

中英語の文法概説

1 . NOUNS (名詞)

Nouns in Middle English, like those in Modern English, generally add **-s** if the word ends with a vowel or **-es** if the word ends with a consonant to indicate the possessive and plural.

	Singular	Possessive	Plural	Meaning
Regular	aventure		aventures	(chance,risk)
	stound		stoundes	(time, moment)
	wight	wightes	wightes	(creature)
Short vowel and consonant	bryd	bryddes	bryddes	(bird)
	god	goddes , goddis	goddes , goddis	(god)
Irregular	deer		deer	(deer)
	hors	horses	hors	
Stem changes	mous	mouses	mys	(mouse)
	gos	goses	gees	
Old -en plurals	eye, ye		eyen, eighen, yen	(eye)
	fo, foo		fon [foos]	(enemy)
	too		toon [toos]	(toes)

Notice that words ending with consonants preceded by short vowels double their consonants before adding the usual endings. Some nouns retain the OE dative ending (**-e**) when they appear as the object of a pronoun in certain fixed expressions & emdash; such as **lif.** and **on live** or **bed,** and **to bedde.** A select few nouns sometimes appear with no inflection for the genitive singular, such as **Lady Chapel** (Our Lady's Chapel) and **fader soule** (father's soul). Others are brother, chirche, and herte.

2 . 代名詞 (PERSONAL PRONOUNS)

Subject	Possessive	Object
I, ich	my, myn	me
thou	thy, thyn	thee
he	his	him
she	her	hir(e)
it, hit	his	it, hit
Plural		
we	oure	us
ye	youre	you
they	hire	them, hem

Note particularly those forms that differ from Modern English (in boldface). Though there is no hard and fast rule, the “thou” form is generally used as the familiar form of address to children, intimates and inferiors. Conversely, the “you” form is used in polite situations and when addressing superiors.

3 . 形容詞 (ADJECTIVES)

There are two possibilities for adjectival inflection. The so called "weak" inflection is used after definite articles, and possessives, in the vocative (O goode God), and often before proper names; it is formed by adding e to the base word. The "strong" inflection is used the rest of the time, and is simply the base word with no inflection when singular. Both strong and weak adjectives add e in the plural.

	Weak	Strong
Singular	sik lay the goode man	his opinion was good
	O goode Custance	A good man was ther
Plural	for the goode men	his hors were goode

比較級・最上級 Comparative Adjectives

As in Modern English, -er and -est are added to the adjective stem to form the comparative and superlative forms, though there are some irregular forms.

	Positive	Comparative	Superlative	
Regular	strong	stronger	strongest	
	grete	gretter	grettest	
Irregular	good	bet	best	
	bad	badder , werse	werste	
	much(e)l	mo	meste	"many, more, etc."
	Iyte(l)	lasse/lesse	leeste	"small, smaller "

In a few archaic forms the OE genitive -es is preserved:

alleskinnes-of every kind

noskinnes-of no kind

The old form alder (or alther) is sometimes used with the superlative to form a compound adjective:

alderbeste-best of all

alderlest-least of all

alderfirst-first of all

alther-fairest-fairest of all

4 . 副詞 (ADVERBS)

Adverbs Adverbs are formed from adjectives by adding -ly, -liche or -e. See the Vocabulary list at the end for some of the most common Chaucerian adverbs.

5 . 動詞 (VERBS)

The present tense is formed with -e, -est, and -eth in the singular and -en in the plural:

I,ich here, finde

thou herest, findest

he, she, hit hereth, findeth

we, ye, they heren, finden

The pronoun thou is often suffixed to the verb (usually in questions):

herestow do you hear?

woostow do you know?

*Note: when the stem of the verb ends in **-d** or **-t**, the third person singular form is often contracted:

he fynt he findeth
 he rit he rideth

The present subjunctive is easily formed by the simple addition of **-e** to the verb stem. Note that the subjunctive is used much more frequently in Middle English than it is today.

Indicative	Doun on hir knees falleth she to grounde.
(直説法)	<i>She falls down on her knees to the ground</i>
Subjunctive	And he falle, he hath non helpe to rise
(仮定法・叙想法)	<i>If he should fall, he would have no help to get up</i>
	A verray pestilence upon yow falle!
	<i>May a real plague afflict you!</i>
	Al falle it foule or faire
	<i>Whether it turn out good or evil</i>

The imperative singular usually has no ending (occasionally **-e** is added to the stem); plural imperatives add **-eth** to the stem. Stems ending in a vowel usually do not add anything.

