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500+ Old English Vocabulary Words

with Modern Meanings

633+ carefully arranged Old English entries
A-Z reference for students, ESL learners, readers of Anglo-Saxon texts, and vocabulary
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Old English (Anglo-Saxon) • Learner Reference Edition

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How to Use This Book

Headword	The Old English dictionary form used for easy lookup.
Modern meaning	A plain-English meaning or close modern equivalent.
Type	N. noun, V. verb, Adj. adjective, Adv. adverb, Pron. pronoun, Prep. preposition, Conj. conjunction, Det. determiner, Num. numeral.

Historical note

Old English was the language of England before the Middle English period. Spellings vary across manuscripts and editions, so a historical dictionary may show variant forms. This book presents a practical learner selection rather than every recorded Old English word.

Letters such as æ, þ and ð are retained where useful. In this A-Z arrangement, þ words are grouped under T.

A

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
abutan	about, around	adv.
ac	but	conj.
acennan	give birth, bring forth	v.
acwellan	kill	v.
adl	sickness, disease	n.
agen	own	adj.
aglæca	monster, opponent	n.
ahwær	anywhere	adv.
al	all	adj.
alimpan	happen, befall	v.
an	one; a, an	num./art.
and	and	conj.
andgit	meaning, sense	n.
andsaca	enemy, adversary	n.
andswarian	answer	v.
andswaru	answer	n.
andwlita	face, appearance	n.
andwyrðan	answer	v.
anfeald	simple, onefold	adj.
anginn	beginning	n.
anhaga	solitary person	n.
anlicnes	image, likeness	n.
anræd	resolute	adj.
anwealda	ruler, authority	n.
ar	honour, mercy, favour	n.
arleas	dishonourable	adj.
arlice	honourably	adv.
arod	bold	adj.
arweorþe	honourable	adj.
astandan	stand up	v.
astyran	move, disturb	v.
atol	terrible, hateful	adj.
attor	venom, poison	n.
awið	anything	pron.
axian	ask	v.
ap	oath	n.
æ	law	n.
æcer	field, acre	n.
æfen	evening	n.

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
æfter	after	prep./adv.
æfæst	pious, devout	adj.
æghwa	everyone, everything	pron.
æghwær	everywhere	adv.
ægþer	each, both, either	pron.
æht	property, possessions	n.
ælc	each, every	det.
ælmesse	alms, charity	n.
ælmhtig	almighty	adj.
æmettig	empty	adj.
ænig	any	adj./pron.
æppel	apple	n.
ær	before, earlier	adv./prep.
ærende	message, errand	n.
ærest	first	adj./adv.
ærnan	run	v.
æsc	ash tree; spear	n.
æscrof	brave in battle	adj.
ætgedere	together	adv.
ætsomne	together	adv.
ætywan	appear, show	v.
æþele	noble	adj.
æþeling	prince, nobleman	n.
ā	ever, always	adv.
ālyfan	allow, permit	v.

B

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
baldlice	boldly	adv.
bana	slayer	n.
banhus	body; bone-house	n.
bar	boar	n.
be	about, concerning	prep.
beacen	sign, beacon	n.
beadu	battle	n.
beadurinc	warrior	n.
beag	ring, ornament	n.
beaggyfa	ring-giver; lord	n.
beald	bold	adj.
bealdor	lord, ruler	n.
bealu	harm, misery	n.
beam	tree; child, offspring	n.
bearm	bosom, lap	n.
bearn	child, son	n.
bearu	grove	n.
bebeodan	command	v.
bedd	bed	n.
begen	both	det.
begeondan	beyond	prep./adv.
beginnan	begin	v.
beheafðian	behead	v.
behreowsian	repent	v.
benn	wound	n.
beran	carry, bear	v.
berstan	burst	v.
beswican	deceive, betray	v.
bet	better	adj./adv.
betan	improve, repair	v.
betweox	between	prep.
bidan	wait, remain	v.
biddan	ask, pray	v.
bifian	shake	v.
bigong	worship, practice	n.
bill	sword, weapon	n.
bisgu	occupation, business	n.
blac	pale, black	adj.
blawan	blow	v.

