



The English is Coming!: How One Language is Sweeping the World

Leslie Dunton-Downer

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English has fast become the number one language for everything from business and science, diplomacy and education, entertainment and environmentalism to socializing and beyond—virtually any human activity unfolding on a global scale. Worldwide, nonnative speakers of English now outnumber natives three to one; and in China alone, more people use English than in the United States—a remarkable feat for a language that got its start as a mongrel tongue on an island fifteen hundred years ago.

Through the fascinating stories of thirty English words used and understood in nearly all corners of the globe, *The English Is Coming!* takes readers on an eye-opening journey across culture and commerce, war and peace, and time and space. These mini-histories shed new light on everyday words: the strange turns of fate by which their meanings evolved and their new roles as the building blocks of the first language ever to forge a global community.

Exploring such familiar terms as *shampoo* (from a Hindi word for scalp and body hygiene long practiced in India); *robot* (coined by Czech painter Josef Capek for his brother Karel's 1921 play about man-made creatures); *credit* (rooted in a prehistoric phrase of sacred significance: "to put heart into"); and dozens of others, Dunton-Downer reveals with clarity and humor how these linguistic artifacts embody the resilience, appeal, adoptability, and wild inclusiveness that English, through a series of historical accidents, gained on its road to worldwide reach. These words explain not only how English has managed to link our distant and often disparate pasts but also how it is propelling humankind to a future that we can, for the first time, talk about and shape in a language that now belongs to all of us: Global English.

Perfect for culture buffs, armchair travelers, and language lovers alike, *The English Is Coming!* is sure to inspire truly global conversations for decades to come.

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