

Old English

Greetings & Farewells

with Meanings

A visual step-by-step classroom book for learning the most useful Anglo-Saxon greeting and parting expressions.

START HERE

Wes þū hāl!

"Be well" - greeting or farewell

BE

>

YOU

>

WELL

health + well-being

OPEN QUICK NAVIGATION

Learn in 7 short steps

Choose a topic below. Each card is clickable and returns to this page through the NAV button.

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Core Greeting

Wes þū hāl - meaning and phrase anatomy

2

One vs Many

Choose the greeting for one person or a group

3

Greeting Words

Recognize hāl, grētan, wilcuma, þū and gē

4

Time of Day

Morning, evening and night teaching forms

5

Farewells

Health wishes, safe travel and blessing forms

6

Pronunciation

þ / ð, long vowels and h in niht

7

Use It

Pick the phrase by situation and number

R

Master Review

One-page classroom reference board

LEARNING ROUTE



Core Greeting: Wes þū hāl

Start with the strongest historical phrase

Learn the meaning first. Then connect each Old English word to its role in the phrase.

HISTORICALLY SUPPORTED

Wes þū hāl!

Be well • Hail • Hello / Farewell by context

Wes

be

þū

you - one person

hāl

healthy, whole, well

THINK OF IT AS A HEALTH WISH

BE

YOU

WELL

The greeting is a wish for the other person to be well.

ALSO SEEN

Hāl wes þū - the same health wish with a different word order.

One Person vs a Group

Old English changes when “you” changes

Modern English uses “you” for one person and for several people. Old English normally distinguishes them.

ONE PERSON

Wes þū hāl!

Be well!

þū = you (singular)

SEVERAL PEOPLE

Hāle wese gē!

Be well, all of you!

gē = you (plural)

GRAMMAR BOARD

ONE

wes

þū

hāl



Wes þū hāl

GROUP

wese / wesap

gē

hāle



plural idea

KEY GRAMMAR

þū = one person | gē = several people

Greeting Words to Recognize

Build a small useful vocabulary set

These words help you recognize greetings, speakers, and time expressions without memorizing long lists.



hāl

healthy • whole • well

Core meaning in the health-wish greeting



grētan

to greet • salute • address

Ancestor of modern “greet”



wilcuma

a welcome guest

Originally a noun, not exactly modern “welcome!”



þū

you - one person

Singular pronoun used in Wes þū hāl



gē

you - several people

Plural pronoun used for a group



morgen / æfen / niht

morning / evening / night

Time-of-day vocabulary

WORD FAMILY

grētan



greet

Modern English descendant

Time-of-Day Greetings

Use these as teaching constructions

They use genuine Old English words, but the phrases are best taught as secondary practice after Wes þū hāl.

LEARNER / TEACHING FORMS

M MORNING Gōdne morgen Good morning gōdne + morgen	E EVENING Gōdne æfen Good evening gōdne + æfen	N NIGHT Gōde niht Good night gōde + niht
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WHY DOES "GOOD" CHANGE?

gōd → **gōdne** before morgen / æfen → **gōde** with niht

Old English adjectives change their endings according to grammar. Learn the form together with the noun.

PRIORITY

Learn Wes þū hāl first; treat these as secondary vocabulary practice.

Farewells and Parting Wishes

Leaving can use the same idea: “be well”

Old English parting language often works as a wish for health, safety, or divine protection.

STRONGEST PHRASE

Wes þū hāl!

Farewell! - Be well!

Wesap hāle

Be well, all of you!

plural health wish

GRAMMAR FORM

Far gesund

Go safely / fare well

safe-travel teaching form

TEACHING FORM

God þē mid sīe

God be with you

religious blessing / teaching equivalent

TEACHING FORM

PARTING LOGIC

LEAVING

WISH

WELL / SAFE

Pronunciation Board

Read the letters before saying the phrases

These are learner-friendly sound cues, not exact reconstructions for every dialect and century.

Þ / ð

TH SOUND

þū - roughly “thoo”

Do not read þ as p.

MACRONS

LONG VOWEL

hāl, gōd, þū

A line over a vowel marks length.

H IN NIHT

BACK-OF-MOUTH SOUND

niht - roughly “nikht”

Think Scottish “loch”, not silent.