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
bletsian	bless	v.
blod	blood	n.
blæc	black	adj.
blæd	leaf, blade; glory	n.
boc	book	n.
bocere	scholar, writer	n.
bocland	chartered land	n.
boclic	learned, written	adj.
bocstæf	letter, written character	n.
bodian	preach	v.
bolster	pillow	n.
bot	remedy, compensation	n.
bricg	bridge	n.
brim	sea, surf	n.
broga	terror, danger	n.
brōþor	brother	n.
brūn	brown, dark	adj.
byrgan	bury	v.
byrþen	burden	n.
bysig	busy	adj.
bæcere	baker	n.
bæl	fire; funeral pyre	n.
bærnan	burn	v.
bāt	boat	n.
būtan	without, except	prep./conj.
gebiddan	pray	v.

C

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
casere	emperor	n.
ceald	cold	adj.
ceap	purchase, price, goods	n.
ceapian	trade, buy	v.
ceaster	town, city	n.
cempa	warrior, champion	n.
cicen	chicken	n.
cipe	onion	n.
cirice	church	n.
cist	chest, box	n.
clipian	call	v.
clyppan	embrace	v.
cniht	youth, servant, warrior	n.
coss	kiss	n.
cossian	kiss	v.
cræftig	skilled, powerful	adj.
cuman	come	v.
cunnan	know, be able	v.
cunnian	find out, investigate	v.
cwalu	killing, torment	n.
cwellan	kill	v.
cweðan	say, speak	v.
cwic	alive, living	adj.
cwēn	queen, woman	n.
cyn	kin, race	n.
cyning	king	n.
cyrtel	garment, coat	n.
cyse	cheese	n.
cyssan	kiss	v.
cypan	make known, reveal	v.
cēosan	choose	v.
cū	cow	n.

D

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
dema	judge	n.
deofol	devil	n.
deop	deep	adj.
deor	wild animal	n.
deorc	dark	adj.
dom	judgment, authority, glory	n.
dream	joy, delight	n.
dreogan	endure, suffer	v.
drihten	lord, ruler	n.
drincan	drink	v.
dugup	experienced men, retainers	n.
durran	dare	v.
duru	door	n.
dyre	dear, precious	adj.
dyrne	secret, hidden	adj.
dysig	foolish	adj.
dæd	deed, action	n.
dæg	day	n.
dægred	dawn	n.
dæl	part, portion	n.
dōn	do, make, put	v.

E

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
eac	also, too	adv.
eadig	blessed, prosperous, happy	adj.
eald	old	adj.
ealdor	leader, chief	n.
ealdorman	nobleman, ruler	n.
eall	all, whole	adj./pron.
eallunga	entirely	adv.
ealu	ale	n.
earfop	hardship, difficulty	n.
earm	poor, miserable	adj.
ece	eternal	adj.
ecg	edge, sword	n.
edisc	pasture, meadow	n.
efne	even, equally	adv.
eft	again, back	adv.
ege	fear, awe	n.
ehta	eight	num.
ellen	courage, strength	n.
elpeodig	foreign	adj.
engel	angel	n.
ent	giant	n.
eorl	nobleman, earl	n.
erian	plough	v.
esne	servant, young man	n.
etan	eat	v.
ĕa	river	n.
ĕare	ear	n.

F

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
faran	go, travel	v.
feallan	fall	v.
feax	hair	n.
feoh	cattle, property, money	n.
feohtan	fight	v.
feond	enemy	n.
feor	far	adj./adv.
feorh	life	n.
feran	travel, go	v.
ferhþ	spirit, mind, courage	n.
fleogan	fly	v.
flōd	flood	n.
folc	people, nation	n.
folde	earth, ground	n.
folme	hand, palm	n.
fon	take, seize	v.
for	for, because of	prep.
forht	afraid, fearful	adj.
forhtian	fear	v.
forliger	adultery	n.
forma	first	adj.
forst	frost	n.
forþ	forth, onward	adv.
forġifan	forgive, give	v.
frea	lord	n.
fremde	strange, foreign	adj.
fremman	do, perform	v.
freond	friend	n.
friþ	peace, protection	n.
frofor	comfort, consolation	n.
fruma	beginning, origin	n.
frætwe	ornaments, treasures	n.
frōd	old, wise	adj.
fugol	bird	n.
full	full, complete	adj.
fultum	help, support	n.
fulwiht	baptism	n.
fyr	fire	n.
fyrd	army, military service	n.

