[SQUEAKING]

[RUSTLING]

[CLICKING]

ARTHUR BAHR: We got a pretty good overview without any rules, except those we intuited and I told you about, of verbs in the mini-texts already last week, including strong verbs from that first sentence of mini-text B, where the verb was *ġelamp* from *ġelimpan.* And for today, you actually got to study them.

So 7.1 of Baker is an excellent overview. And I'm going to start by reinforcing a few of those main points here. The good news about Old English-- so first of all, I suspect, for many of you if not most, verbs are the hardest part of learning any foreign language. And I think that's probably true of Old English as well.

Nevertheless, the good news is that Old English has very few verb endings to memorize, especially compared to, say, Latin or Greek. And this becomes dramatically obvious on table 7.2, page 66 of Baker. You can see all of the pleural forms are the same in all instances. All persons of the singular subjunctive are the same. And that's it. This is partly a function of the fact that Old English has very few verb tenses-- specifically two, past and present. We'll get back to that in a second.

The main complication, however, with Old English verbs-- and it is a big one-- is that there are two different kinds of verbs-- strong verbs and weak verbs, where weak verbs are those that form the past tense by adding a dental suffix, like the *-ed* of modern English-- *walk/walked*-- whereas strong verbs change the root vowel in lieu of adding an ending.

This, by the way, is a feature of all Germanic languages-- the strong/weak verb distinction. And we have it in modern English as well. So *sing, sang, sung* is the classic modern English strong verb, where there is no ending at all. It's just the vowel that changes.

And sure enough, if you take a look at the past indicative, so the middle left of that table 7.2, you can see that the past indicative singular is where we have actual differences in the endings of verbs from strong and weak. Very helpfully, the all plurals are the same applies to strong verbs as well. So you don't have to worry about any of what follows in the plural.

And as you can see, the first and third person singular past indicative of the strong verbs, there's a little dash in lieu of an ending, which indicates that there is no ending. And so when you reproduce table 7.2 on your exams, which you will every single exam-- this is the last table, by the way, that's going to be on every single exam.

So 5.3 and 5.4 from chapter 5, obviously, the strong noun endings 6.1 from chapter 6, and then the personal endings of the verbs in table 7.2-- those are the four tables that you will reproduce-- 68 points worth, it turns out-- on every single exam, all right?

And just as you need to indicate the absence of an instrumental form in the feminine and plural back for table 5.3, so too you have to indicate the absence of an ending for the first and third person past indicative of strong verbs. And that's one of the things that makes Old English verbs tricky, is they often lack an ending in the past indicative, which can make it hard to find the conjugated verb of a given clause. The other-- yeah, do you have a question?

AUDIENCE: For the second person past indicative for the strong--

ARTHUR BAHR: Yes?

AUDIENCE: Is the vowel also changing along with the ending?

ARTHUR BAHR: OK, yes. I'm glad you asked that, Lambert, because that's the other thing that is arguably trickier about strong verbs, is they are constantly changing their vowels. So if you take a look at 7.1, which has the actual conjugated form-- and our two examples are *fremman,* to do, and *helpan,* to help-- you can see that that E of-- that short E of *fremman* never changes, very obligingly, through that whole column in every single form.

It does switch between having two M's and one M. We'll get to that phenomenon, which is called gemination, in a little bit. But in terms of the vowel, no differences at all. Whereas, *helpan,* on the right, quite unhelpfully-- see what I did there-- changes its vowels from *helpan* to *hilpþ* to *healp* to *hulpon* to *holpen.* And moreover, it's bopping around, if you read down that column. So you can hear five quite distinct vowel sounds there-- [e], [i], [æ], [u], [o]-- which we'll talk more about in a moment.

Now, here, you may be thinking, I speak modern English. And I do not say "*I halp*" in the past. I say "I helped." And you are correct. That's because modern English shows a strong preference for weak verbs. So a lot of verbs that were strong in Old English, like *helpan,* have over the centuries become weak, like *help,* so that we've just changed how we form the past.

Nevertheless, this process doesn't happen overnight. It happens gradually. So if you've read or heard the King James Bible, which was written in the early 17th century, "He hath holpen his servant Israel" is one of the phrases. So they're still using that strong past participle that you see down at the bottom of the column, *holpen,* into the 1600s, albeit in what then is already an archaic formulation.

