



The History of English in Ten Minutes

The Norman Conquest

Narrator:

1066. True to his name, William the Conqueror invades Britain, bringing new concepts from across the channel like the French language, the Domesday book and the duty free Galois's multipack.

French was *de rigueur* for all official business, with words like 'judge', 'jury', 'evidence' and 'justice' coming in and giving John Grisham's career a kick-start. Latin was still used *ad nauseam* in Church, and the common man spoke English – able to communicate only by speaking more slowly and loudly until the others understood him.

Words like 'cow', 'sheep' and 'swine' come from the English-speaking farmers, while the a la carte versions - 'beef', 'mutton' and 'pork' - come from the French-speaking toffs – beginning a long running trend for restaurants having completely indecipherable menus.

The bonhomie all ended when the English nation took their new warlike lingo of 'armies', 'navies' and 'soldiers' and began the Hundred Years War against France.

It actually lasted 116 years but by that point no one could count any higher in French and English took over as the language of power.