

The Story of Lady, Lady- Bird, Lasmmas, Loaf and Lord

Szerző dezs

Angol érettségi tétel

The Story of LADY, LADY-BIRD, LAMMAS, LOAF and LORD

LADY [

], sb,

-- The word originates from OE hlaefdige, which consisted of ‘hlaef’ (bread) and the root ‘dig‘ (to knead). Like the corresponding masc.

designation hlaford (lord), the word is not found outside Eng.

The OE

<ae> being regularly

shortened in ME before two consonants yielded regularly

<a> and <e>

according to dialect. The ME lefdi, levdi

is represented by Sc. leddy.

The other form lafdi became lavedi,

then because of open-syllable

lengthening lavedi and finally the Great Vowel

Shift changed the []

to the diphthong [].

The original

meaning ‘the female

head of a household’; first appeared in OE in the beginning of the 9th

century. From the 11th century on, it was also

used as the female

designation corresponding to lord. It was used by Chaucer in the sense of ‘a

woman, who is the object of chivalrous devotion’.

In the early modern English

period it was also applied to fairies, for example by Milton. In the

Victorian

era, it started to be used for ‘a woman whose manners, habits and sentiments

have the refinement characteristic of the higher ranks of

society’; we find the

word in this meaning in George Eliot’s Silas Marner. The

meaning ‘designation

of a public convenience for females’; emerged in the 20th century.

LADY-BIRD [

], sb, -- The genitive singular

of the OE hlaefdige (lady), which was hlaefdigian,

became by

regular phonetic change in ME coincident in form with the nominative,

hence

certain syntactical combinations have the appearance of proper

compounds - lady-bird

is an example for this.

The word first

appeared in

Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet in the sense of

‘sweetheart’. This meaning was

used even in the 19th century. The usage of the

word as a common name for the coleopterous insects belonging to the genus *Coccinella* was first used by A. van Leuwenhoek in 1704. The word can also refer to the pintail duck (*anas acuta*), in this sense it started to be used in the end of the last century.

LAMMAS [], sb – The word originates from OE *hlafmaesse*, which was a compound consisting of the words *hlaf* (bread) and *maesse* (mass). In the 16th century the first part of the word had been misinterpreted as ‘lamb’, so by analogy the spelling ‘Lambmass’ was used until the late 17th century.

The word was already used by King Aelfred in the sense of ‘the 1st of August’ in 893. In the early modern English period the form ‘latter Lammas’ appeared in the sense of ‘a day that will never come’. The compound *Lammas-apple* (a kind of apple ripening at Lammas) started to be used only in the late 19th century, while the first appearance of the term *Lammas-day* occurred already around 1000.

LOAF [], sb – In this word the sound indicated by the two vowels represents the regular development of OE [] in *hlaf*, which in ME became [] everywhere except in the north. This []

later underwent the Great Vowel Shift and this is why in Modern English it is pronounced with the diphthong [].

The loss of the initial <h> happened during the early Middle English period, the form *lafe* appeared around 1200. The spelling with <oa> first appears in the 16th century, following the GVS.

The word is quite well attested even during the OE period in its earliest meanings. For example it appears in the *Lindisfarne Gospel* (c950) in the

meaning ‘bread’. The word ‘sugar-loaf’ emerged in the Middle English period (14th

c), while the usage of ‘loaf’ in the sense of ‘a head (of cabbage)’ appeared in the Early Modern English period. Its meaning ‘minced or chopped meat moulded into the shape of a loaf and cooked’ was first used in the late 18th

century. The slang meanings ‘head’ and ‘dead’, which are based on the rhyming of these words and the term ‘a loaf of bread’,

appeared in the first half of the 20th century.

LORD

[
] sb, -- This word goes back to OE hlafweard which originally meant breadkeeper, the head of the household, who gives bread to the family and the servants, but it had already acquired a wider application before the literary period of OE. The development of the sense has been largely influenced by the adoption of the word as the customary rendering of the Latin dominus. Following the loss of the initial <h> in the early Middle English period, as a result of corruption, the word only preserved the <l> from the compound's first unit, while the <w> of weard first altered to <v> and then disappeared by the 14th century. The long [] sound is a result of pre-cluster lengthening ('rd-cluster). The meaning 'the male head of a household' appears in the Lindisfarne Gospel (c950), but the word was used in the sense of 'one who has dominion over others as his subjects' already in Beowulf. It was first used as a vocative for God by Aelfric around 1000. From the 14th century on, the figurative meaning 'one who or something which has the mastery or preeminence' is also in usage. The word was first used for 'magnates in some particular trade' in the 19th century.