So one way in which modern English prefers weak verbs is that many verbs are just getting weak. But it's also the case that when we adopt a verb into modern English, it's always weak as well, even if there's a-- even if it sounds like a strong verb that we might analogize it to.

So for example, modern English *drive,* because it comes from Old English *drīfan,* which is strong, is still strong in modern English. But *contrive,* which rhymes with *drive,* is weak because it was adopted into modern English right at the end of the Middle Ages. And that explains why we say *drive, drove, driven,* but not *contrive, controve, contriven.*

Although, I love strong verbs. And so I'm constantly hoping that we can mobilize and find weak verbs that could be strengthened. This is deeply nerdy, obviously. But we're all here. So we're among our people. *Melt* is another good example. So *melt* used to be strong in Old English.

And you can hear that same *melt, molten*-- so *molten,* the adjective, which we tend to use as an adjective now, and mostly for just things like lava, molten lava, molten lead, but it would sound odd to say "Here, Chef, I have molten this butter for you." I mean, you'd probably be understood, right? So I encourage you to go off and refer to having "molten" things.

Similarly, today-- what is today in the Christian calendar? It is Shrove Tuesday. It is the day before Ash Wednesday, Mardi Gras also. *Shrove* is the strong past tense of *shrive.* To shrive means to forgive, to convey penance and absolution for sins. So today, I shrive. Yesterday, I shrove. I have shriven. So there are temporally consonant examples of this happening.

That's all just for fun. You do not have to memorize the vowel gradations of the strong verbs. But you do have to understand how they work. And we'll come to that in just a moment. But before we get there, go to the bottom of page 65 and these numbered lists. So as I mentioned briefly, just two tenses past and present. You'll also hear preterite as a synonym for past, P-R-E-T-I preterite-- P-R-E-T-E-R-I-T-E.

So how do we express futurity? Typically, Old English uses auxiliary verbs, which are also called modal verbs, like *willan* or *sculan.* We'll get to those in a moment. But sometimes, it's just context. It's just a present tense. And you have to infer from context that it's future meaning.

Similarly, there's no conjugated form of the perfect or the pluperfect, that is to say I have done something, I had done something. But Old English most often expresses it, frankly, the way modern English does with a form of the verb *habban,* "to have," sometimes with the adverb, *ǣr.* But again, that shouldn't be too tricky.

So turning the page to 66, numbers 3 and 4 is-- that basically just talks about the endings. We've covered that. With number 5, we come to the first of the vowel shifts that occur in Old English strong verbs. And it's actually I-mutation. So number 5, the root vowels of strong verbs undergo I-mutation in the present, second, and third person singular indicative.

That's how we get from *helpan* to *hilpst,* from *faran* to *færst,* and from *ċēosan* to *ċīest.* And you can go back to chapter 2 and the table, the I-mutation table on page 17, to remind yourself what all of those shifts look and sound like.

This does not occur in the weak paradigms or with strong verbs whose vowels are not subject to I-mutation, such as *wrītan,* whose second person singular is *wrītst.* And as you can see on page 17, there is no I-- there is no unmutated I. So there's nothing to do there.

Number 6, so while a modern English verb descended from strong verbs never has more than one vowel in the past tense-- we say "I drove," "you drove," "we drove," "they drove," it's always just that same [o] sound-- Old English strong verbs have two past forms with different vowels.

The form used for the first and third singular past indicative-- so healp-- is called the first past. And the form used everywhere else in the past tense, such as the past plural *hulpon* and the second singular *hulpe,* you helped, is called the second past. And then there's a fourth vowel that is the vowel of the past participle, which, in the case of *helpan* goes to *holpen.*

So this is important because it means that the second of those vowels, the second of those-- the first shifted vowel from *helpan* to *hilpst,* that's not part of the so-called principal parts or vowel gradations of the strong verb series. So if you take a look-- and you don't have to right now, but it's very useful to know that at the end of *Word-Hoard,* there's a very nice little table that just has all of the strong verb classes with multiple examples.

And there are only four. There are only four parts because-- or only four forms for each verb because they're ignoring the I-mutated second and third singular present, all right? Any questions about that, the basics there? We'll see more examples in a little bit.

