

Instructions for learning verbs, day 1:

Slight change from the syllabus, guys. For session 5, Study 7.1-7.4 of Baker (pp. 64-79): don't go on to 7.5 and 7.6 as it said on the syllabus and don't worry (except as noted below) the material from Mitchell and Robinson, which I think would just confuse matters at this stage.

After you read through the pages, memorize only the personal endings laid out in Table 7.2, but read out loud and try to work into your ear all of the verbs listed in Tables 7.1-7.11.

Why? For two reasons:

1. Because so many of the exceptions and nuances of the forms that make this chapter daunting have to do with what's easiest to say out loud (like assimilation, 7.2.1, or contracted weak verbs, 7.3.3), it's easiest to become comfortable with these rules by, well, saying them out loud rather than trying to memorize them.
2. Similarly, it is easiest to become familiar with the vowel gradations that govern the many classes of strong verbs (Table 7.8) simply by repeating them aloud, rather than trying to learn them as a set of rules.

BUT—and this is important—remember that the second of the forms that Baker gives in that Table 7.8 does not represent one of the strong verb gradations; rather, as Baker explains, it represents the i-mutation (see Table 2.1 on p. 17) that affects strong verbs in their second- and third-person singular present forms. So in order to get a good sense of the strong verb gradations, either ignore that second form as you read or instead use paragraph 93 on p. 37 of Mitchell and Robinson, which doesn't include the i-mutated form. (Baker and M&R use different verbs for their tables, but classes and vowel gradations are the same.) That said, precisely because you will often see such i-mutated forms, it is worth going back to Table 2.1 on p. 17 of Baker to refresh your memory on what those sound changes are.

After you've read out loud and repeated the verbs enough to feel like you have a preliminary handle on them, log onto Old English Aerobics and try the following exercises:

<http://workouts.oldenglishaerobics.net/07-verb-e01.php>

<http://workouts.oldenglishaerobics.net/07-verb-e02.php>

(If you will need an Old English Aerobics account; I've also posted instructions on the course website.) These exercises give you a modern English sentence and its translation into Old English, with only one word missing: a verb form that you supply from a list of possibilities. Because they offer a host of context clues, these exercises are relatively forgiving.

Once you feel like you have a handle on that, try this one:

<http://workouts.oldenglishaerobics.net/07-verb-paradigm-drill-1.php>

This one is harder because there are no context clues; you simply have to place all the verb forms in their correct slots. Do not stress about how many you get right; this is learning-by-doing, not an exam-style assessment. And while this sounds like (and is!) a lot of work, I guarantee that it's easier and less mind-numbing than trying to actually memorize all of the forms. It will also prepare you for harder exercises to come.

And don't forget to read the lovely poems that I assigned! Come prepared with a thought or question or two about them for us to discuss on Thursday.

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