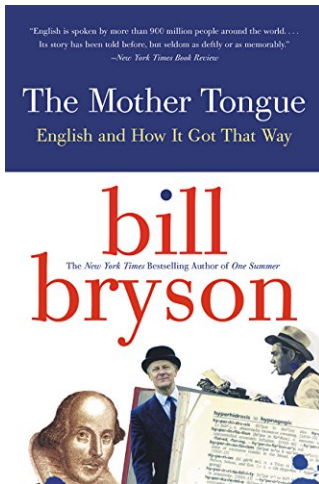


# [PDF] The Mother Tongue - English And How It Got That Way

Bill Bryson - pdf download free book

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## Books Details:

Title: The Mother Tongue - English A

Author: Bill Bryson

Released: 2001-10-23

Language:

Pages: 272

ISBN: 0380715430

ISBN13: 978-0380715435

ASIN: 0380715430

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## Description:

Who would have thought that a book about English would be so entertaining? Certainly not this grammar-allergic reviewer, but *The Mother Tongue* pulls it off admirably. Bill Bryson--a zealot--is the right man for the job. Who else could rhapsodize about "the colorless murmur of the schwa" with a straight face? It is his unflagging enthusiasm, seeping from between every sentence, that carries the book.

Bryson displays an encyclopedic knowledge of his topic, and this inevitably encourages a light tone; the more you know about a subject, the more absurd it becomes. No jokes are necessary, the facts do well enough by themselves, and Bryson supplies tens per page. As well as tossing off gems of fractured English (from a Japanese eraser: "This

product will self-destruct in Mother Earth."), Bryson frequently takes time to compare the idiosyncratic tongue with other languages. Not only does this give a laugh (one word: Welsh), and always shed considerable light, it also makes the reader feel fortunate to speak English.

**From Publishers Weekly** Bryson's blend of linguistic anecdotes and Anglo-Saxon cultural history proves entertaining but superficial. "While his historical review is thorough. . . he mostly reiterates conventional views about English's structural superiority," said PW. "He retells old tales with fresh verve . . . but becomes sloppy when matters of rhetoric and grammar arise."

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Opening with some of the hilarious ways English is used - hotels announcing that the chambermaid will be happy to "flatten your underwear" (Yugoslavia) or injunctions to "tootle the horn" when a "passenger of the foot heaves into sight" (Tokyo), the book goes on to develop the unreasonable-ness of the language (but then, which language isn't)? The point is that these attempts reflect more the power of English as a global language which make its idiosyncracies all the more visible. English is the de facto interlingua for business, not only internationally, but also in large nations with develop The Mother Tongue is the story of the evolution of the English language, from its humble beginnings as a Germanic tongue to what it has evolved into over the centuries. So, Bill Bryson + cheap equals insta-buy for me, apparently.Â Bryson spends most of his time looking at how we got where we are today. Where English came from, how it got to England, where it went from there. With its in-text references, footnotes, extensive bibliography and index, this book looks almost academic, but Bryson, an American living in England, handles it all with a cheerfully low-key sense of humor -- almost as if Terry Pratchett had turned his eye to grammar -- and even a refreshingly open approach to the word fuck in the chapter on swearing. U.S. English insists that a national English-language law would apply only to government business, and that in unofficial, private, or religious contexts people could use any language they liked. Yet it was U.S. English that tried to take AT&T to court for inserting Spanish advertisements in the Los Angeles Yellow Pages. That would hardly seem to be government business. And many Hispanics feel that there would be further encroachments on their civil libertiesâ€”such as the short-lived 1985 attempt by Dade County in Florida to require that marriage ceremonies be conducted only in English. U.S. En... The Mother Tongue (. ISBN 0-380-71543-0) is a book by Bill Bryson which compiles the history and origins of the English language and its various quirks. It is subtitled English And How It Got That Way. The book discusses the Indo-European origins of English, the growing status of English as a global language, the complex etymology of English words, the dialects of English, spelling reform, prescriptive grammar, and more minor topics including swearing. This account popularises the subject and makes it