All right, let's take a look at page 67 and the two forms of "to be." The verb *bēon,* "to be," in Old English is a mess, but so is "to be" in modern English. Table 7.3, you will need to be able to recognize the forms of *bēon* and *wesan,* its occasional infinitive. But *bēon* is really the main.

You'll need to be able to recognize these on exams. But you do not have to be able to reproduce them. The good news is that many of the forms are pretty similar to modern English. You can easily hear how *iċeom* becomes "I am," *þū eart* becomes "thou art," which, of course, now is "you are," *hē is* literally "he is," and so on.

Now, these verbs-- or rather, these two forms of *bēon* can be used interchangeably. But there is an important difference often in how they're used, which is that the be forms of the verb-- that is to say bēo, bist, biþ, bēoþ-- the right hand of those two columns down in 7.3-- those are often used to express futurity or-- and to express a constant always true state of affairs.

So if I say in Old English that the sun is a distant star, I would almost certainly use the *be* form, *sēo sunne biþ,* as opposed to-- because it's always a distant star-- as distinct from a sentence like "The sun is shining," which is obviously a changeable state of affairs, where I would say something more like *sēo sunne is scīnende.* And I mean, probably in Old English, I would just use *scīneð.* But that's the difference.

But as Baker says just above table 7.3, sometimes the *be* forms are simple presents analogous to the vowel forms, the *eom, eart, is.* Any questions on the two, on these two forms of "to be"? Tara?

AUDIENCE: So to clarify, you would use *bēon* specifically with consistent things?

ARTHUR BAHR: Exactly.

AUDIENCE: Does this show up, not necessarily like grammatically, in like, let's say, middle English or, I mean, any other part--

ARTHUR BAHR: Oh, great question. No, by middle English, the two *be's* have-- or the two *be's* the two forms of "to be" have collapsed into one.

AUDIENCE: No. I mean, just in the sense of using the infinitive as a-- the infinitive to be like an eternal thing.

ARTHUR BAHR: Oh.

AUDIENCE: Is that true on--

ARTHUR BAHR: That's a good question. I'm trying to think. I don't think so. I think this is specific to Old English. You can, however, see in the be forms of the verb-- those of you, anyone who's studied German-- the *bist* of the second singular, that's literally "du bist" of modern German. So that's kind of fun.

And take a look at the past indicative and past subjunctive--*wæs, wære, wæs.* That's very close to *I was, you were, he was.* We've lost the endings on *wæron.* We still just say *we were,* but yeah. Good. Other questions?

All right, 7.1.3, preterite present verbs you're going to read quite a lot about for next time, which is just tomorrow, since we're in our unfortunate compressed week thanks to President's Day and the registrar. And preterite present verbs are so-called because the present tense of these verbs looks like the past tense, which, as I pointed out, many grammar books called preterite, of the strong verbs. So *can, could, may, might, shall, should*-- we'll get to those next time. So this is really just a preview of coming attractions.

All right, 7.2, more about endings-- so assimilation, this explains the process by which D becomes T-- number 1, D becomes T when it immediately follows an unvoiced consonant. What's the difference between voiced and unvoiced, by the way? Anybody? Yeah? Oh, sorry. Yeah, Ritam?

AUDIENCE: Well, when you make voiced sounds, your larynx vibrates.

ARTHUR BAHR: Yeah, exactly. So if I say duh, duh, duh, you can feel that vibrate. If I just say tuh, tuh, tuh, it doesn't. So the D is going to become T right before the unvoiced P of *slǣpan.* So *slǣpte, mētte,* it's going to double that T instead of adding a D.

And as they point out, we do the same thing in modern English, because even though we spell *reached* with an -*ed* at the end, if you actually say the word, you can hear that what you're saying is a T, "*reacht,*" not "reach-duh." All right. And then some more rules down there. These are all, as the word "assimilation" suggests, based on what is easier to say in the mouth.

You don't need to worry too much about that or about 7.2.2, plurals ending in E. Before the pronouns *wē* and yē, we and you, any plural ending may appear as an E. I'm not going to test you on this. It's just something to be aware of.

Also important to note in 7.2.3 is that the subjunctive is already starting to fall out of Old English by the late Old English period. So the subjunctive in English is this fascinating example of something that is always already about to die and yet never quite does. It's like the monster in the horror movie that's never quite finally stabbable.

