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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★

The Timeline History of the English Language

Gary Judge
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While some approach the history of language with a yawn, the subject can be fascinating to others—even readers living outside the academic realm. Textbooks often elaborate on details that can turn a student away in boredom, but knowing how a language developed over the centuries is not just a specialized field for scholars.

The Timeline History of the English Language is a concise, enlightening reference tool filled with helpful illustrations. This text is ideally suited to high school students as well as people learning English as a second language, and college professors may find it an excellent supplement to an undergraduate reading list. The book's unique value is in its organization and brevity. Rather than wading through verbiage to get an answer to a simple question, readers can extract required information faster by referring to one of numerous charts, maps, or timelines.

Gary Judge has presented his material in a simplified, easy-to-understand layout, broken into three parts. He includes historical details as well as information on derivations, the alphabet, and linguistic research. His practical glossary is a quick guide for those who want to look something up without reading extensively. The text is indexed for even greater accessibility. Judge's goal is to clarify how this language has evolved, enabling the student to understand where the words came from and how they were shaped, while providing details on impacting cultural forces.

Special features of this book include various ways of looking at the growth of the language, starting with a simple view, progressing to a historical breakdown, and ending with a wide view. At a glance, readers can see a timeline of major languages that contributed to English or a timeline of cultural development and Indo-European migrations. Judge addresses interesting phases, such as the invention of the printing press and standardization, the Renaissance and literary enhancement, early modern English literature, and American English vs. British English.

The author is a native of New Zealand who lives in Yokohama, Japan. Judge has taught English and drama in high schools and colleges for over twenty years. He specializes in programs for the Japanese to aid them in their pursuit of English. The user-friendly Timeline History of the English Language belongs on the bookshelf of anyone interested in language.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (May 18, 2010)

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