Advanced Etymological Chronology

Etymology · Practice Test · 20 Questions

1. In what year was the first volume of the 'Oxford English Dictionary' (originally titled 'A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles') officially published?

A) 1884
B) 1888
C) 1895
D) 1901

2. The term 'robot' was introduced to the English language in 1920 via Karel Capek's play 'R.U.R.'. In which specific year did Capek's brother, Josef, first suggest the word based on the Old Church Slavonic 'robota'?

A) 1917
B) 1918
C) 1919
D) 1920

3. How many volumes comprised the first complete edition of Samuel Johnson's 'A Dictionary of the English Language', published in 1755?

A) 1
B) 2
C) 3
D) 4

4. The word 'serendipity' was coined by Horace Walpole in a letter written on January 28 of which year?

A) 1748
B) 1754
C) 1762
D) 1770

5. Approximately how many words did Noah Webster include in the first edition of his 'An American Dictionary of the English Language', published in 1828?

A) 50,000
B) 70,000
C) 90,000
D) 110,000

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6. The word 'virus' entered Middle English from Latin in the 14th century. In what year did the specific biological sense, referring to a submicroscopic infectious agent, first appear in medical literature?

A) 1882
B) 1892
C) 1902
D) 1912

7. Who published 'Etymologicum Anglicanum' in 1743, posthumously completing a work started by Francis Junius?

A) Edward Lye
B) James Murray
C) John Minsheu
D) Henry Bradley

8. The English word 'avocado' is derived from the Nahuatl word 'ahuacatl'. In which year did the word first appear in written English records according to the OED?

A) 1655
B) 1678
C) 1696
D) 1705

9. How many years passed between the commencement of the 'Oxford English Dictionary' project in 1857 and its final completion in 1928?

A) 61
B) 71
C) 81
D) 91

10. The term 'cybernetics' was coined by Norbert Wiener in his 1948 book of the same name. From which ancient Greek word does it etymologically derive?

A) kybernetes
B) kyberno
C) kybernetike
D) kybernai

11. John Minsheu published 'Ductor in Linguas' (The Guide into the Tongues) in 1617. How many languages did this work cross-reference?

A) 7
B) 9
C) 11
D) 13

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12. The word 'paparazzi' derives from the character Paparazzo in Federico Fellini's film 'La Dolce Vita', released in which year?

A) 1958
B) 1959
C) 1960
D) 1961

13. In 1604, Robert Cawdrey published the first monolingual English dictionary. What was the exact title of this work?

A) A Table Alphabeticall
B) The English Expositor
C) Glossographia
D) The Dictionarie of the English Tongue

14. The word 'alphabet' originates from the first two letters of which script's writing system?

A) Phoenician
B) Greek
C) Etruscan
D) Hebrew

15. The term 'gene' was coined in 1909 by Wilhelm Johannsen. From which Greek word, meaning 'birth', is it derived?

A) genos
B) genesis
C) gonos
D) genia

16. According to the OED, the word 'internet' first appeared in a written publication in which year?

A) 1972
B) 1974
C) 1976
D) 1978

17. Etymologically, the word 'quarantine' stems from the Venetian dialect term 'quarantena', meaning how many days?

A) 30
B) 40
C) 50
D) 60

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18. In 1530, John Palsgrave published 'Lesclarcissement de la langue francoyse'. What was the primary purpose of this dictionary?

A) Latin-English translation
B) English-French teaching
C) Greek-English comparative
D) German-English grammar

19. The word 'gas' was coined by the Flemish chemist Jan Baptist van Helmont in the 17th century. In what approximate year did he record this neologism?

A) 1624
B) 1634
C) 1644
D) 1654

20. How many distinct language roots did the lexicographer Isidore of Seville analyze in his 7th-century encyclopedia 'Etymologiae'?

A) 3
B) 5
C) 7
D) 9

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