All right. More about weak verbs, 7.3-- so there are three classes of weak verbs, but only two of them listed here on the top of page 77.4. We'll get to class 3 in a moment. So the most important thing to know about these two form-- these two classes, I should say, of the verb is that, in class 2, which are most verbs that end in *-ian,* most weak verbs that end in *-ian,* like *lufian*-- *herian* is an exception that we'll get to in a *moment*--

Most of those verbs have different third person present indicative and present plural indicative endings. And you can see this on 71, the little boxed exclamation point. So *hē sceþeþ, hereþ, hālþ*-- those are all class 1 weak verbs, but *hē lufaþ* in the third singular of *lufian* which is class 2. So we would normally expect that *-aþ* ending to indicate the plural, which is what it does indicate in class 1 verbs. But in class 2, it's just the singular. And you get *lufiaþ* when you have the plural, all right?

So if the root syllable ends-- this is the end of that little box on page 71. If the root syllable ends with any consonant but R and is followed by I, chances are it is a class 2 weak verb. And the present third person singular will end in *-að* or *-aþ,* all right?

Flipping back to page 70, on the bottom of the page, 7.3.1, class 1 is marked by I-mutation. And you may be thinking, oh God, more mutation. You don't have to worry. All that means is that the verbs-- sorry, the verb-- yeah, class 1 weak verbs have vowels that are I-mutated vowels. I don't know why they-- I don't know why they went into that.

If the root syllable is short, then gemination, which is the doubling of the consonant at the end of the root syllable, occurs in certain forms, including the infinitive. OK, so this explains why, back in table 7.1 on *fremman,* we had some cases where it was *fremme,* with the double M, and others, like in the third singular, where it was just *fremeþ,* where it was just a single M.

You can see that in *sceþþan,* the leftmost column, "to injure," *iċ sceþþe,* but then *þū sceþest, hē sceþeþ,* wē *sceþaþ.* So that alternation-- again, you don't have to memorize that. But it does mean that, because when you look up a verb you're looking up its infinitive, you may need to add an extra consonant in order to get in order to find the word you're looking for. So for example, if you're looking up-- if you see *hē sceþeþ* with a single *thorn* there, you're going to have to look it up under-- with two thorns. Yeah?

AUDIENCE: Totally off topic, just based on your pronunciation, is it consistent that things that we would normally voice intervocalically we don't voice when they're geminated?

ARTHUR BAHR: Oh, yes, it is. Yeah, it is. And I think that's just because the second consonant makes it not renders--

AUDIENCE: It--

ARTHUR BAHR: Renders it no longer intervocalic.

AUDIENCE: They render each other no longer intervocalic.

ARTHUR BAHR: Yes, exactly, exactly.

AUDIENCE: So the underlying form is always unvoiced.

ARTHUR BAHR: Correct, yeah. Well, the underlying form is the single consonant. So maybe that's not true. But it doesn't matter. Just if it's doubled, unvoiced. Yeah, got it. Good question. The only exception to this *-ian* means class 2 is verbs like *herian,* where you have *-rian.*

You're just going to have to learn that and get used to it. But it's not something you should try to memorize or really worry about right now. It's just something to be aware of. And then I think the reason that they give *hālan*-- it's heal, to heal-- its own column there is just because, if you take a look at the third singular, it's *hālþ,* not *hāleþ.* There's no E, as we would expect. All right.

Now, 7.3.2, at the bottom of page 71, class 1 weak verbs that change their vowels-- this sounds like a huge pain. And frankly, it kind of is, but partly because the verbs that do this are pretty common, actually. So if you turn the page to 72, table 7.5, you don't need to memorize this. But you should try to get familiar with it.

So if you take a look at sēċan, to seek, you can see, in the past indicative, it changes its vowel, so from A to O. But it also has all of the normal weak verb endings that we would expect. So it's *iċ sohte,* not *iċ soht.* Because if it were a strong verb, there would be no ending in the first and third person singular.

Similarly, *þenċan* goes to *þohte* and *cwellan* to *cwealde.* And you can hear, of course, *seek, sought.* "I have sought." We still have that past form. *Think, thought. Saw* comes straight from Old English. So again, just something to be aware of.

