



**A Short History of the German Language (RLE  
Linguistics E: Indo-European Linguistics)  
(Routledge Library Editions: Linguistics)**

*William Walker Chambers, John Ritchie Wilkie*

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This simple introduction to the history of the German language seeks to provide students who have some knowledge of modern German, but no knowledge either of its development or of linguistic theories, with a short account of the essential factors – chronological, geographical and linguistic – and their interrelation.

The material is arranged in three parts. The first traces the history of the German language from its origins in Indo-European through the pre-documentary Germanic period and the Middle Ages to the present day. In the second part the development of the German vocabulary is described, including word formation, borrowing, and change in meaning; and the book concludes with a section on changes in sounds, grammatical forms, and syntax. Emphasis is placed on the development of the standard literary language in its historical and social context, while such topics as dialects and the relationship of German to other Germanic and European languages are treated very briefly as the need arises.

The inclusion of maps, some specimen passages of German its early stages, suggestions for further reading after each chapter, and an extensive classified bibliography also contribute to making this a useful introduction to the subject and a reliable foundation for more advanced work.

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