dán*)

\*ǵ, \*g > k (no later shift in German):

Engl. *comb*, Germ. *Kamm* (cf. Gk. γόμφος /gómphos/ ‘peg’, Skt. *jámbhāsas*  
‘row of teeth’)

Engl. *knee*, Germ. *Knie* (cf. Lat. *genū*, Gk. γόνυ /gónu/, Skt. *jānu*)

Engl. *corn*, Germ. *Korn* (cf. Lat. *grānum*; Skt. *jīrṇām* ‘crushed’)

\*g<sup>w</sup> > kw, sometimes delabialized to k:

Engl. *come*, Germ. *kommen* (cf. Lat. *venīre*, Gk. βαίνειν /báine:n/, Skt. *gam-*)

Engl. *queen* (cf. Gk. γυνή /guné:/, Skt. *jānī*, both ‘woman’)

Engl. *quick* (cf. Lat. *vīvus*, Skt. *jīvás*, both ‘alive’)

\*b<sup>h</sup> > b (no later shift in German):

Engl. *brother*, Germ. *Bruder* (cf. Lat. *frāter*, Skt. *b<sup>h</sup>rātā*)

Engl. *bear*, Germ. *ge-bären* (cf. Lat. *ferre*, Gk. φέρειν /p<sup>h</sup>ére:n/, Skt. *b<sup>h</sup>ártum*, all  
‘carry’)

Engl. *bite*, Germ. *beißen* (cf. Lat. *findere*, Skt. *b<sup>h</sup>éttum*, both ‘split’)

\*dh > \*d (Engl. *d*) > Germ. *t*:

Engl. *door*, Germ. *Tür* (cf. Lat. *forēs*, Gk. θύρα /t<sup>h</sup>úra:/)

Engl. *daughter*, Germ. *Tochter* (cf. Gk. θυγάτηρ /t<sup>h</sup>ugáte:r/, Skg. *duhitā*)

Engl. *deep*, Germ. *tief* (cf. Lithuanian *dubùs* ‘hollow’, Tocharian B *tapre* ‘high’)

\*ǵ<sup>h</sup>, \*g<sup>h</sup> > g (Engl. *y* before front vowels, but no later shift in German):

Engl. *goose*, Germ. *Gans* (cf. Gk. γήν /k<sup>h</sup>é:n/, Skt. *hamsás*)

Engl. *yellow*, Germ. *gelb* (cf. Lat. *helvus* ‘bay (horse)’)

Engl. *guest*, Germ. *Gast* (cf. Lat. *hostis* ‘enemy’) [but English *guest* is actually a  
Norse loanword]

The outcome of word-initial \*g<sup>wh</sup> (which was rare) is disputed.

Note that voiceless stops after \*s were exempt from Grimm’s Law, e.g.:

Engl. *star*, Germ. *Stern* (cf. Lat. *stēlla*, Gk. ἀστήρ /asté:r/, Skt. *str-*)

Engl. *stand*, Germ. *stehen* (cf. Lat. *stāre*, Gk. aorist στῆναι /stê:nai/, Skt.  
*st<sup>h</sup>ātum*)