Contracted verbs, 7.3.3, don't worry about. I mean, unless you really-- unless you're a linguistics nerd, which some of you obviously are. So by all means, do a deep dive, if you care. But in terms of the purposes of this class, we're not going to dwell on the contracted verbs particularly. But you can see how they work from the example, *smēaġan,* table 7.6, "to ponder," which I think we had in our very first mini-text at the top of 73.

Class 3 weak verbs-- so Baker says somewhat dryly that obeying the rule that the most common words are the last to leave a dying class, class 3 verbs contain only *habban, libban,* and *secgan.* And these are laid out this way, as if to emphasize their anomalous status. You turn the page and flip the book around. And you can see these forms.

Of these, *habban* is by far the most important, partly because, as I mentioned earlier, *habban* often gets used to indicate the perfect and the pluperfect tense, just like it does in modern English. So you should be able to recognize those forms of *have,* to have. Fortunately, they're pretty close to modern English. And the endings are not that confusing.

So I'm trying to think if there are any other moments to highlight here. I guess just to be aware that there are two different forms of *libban,* kind of like *bēon,* although they don't indicate different-- they don't have any semantic difference at all, the two different forms of "to live," and even some different forms of "to think."

So you can either have past indicative, *hogode* or *hygde* for the past tense of "think," a different verb for "to think." So Old English, like many languages, has multiple verbs for "to think." So *þenċan* is where we get *think* from. But there's also *hycgan,* which the Beowulf poet loves, lots of *hycgan* all over Beowulf. All right, that was a lot very quickly on weak verbs. So any questions about weak verbs before we move on to strong verbs?

All right, so strong verbs-- on page 75, Baker gives you his table of the classes of strong verbs. And this is what I mean when I say that-- well, the second of those columns, the third person singular, that's the I-mutated form. And that is not part of the vowel gradations of the strong verbs, which is why I think it's actually kind of unhelpful of Baker to have to have included it. But whatever, it does at least reinforce that there is that difference. There is that vowel shift in many classes of strong verbs.

The analogous class, or the analogous table in Mitchell and Robinson is on page 37, paragraph 93. You don't have to go to it right now, although you certainly can. And that gives just the infinitive the first past, the second past, and the past participle, same thing with the table at the back of-- at the back of *Word-hoard,* just the four traditional principal parts of the verb.

And here, at the bottom of 75, you get another one of these little boxed exclamation point things. And Baker says, "Students often ask if they should memorize the strong verb classes. The answer is a qualified yes." I am here to say, as I did in my announcement on the Canvas site, the answer is actually no. I do not expect you to memorize these.

That said, I do encourage you to read them out loud, to just take a few minutes every other day, as you're doing your Old English homework, as you're memorizing *Word-hoard*-- you've got *Word-hoard* out a lot anyway. I know you people. Just go to the back and say *bīdan, bād, bidon, biden, būgan, bēag, bugon, bogen...*

If you just start saying these out loud, they'll get into your ear. And it will be easier to recognize them when you're dealing with them in the, quote unquote, "real world," the very rarefied version of the real world in which we're all studying Old English, but fortunately the one that we inhabit.

I'm not going to expect you to memorize this. So if I give you a strong verb in the past tense on an exam in sight translation, I'll go ahead and give you the infinitive as well so that you'll know what it comes from. And it will be a word from *Word-hoard,* obviously, if it's on the exam at all. Nonetheless, your translation for homework is going to go a lot faster and be a lot less frustrating if you have some kind of familiarity with these vowel gradations.

The reason for that, of course, is that, again, we look things up-- we have to find things under the infinitive form. So Baker's glossary tends to be very useful, tends to be very helpful. So go ahead and look up this word in Baker and see what you see what you get. Excuse me. What could it be? *Bēag.* Anyone?

AUDIENCE: It looks like it's gone for--

AUDIENCE: It's dual.

ARTHUR BAHR: Yeah. So on page 291, we have two options. One is that it's a masculine noun, which means "ring." And the other is that it comes from *būgan* or *ġebūgan.* Not all glossaries are going to be as helpful as Baker. And in fact, I think Mitchell and Robinson, where we do where we do some of our readings, it is not actually as helpful as Baker.

So this is one of the reasons that I encourage everyone to-- if I may borrow this briefly, to have their magic sheet with them because you can see now, I hope, how it could be very helpful to have the classes of strong verbs ready to hand so that if you look up B-E-A-G and it gives you a nonsensical meaning, because presumably-- I mean, "ring" and the past tense of *būgan* are not synonyms, right? It could be very helpful to have these classes of strong verbs here, so you can see, oh, E-A, that might come from a vowel whose root is U. It could also come from *bēogan.* But that's not a word, so it doesn't.