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
fyren	crime, wickedness	n.
fæder	father	n.
fæger	beautiful, fair	adj.
fæmne	woman, maiden	n.
fæst	firm, fixed	adj.
fūs	eager, ready	adj.

G

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
gafol	tribute, tax	n.
galan	sing	v.
gamol	old, ancient	adj.
gangan	go, walk	v.
ganot	gannet	n.
gar	spear	n.
garleac	garlic	n.
gat	goat	n.
geard	yard, enclosure	n.
gearo	ready, prepared	adj.
gebed	prayer	n.
gebetan	make amends, repair	v.
gebiddan	pray	v.
gebor	tenant farmer	n.
gebēor	beer-drinking, feast	n.
gedafenlic	suitable, proper	adj.
geond	through, throughout	prep./adv.
geong	young	adj.
georn	eager	adj.
geðanc	thought, intention	n.
giefu	gift	n.
gielp	boast	n.
giet	yet, still	adv.
gif	if	conj.
giogup	youth	n.
gnornian	mourn	v.
god	good	adj.
God	God	n.
godspel	gospel	n.
gold	gold	n.
gram	angry, fierce	adj.
grund	ground, earth	n.
grædig	greedy	adj.
guma	man	n.
gup	battle, war	n.
gylp	boast, pride	n.
gyrd	rod, twig	n.
gyse	yes	adv.
gāst	spirit, soul, ghost	n.

H

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
habban	have	v.
haga	hedge, enclosure	n.
hagosteald	young unmarried man	n.
hal	whole, safe	adj.
halig	holy	adj.
ham	home	n.
hatan	command, call, name	v.
heall	hall	n.
heals	neck	n.
heard	hard, strong	adj.
hearm	harm, injury	n.
heawan	cut	v.
heofon	heaven, sky	n.
heorot	hart, stag	n.
heorte	heart	n.
here	army	n.
herepath	army road	n.
hergian	ravage, plunder	v.
hild	battle	n.
hlaf	loaf, bread	n.
hleo	shelter, protection	n.
hlæfdige	lady	n.
hlæw	mound, burial mound	n.
hlāford	lord	n.
holt	wood, forest	n.
hord	hoard, treasure	n.
hors	horse	n.
hring	ring	n.
hræfn	raven	n.
hrōf	roof	n.
hund	dog, hound	n.
hunig	honey	n.
hunta	hunter	n.
hweorfan	turn, change	v.
hwil	while, period of time	n.
hwæl	whale	n.
hwær	where	adv.
hwæt	what; brave, vigorous	pron./adj.
hwæper	whether, which of two	pron./conj.

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
hycgan	think, intend	v.
hyge	mind, thought, courage	n.
hyht	joy, hope	n.
hyrde	guardian, keeper	n.
hyrstan	adorn	v.
hāt	hot	adj.
hēafod	head	n.
hēah	high, tall	adj.
hūs	house	n.

I

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
ic	I	pron.
ides	lady, woman	n.
ig	island	n.
ilca	same	adj./pron.
innen	within	adv.
isen	iron	n.

J

No substantial native Old English headword section for J. The letter was not a normal initial in the core native vocabulary.

K

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
cniht	youth, servant, warrior	n.
cunnan	know, be able	v.
cēosan	choose	v.

L

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
lac	play, offering, sacrifice	n.
laf	remainder, remnant	n.
lagu	law	n.
lar	teaching, learning	n.
lareow	teacher	n.
laþ	hateful, hostile	adj.
leac	leek	n.
leas	false, empty, devoid of	adj.
leax	salmon	n.
leode	people	n.
leof	dear, beloved	adj.
leoht	light	n.
leornere	learner, student	n.
leop	song, poem	n.
lic	body	n.
lichama	body	n.
lid	ship	n.
lif	life	n.
lind	lime tree; shield	n.
lof	praise, fame	n.
lofgeorn	eager for praise	adj.
lufian	love	v.
lufu	love	n.
lust	desire, pleasure	n.
lyft	air, sky	n.
læran	teach	v.
læce	doctor, healer	n.

