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Review

'A clear, readable introduction to language ... the layers of vocabulary are dealt with brilliantly ...' Good Book Guide

About the Author

Charles Barber was formerly Reader in English Language and Literature at the University of Leeds. He died in 2000.

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Philp Shaw is Environmental Audit Officer, Scottish Natural Heritage, UK.

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THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (CANTO CLASSICS) BY CHARLES BARBER, JOAN BEAL, PHILIP SHAW PDF

This bestselling text by Charles Barber, with updating contributions from Joan C. Beal and Philip A. Shaw, recounts the history of the English language from its remote ancestry to the present day. Using dozens of familiar texts, including the English of King Alfred, Shakespeare and Chaucer, the English language is explored in terms of where it came from, where it is going, and the global impact it has had, taking into account the many varieties of English that now exist. Stimulating and interesting, it is not only written for specialists on language and linguistics, but also for general readers who take an interest in the subject.

- Sales Rank: #381260 in Books
- Brand: Barber, Charles/ Beal, Joan C./ Shaw, Philip A.
- Published on: 2012-03-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .71" w x 5.43" l, 1.00 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 318 pages

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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Philp Shaw is Environmental Audit Officer, Scottish Natural Heritage, UK.

Most helpful customer reviews

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An excellent, if heavily technical, layman's guide

By Jim

This book is an excellent introduction to the history of the English language. As the other reviewers have noted, it's a bit top-heavy on technical linguistics, and therefore may not be suitable to everyone. But if you don't mind reading a book which could also be used as a 400-level college textbook... I think this book would appeal to any who have an interest in linguistics in general and the history on English in particular -

especially if you've read other, lighter books on the topic already and you're ready to get seriously into the topic.

I fit the above category, and I loved this book. Probably the best I've read on the subject so far.

25 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

Informative good read

By K. Johnson

If someone is interested in learning the origins, history, and development of the English language, then he or she will gain a lot from this book. There are many technical aspects included. It's also enjoyable. Many applied linguistic terms and areas are covered. From English's relationship to Sanskrit and other languages, to the great vowel shift explaining why English often doesn't sound the way it's spelled--difficult and illogical for students learning the language. The author went into depth about such topics as the culture of the Germanic tribes and how demographics influenced the development of the English language the way it did. The Scandinavians, French, and many others have loaded the language with with many loans words. It's a good informative read.

28 of 29 people found the following review helpful.

great introduction to history of english language

By cole

My interest in linguistics began when my latin teacher began talk about past forms of english in class. I was looking through the book store to find more about what he was talking about. Many of the titles looked either too thick or too long. then i came across this title. It was thin and supposedly for beginners like me. I thought i would give it a try and purchased it. When i got home i immediatly began to read. It was getting dark by the time i put it down. I am an avid fan of fiction, and only read non fiction for the information. I usually find it boring, yet informative and long to be finished with it. But this book i found was very interesting as well as informative and i could not put it down. It introduces you first to the various symbols used to show different sound and then wastes no time plunging you right into the beginnings of the language through old, middle, and early modern english. It was easy to follow as long as you had the symbols memorized and gave a brief history of the times when the langauge was at certain stages. I finished it quickly and understood most of the stuff i read. Now i feel i can step up to the next level and read some of the more complex books. This book was a good foundation for my interest in linguistics and i found no fault in it.

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