Singular	Go bet! (<i>Go quickly!</i>)
(命令法 単数)	Com hider, love, to me (<i>Come hither, love, to me</i>)
Plural	Gooth forth! (<i>[you, pl.] go forth.!</i>)
(命令法 複数) -th	"Cometh neer," quod he, "my lady Prioress." (<i>Come nearer, " he said "my lady Prioress. "</i>)

[note: the use of the plural imperative for polite address]

6 . 過去形 (PRETERITES)

As in Modern English the preterite is formed by the addition of **-d** or **-t** to the verb stem (the weak conjugation) or by a change in the stem vowel (the "strong" conjugation as in sing, sang, sung). In the weak conjugation the personal endings are often superadded:

Sing.	Plu.		Sing.	Plu.
I herde	we herden		I wente	we wenten
thou herdest	ye herden		thou wentest	ye wenten
he herde	they herden		he wente	they wenten

Strong verbs form their preterites by regular vowel changes. No personal singular endings are added, but the second person singular and plural have a different vowel from the first and third persons singular. This

distinction had already begun to fade by Chaucer's time, however, and the same vowel is frequently used throughout the preterite. Take the verb *ginnen* (to begin) as an example:

I gan
thou gonne
he, she, it gan
we gonnen

The past participle of both strong and weak verbs frequently has a *y* prefix; the weak past participle ends in **-d** or **-t**, the strong in **-e** or **-en**. Example: (y)**gonne** and (y)**herd**. As always, the verbs "been," to be, and "gon," to go, are irregular. The forms for the present and preterite are as follows:

< P>Sing.	Plu.	Sing.	Plu.
I am	we be(e)n, aren	I was	we were(n)
thou art	ye be(e)n, aren	thou were(n)	ye were(n)
he/she/hit is	they be(e)n, aren	he were(n)	they were(n)

Past participle - (y)be(n)

7 . 過去現在動詞 (PRETERITE PRESENT)

These are usually auxiliary ("helping") verbs, and many of them survive in Modern English. Their present tense is formed on an old preterite, so that the third person singular has no inflectional ending. Their preterites are weak.

Present Sing ular	Present Plural	Preterite
dar, darst (dare)		dorste, durste
may, mayst (to be able)	mowe(n)	myghte, myghtest, myghte(n)
mot, most (must, may)	mote(n)	moste, muste, muster, mosten
owe, owest, oweth (ought, owe, own)	owe(n)	oght, oughtest, oughten
tharf (it is necessary)	thurfen	thurfte
kan, kanst (know how, know)	connen	coude
woo(s)t (know, discover)	witen	wiste
shal, shalt (must)	shul, shulle(n)	sholde, sholdest, sholden

* shal also has its modern sense of futurity.

Be careful. These words often have meanings different from their Modern English counterparts.
 Some Special Cases

The verb "ginnen," to begin, is most often used in the preterite as a mere auxiliary signifying past time: **he gan riden** (he rode). Its sense of beginning is usually apparent only when the dependent infinitive is preceded by **for to**: **he gan for to riden** (he began to ride). The verb "don," to do, is often used with a causative sense: **he did don him sleen** (he had him killed).

8 . 非人称動詞 (IMPERSONAL VERBS)

Middle English has a great many impersonal constructions. These are some of the most common: 文法上の主語を必要としない動詞群 (仮の主語 it を置くこともある)。現在形は常に-eth の語尾をとる。

him liketh(現在形)	it pleases him
him list<listeth(現在形)	it pleases him; he wants
him reweth(現在形)	it pains him ; he rues, repents
hire mette(過去形)	it dreamed to her; she dreamed
us nedeth(現在形)	it is lacking to us; we need
deigned hym nat(過去形)	it was not proper to him; he disdained
hire oughte(過去形)	it was right for her; she ought
us moste(過去形)	it is necessary for us; we must
it remembreth me(現在形)	I remember

Note the difference between the personal verb **thenke(n)** and the impersonal **thynke(n)**: the subject of thenken is in the nominative case (**I**); since **thynken** is impersonal, it takes not a subject pronoun, but rather an object pronoun (**you, hir**).

thenke(n)	And after wyn on Venus moste I thynke
人称動詞	<i>After drinking I must think of Venus (lovemaking)</i>
	Nay, nay, I thoghte it revere, trewely!
	No, no, I never thought it (such a thing), truly!
thynke(n)	Which was the mooste fre, as thynketh yow?
非人称動詞	<i>Who was the most generous, as it seems to you?</i>
	But nathelees, hir thoughte that she dyde
	<i>But nevertheless, it seemed to her that she was dying</i>