M

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
magan	be able, can	v.
man	crime, wickedness	n.
manig	many	adj.
mann	person, human being	n.
mæbelian	speak, address	v.
maþm	treasure, precious object	n.
mearh	horse	n.
mece	sword	n.
med	reward	n.
meodo	mead	n.
mere	sea, lake	n.
mete	food	n.
micel	great, large, much	adj.
middangeard	world, earth	n.
miht	might, power	n.
mod	mind, spirit, courage	n.
modig	brave, bold, proud	adj.
mona	moon	n.
morþor	crime, murder	n.
motan	may, be allowed to	v.
mund	hand; protection	n.
mycel	great, large	adj.
mynster	monastery, church	n.
mæg	kinsman, relative	n.
mægen	strength, power	n.
mære	famous, glorious	adj.
mægþ	family, people, maiden	n.
mōdor	mother	n.

N

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
nama	name	n.
neah	near	adj./adv.
neorxnawang	paradise	n.
niht	night	n.
niman	take	v.
niwe	new	adj.
nip	hatred, malice	n.
nog	enough	adj.
norþ	north	n./adv.
nottian	use, employ	v.
nytt	use, utility	n.
nædre	snake, serpent	n.
næfre	never	adv.
næss	headland, promontory	n.
nā	not ever, never	adv.
nū	now	adv.

O

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
of	from, of	prep.
ofer	over, across	prep./adv.
ofermod	pride, arrogance	n.
offrian	offer	v.
oft	often	adv.
on	in, on	prep.
oncyrran	turn back, return	v.
onfon	receive, accept	v.
ongietan	understand, perceive	v.
onginnan	begin	v.
onwunian	remain, stay	v.
open	open	adj.
ord	point, spear, beginning	n.
op	until, as far as	prep.
oþer	other, second	adj./pron.
oþþe	or	conj.

P

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
pening	penny, money	n.
pere	pear	n.
piſe	pea	n.
plegan	play	v.
plume	plum	n.
plōh	plough	n.
preost	priest	n.
pund	pound	n.
pytt	pit	n.
pyttan	put into a pit	v.
pæþ	path	n.

Q

No substantial native Old English headword section for Q. The letter was not a normal initial in the core native vocabulary.

R

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
rand	shield	n.
rap	rope	n.
reccan	explain, tell	v.
riht	right, justice	n./adj.
rihtwis	righteous, just	adj.
rinc	man, warrior	n.
rod	cross	n.
rodor	sky, heaven	n.
ryht	right, law	n.
rād	riding, journey	n.
rēad	red	adj.
rēaf	robbery, plunder	n.
rēn	rain	n.
rīcsian	rule, exercise power	v.
rīdan	ride	v.
rīce	kingdom; powerful, rich	n./adj.
rōf	famous, excellent	adj.
rūn	secret counsel, mystery	n.
rǣd	advice, counsel	n.
rǣdan	advise, interpret, read	v.

S

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
sacu	battle, lawsuit	n.
samod	together, at once	adv.
sar	sore, pain	n./adj.
sarig	sorrowful	adj.
sawol	soul	n.
scadu	shadow	n.
scealc	servant, man	n.
sceap	sheep	n.
sceatt	money, coin, region	n.
sceawian	look at, see	v.
sceþþan	injure, harm	v.
scieppan	create, shape	v.
scild	shield	n.
scip	ship	n.
scir	bright, clear; district	adj./n.
scirgerefa	sheriff	n.
sculan	must, ought	v.
se	the, that	det./pron.
secan	seek	v.
secgan	say, tell	v.
sefa	mind, disposition	n.
sele	hall, dwelling	n.
sellan	give, sell	v.
sendan	send, throw	v.
seo	the, that	det./pron.
seon	see	v.
sib	peace, kinship	n.
sibb	peace, relationship	n.
sige	victory	n.
simle	always	adv.
sinc	treasure	n.
sip	journey, fate	n.
sipþan	afterward, since	adv./conj.
slean	strike, slay	v.
smeagan	think, examine	v.
snottor	wise, intelligent	adj.
socn	inquiry, jurisdiction	n.
sona	soon	adv.
sorg	sorrow, grief	n.

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
sop	true	adj.
sped	success, prosperity	n.
spell	story, message	n.
sprecan	speak	v.
stan	stone	n.
stefn	voice	n.
steorra	star	n.
stieran	steer, control	v.
stow	place	n.
strang	strong	adj.
stræl	arrow	n.
sunu	son	n.
sweart	black, dark	adj.
swefn	dream	n.
sweg	sound, noise	n.
sweord	sword	n.
sweostor	sister	n.
sweotol	clear, evident	adj.
swin	pig, swine	n.
swincan	labour, toil	v.
swīft	swift, fast	adj.
syllan	give	v.
syn	sin, crime	n.
synnfull	sinful	adj.
sæ	sea	n.

