

## Analysis Texts 1-3, Activity 1.1

## Activity 1.1

Describe some of the differences you can observe in the following texts, which are the beginning of the parable of the Prodigal Son from St Luke's Gospel, Ch 15 (the verses of the chapter are numbered). Look at vocabulary, spelling, word structure and word order, and try to identify Old English words that are still part of present-day English, though sometimes considerably changed in their spelling. Notice which Old English words appear to have been lost.

Text 1	WW translation	Text 2	Text 3
11 He cwæð soðlice sum man hæfde twegen suna	11 He quoth soothly some man had two sons.	11 And he seide,  A man hadde twei sones;	11 And he said,  A certaine man had tvvo sonnes:
12 þa cwæð se gingra to hys fæder fæder syle me mynne dæl mynre æhte. þe me to gebyreð. þa dælde he hym hys æhta.	12 then quoth the younger to his father. father sell me my deal of-my property. that me to belongs. then dealed he him his property.	12 and ... seide the 3onger of hem to the fadir, Fadir, 3yue me the porcioun of catel, that fallith to me. And he departide to hem the catel.	12 and ... said the yonger of them to his father, Father, giue me the portion of substance that belongeth to me. And he deuided vnto them the substance.
13 þa æfter feawa dagum ealle hys þyng gegaderode se gingra sunu 7 ferde wræclice on feorlen ryce. 7 þær forspylde hys æhta lybbende on hys gælsan.	13 then after few days all his things gathered the younger son & fared abroad in far-off country. & there spilled his property living in his luxury.	13 And not aftir many daies, whanne alle thingis weren gederid togider, the 3onger sone wente forth in pilgrymage in to a fer cuntre; and there he wastide hise goodis in lyuyng lecherously.	13 And not many daies after gathering al his things together the yonger sonne vvent from home into a farre countrie: and there he vvasted his substance, liuing riotously.

### Vocabulary, spelling & word structure

(These notes to the first introductory Activity do not describe the changes comprehensively, and at this stage omit a number of possible references to sound changes.)

<i>OE</i>	<i>ME</i>	<i>EMnE</i>	<i>MnE</i>
cwæð	seide	said	quoth/said

cwæð from OE *cweðan*, MnE *quoth* now archaic.

*seide/said* from OE *secgan*.

Development of spellings of past tense - *sæzde, sazode, sæde, saizde, sæide, sede, sade, seide, sed, seaide, sæide, seyde, seid, sayde, saide, seyede, zayde, seyd, sayd, seyed, saied, sayed, said*.

hæfde	hadde	had	had
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Past tense of OE *habban*; spellings from OE to MnE include - *hæfde, hefde, befede, heffede, heofde, heuede, hafde, haued, hæuede, hæfuede, hæfede, hauede, hafuede, hafede, heuede, hefuede, hefte, hafte, havid, hadd, hafid, hedde, bede, hadde, had hade, haid, haved, bed, hayd, had*

twegen	twei	tvvo	two
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OE forms of the numeral were *twa*· (feminine) - MnE *two* - *tu* (neuter) and *twegen* (masculine), which survives as *twain*.

suna	sones	sonnes	sons
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OE *suna* is the plural of *sunu*. <-a> is one of a number of different plural inflections which eventually regularized to MnE <-s>.

se gingra	the zonger	the yonger	the younger
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OE *geong* (other forms were *giong, gung, iung*) had a “mutated” comparative form *gingra*, (as well as *gyngra, geongra*), which did not survive.

The demonstrative pronoun *se* is the masculine nominative form of a complex paradigm which in time simplified to the single definite article *the*.

hem	them	them
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The OE plural pronouns beginning with <h->, *hie, heora, heom*, were in time replaced by *they, them, their* from ON.

fæder	fadir	father	father
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A single <d> between a vowel and “vocalic r” spelt <er> began to be pronounced [ð] from the beginning of the 15th century. Compare *mother* (OE *modor* > *moder* > *mother*).

syle	zyue	giue	sell/give
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The meaning of *syle* (from *sellan*) has changed to *give* (from OE *giefan*).

mynne dæl	porcioun	portion	deal/portion
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*dæl* is an OE word; *porcioun/portion* derived from OF.

The possessive pronoun *mynne* (*my*) is the accusative form. The following form *mynre* with *æhte* marks the possessive.

The spelling of *minne* with <y> in *mynne* was a common convention of writing <y> for <i> which had developed in handwriting (compare *hys, hym, þyng, ryce, forspylde, lybbende* for *his, him, þing, rice, forspilde, libbende*).

myhre æhte      catel/goodis      substance      chattel(s)/substance/goods  
*æhte/æhta* are inflected forms of OE *æht* (= *possessions/property*), respectively possessive singular and accusative plural.  
*catel* was an early Norman French loan-word. The OF equivalent was *chatel*. The two forms have since become separate words, *chattel* and *cattle*.  
*substance* was an OF loan-word.

gebyreþ      fallith      belongeth      falls/belongs  
 The older 3rd person present tense inflections *-eþ*, *-ith*, *-eth* changed during the 16th and 17th centuries to the Northern forms with *-s*, *-es*, though surviving in dialects and literature for much longer.

dagum      daies      daies      days  
*dagum*, from OE *dæg*, has a dative plural inflection <-um>. The plural regularised to <-s/-es>

þyng      thingis      things      things  
 OE *þing* was not inflected for its plural form, but later regularised.  
 OE letter <þ> was later dropped for the French <th> digraph.

gegaderode      gederid      gathering      gathered  
 OE *gaderian* is another example of the change of <d> to <th>, like *fæder*. The inflection <-ode> marked singular past tense in “weak verbs”. The prefix <ge-> on verbs gave them an “active” meaning - *gather together*.

                 togider      together      together  
 From OE *togædere* (not in Text 1), with the sound change [d] to [ð].

ferde      wente      went      went  
*ferde* is from OE *faran*, MnE *fare*.  
*wente* is from OE *wendan*, MnE *wend/went*.

ryce      cuntre      countrie      country  
 OE *rice* (*kingdom, country*) now survives only as the suffix *-ric*, as in *bishopric*.

forspylde      wastide      vusted      spilled/wasted  
 The OE prefix *for-* “denotes an increase in the signification of the verb”. OE *spillan* meant *destroy*; *forspillan* therefore is something like *completely wasted*.  
*Wastide* derives from the Anglo-French verb *waster*.

lybbende      lyuinge      liuing      living  
 The 2nd and 3rd person present tenses of OE *libban* (*live*) were *leafast* and *leafaþ*, from which the later form *live* derived. Compare OE *habban* (*have*) and *hebban* (*heave*).  
 The OE present participle inflection *-ende* did not survive.

gælsan      lecherously      riotously      lecherously/riotously  
 The OE noun *gælsan* has a dative case inflection (base form *gælsa*). The other texts translate with adverbs, both from OF loan-words.

**Word order**

The basis of MnE word order is established in OE, but with some differences, illustrated in,

þe me to gebyrēð

that me to belongs

*that belongs to me*

þa dælde he hym hys æhta

then dealed he him his property

*then he dealed him his property*

ealle hys þyng gegaderode se gingra sunu

all his things gathered the younger son

*the younger son gathered all his things*

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