SAY THE MAIN PHRASES

OLD ENGLISH	ROUGH SOUND	MEANING
Wes þū hāl	wes thoo hahl	Be well / hello / farewell
Hāl wes þū	hahl wes thoo	Hail / be well
Hāle wese gē	hah-leh weh-seh yay	Be well, everyone
Gōdne morgen	gohd-neh mor-gen	Good morning
Gōde niht	goh-deh nikht	Good night

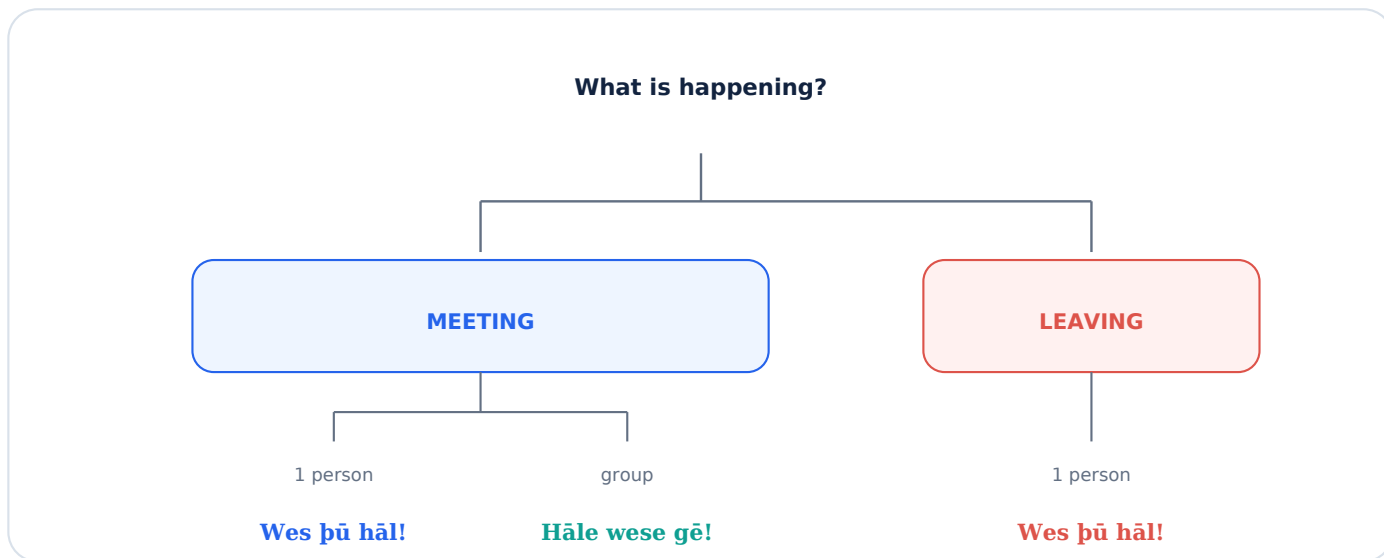
READING ORDER

letters -> sound cue -> phrase meaning

Use the Right Phrase

Choose by situation, not by word-for-word translation

Use the context first: meeting or leaving. Then choose the number: one person or several.



MINI CONVERSATION BOARD

A: Wes þū hāl!

"Hello! Be well."

B: Hāl wes þū!

"Hail! Be well."

PARTING

Wes þū hāl! = "Farewell / be well"

Same phrase, different function - context decides greeting or farewell.

Master Board: Old English Greetings

One-page classroom review

Use this page as a quick reference after completing the seven steps.

SITUATION	OLD ENGLISH	MEANING	STATUS
Meet 1 person	Wes þū hāl	Be well / hello	STRONG
Meet a group	Hāle wese gē	Be well, all	STRONG
Part from 1 person	Wes þū hāl	Farewell / be well	STRONG
Morning	Gōdne morgen	Good morning	TEACHING
Evening	Gōdne æfen	Good evening	TEACHING
Night	Gōde niht	Good night	TEACHING
Safe parting	Far gesund	Go safely	TEACHING

MEMORY ANCHORS

hāl

well / whole

þū

you - one

gē

you - group

grētan

to greet

60-SECOND REVIEW

Wes þū hāl -> þū = one -> gē = group -> context decides greeting / farewell

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