T

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
teon	pull, drag	v.
tid	time	n.
til	good, useful	adj.
tir	glory, honour	n.
torht	bright	adj.
treow	tree; faith, loyalty	n.
tudor	offspring, lineage	n.
tungol	star, heavenly body	n.
twegen	two	num.
tweo	doubt	n.
tūn	town, village, farm	n.
þeah	though, although	conj.
þegn	thane, retainer	n.
þenden	while, until	conj.
þeoden	prince, lord	n.
þes	this	det./pron.
þider	thither	adv.
þis	this	det./pron.
þolian	suffer, endure	v.
þonne	then, when	adv./conj.
þrowian	suffer	v.
þrym	glory, splendour	n.
þræl	slave, servant	n.
þrī	three	num.
þurfan	need	v.
þurfan	need	v.
þurh	through	prep.
þurst	thirst	n.
þus	thus	adv.
þusend	thousand	num.
þyncan	seem, appear	v.
þær	there, where	adv.
þæt	that; the	det./conj.
þā	then, when	adv.
þē	you, thee	pron.
þēaw	custom, practice	n.
þēod	people, nation	n.
þēow	slave, servant	n.
þīn	your, thine	det./pron.

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
þū	you, thou	pron.

U

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
uhta	period before dawn	n.
uncuþ	unknown, unfamiliar	adj.
under	under	prep.
unriht	wrong, injustice	n./adj.
unrihtwis	unjust	adj.
ūp	up	adv.
ūpweard	upward	adj./adv.
ūre	our	det.
ūtan	outside, from outside	adv./prep.
ūte	out, outside	adv.

V

No substantial native Old English headword section for V. The letter was not a normal initial in the core native vocabulary.

W

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
weald	forest; power, rule	n.
wealdan	wield, rule, control	v.
wealdend	ruler, Lord	n.
weard	guardian, guard	n.
weaxan	grow	v.
weg	way, road	n.
wepan	weep	v.
wer	man	n.
werod	troop, company	n.
werġild	compensatory payment	n.
west	west	n./adv.
westen	desert, wilderness	n.
wic	dwelling, settlement	n.
wig	war, battle	n.
wiht	creature, being, thing	n.
willan	want, wish	v.
wine	friend, lord	n.
winnan	struggle, fight	v.
wita	wise man, counsellor	n.
witan	know; counsellors	v./n.
wite	punishment, fine	n.
wiþ	against, toward	prep.
wlanc	proud	adj.
wod	mad, furious	adj.
wolcen	cloud, sky	n.
woruld	world	n.
wraþ	hostile, angry	adj.
wrecan	avenge	v.
writan	write	v.
wræcca	wanderer, exile	n.
wudu	wood, forest	n.
wuldor	glory	n.
wundor	wonder, miracle	n.
wunian	dwell, remain	v.
wynn	joy, delight	n.
wyrcan	make, work	v.
wyrd	fate	n.
wyrm	worm, serpent, dragon	n.
wyrt	plant, herb, root	n.

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
wæl	slaughter, carnage	n.
wæstm	fruit, growth	n.
wif	woman, wife	n.

X

No substantial native Old English headword section for X. The letter was not a normal initial in the core native vocabulary.

Y

Old English	Modern meaning	Type
yfel	evil, bad	adj./n.
yfelnes	wickedness	n.
yldo	age, old age	n.
ymb	about, around	prep./adv.
yrmpu	hardship, misery	n.
yrnan	run	v.
yrre	anger, angry	n./adj.
yp	wave	n.
ypan	flow, move like a wave	v.

Z

No substantial native Old English headword section for Z. The letter was not a normal initial in the core native vocabulary.

Reference Sources

For deeper study and historical verification, consult established Old English resources:

Source	Resource	Use
University of St Andrews	Old English Vocabulary	A teaching-oriented core vocabulary list.
Dictionary of Old English	University of Toronto	A major historical dictionary covering Old English vocabulary.
Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary	Online Old English Dictionary	A large historical dictionary of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary.

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