All right. Verbs affect-- all the rest of 7.4, you don't need to worry too much about grammatical alternation, 7.9. Again, you don't have to worry too much about contracted strong verbs, although it's always useful anytime you have one of these tables to just say them out loud because usually the reason that seeming exceptions exist, like contracted strong verbs, is simply because the form that we have, in this case contracted, is just easier to say.

So if you say these things out loud, you'll probably hear in your mouth how it's easier to say. And that, in turn, will help fix it in your head how it works. OK. So I'm going to take us through the boxed section on page 78 and 79, and then take questions.

This would be a good time to go over all the verb paradigms you have seen so far, noting basic similarities, especially the fact that, in the present tense, the second and third person singular forms are usually different from all the others. Present tense strong verbs cause few difficulties, since the endings make them easy to identify. Past plurals are easy as well for the same reason.

But past singulars, which either lack an ending, in the first and third singular, or end only in E in the second singular, are easy to confuse with nouns and adjectives. As you gain experience, this kind of confusion will become less likely. But in the meantime, here are some tips to help you get it right.

So one is to look up words carefully. Learn what kinds of spelling variations you can expect. See table 2.1.3 in Appendix A. When two words look alike, but their spelling differences are not what you'd expect, you can probably conclude that they're different words. So *wearþ,* "became," looks like *weorþ,* value or price. But E-A normally does not vary with E-O. *nam,* "took," looks like *nama,* the noun meaning "name." But endings are rarely lost in Old English and so... yeah.

Second, examine the grammatical context of the sentence or clause you're reading. This is what we've been doing from the very first mini-text-- find the subject, find the verb. If you're still looking for a verb and you have *bēag*-- this is what I asked you to look it up-- try it first as the past of *būgan,* "to bow." If you need a noun, try it as "a ring."

Examine the word order. That's not super helpful yet because we haven't talked about word order much. But in due course, *we* will. And verbs have a pretty-- as we've discussed, the conjugated verb very much prefers to be the second element of a sentence in Old English.

And then once you've got a tentative translation, apply a sanity test. Does it make sense? If it seems ungrammatical or grammatical but absurd, try something else. And this is where I would now encourage you to start working at your own pace and as you wish with the Old English Aerobics website that's on the syllabus.

I'll send you some examples. But really, just they're just drills. There's no need to do anything. But I encourage you to do so, just because-- just as a way of testing out what your recognition is, because you are going to have to recognize things on the exam, which is only a little over two weeks away at this point.

All right, lots of verbs so far. And there's more for next time. So for tomorrow, pay a special attention to preterite present verbs, 7.6 on pages 80 and 81. These are hugely important because they show up all the time. Many of these preterite present verbs are modals.

So *cunnan,* "to know how to or to be able to,"*magan* which is another way of saying "to be able to,"*sculan* which is where we get modern English "shall," but it has a much stronger sense of obligation or necessity in Old English. Usually, when you see *sculan,* you want to translate it as "must" or "need to" rather than "will."

That difference between-- that semantic difference between "will" and "shall" we find even into Shakespeare's day. So there's a pretty distinct semantic difference in a Shakespeare play between saying "I will do something," which implies at least an element of volition, because *willan* originally means "to want to do something," whereas *sculan,* which is where we get "shall," implies obligation or necessity without the desire.

So when Ophelia is replying to Polonius and he's like, forget Hamlet and go be a dutiful daughter, she says, I shall obey my Lord. And the fact that she doesn't say will, there's a little subtle hint that she's not too happy about it. And so you can see on page 81, *sculan,* it typically means must.

Of these verbs, of these preterite present verbs, the ones that are so common that you will simply need to know are *cunnan*-- so circle these and start being able to recognize their forms--*cunnan, magan, motan, sculan,* and *witan.*

And here again, I encourage you to say out loud and just repeat how those verbs shift, both in their forms and in their vowels. But we'll talk more about them next time. Any questions on the basics of verbs? It's a lot. This week is a lot, I know. You have the weekend to get it reinforced. And then we'll start using it more actively as we keep translating.