**Constructing Dithemic Middle English Place-Names**

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Have you ever needed to construct a new place-name as described in SENA PN1B2b4 (for a personal name) or SENA NPN1C2b1 (for a group)? This class will introduce you to the basics of constructing dithemic (two element) English place-names, including, patterns, elements and sources.

**Definitions**

***theme*** a tradition name root. [In English place names studies, these are usually given in their pre-Conquest language and spelling.] Sometimes called an **element**.

***dithemic*** made up of two theme or elements

***prototheme*** the first theme or element of a name composed of two traditional name roots.

***deuterotheme*** the second theme or element of a name composed of two traditional name roots.

Dithemic placenames are the most common type of English place names and one of the most recognizable. Oxford, Cambridge, Morton, Stockton, Stratford, Norwich, Croydon, Manchester, Blackwell, Langdale, Flaxbury, Swindon, Ashley, Brockhill

2 basic types of dithematic place-names – topographic (landscape) and habitative (built by man).

A dithemic English place name SHOULD have either should either have a topographic or habitative element, and that element should be your second element.

Pick a deuterotheme and a prototheme. A prototheme describes the deueterotheme in some way. It can be a color, an adjective describing the 2nd element , a domestic animal or crop, a wild animal or crop, etc.

**Sources of place names with dated citations**

[Ekwall] Ekwall, Eilert. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names.*

[Watts] Watts, Victor, ed. *Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names, Based on the Collections of the English Place-Name Society.*

[EPNS] https://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/search

[Mills British] Mills, A. D. *A Dictionary of British Place-Names.*

[Mills English] Mills, A. D. *A Dictionary of English Place-Names.*

**Lists of place-name themes or elements**

Smith, A.H. *English Place Name Elements.*  
This is volumes 25 and 26 of the English Place-Name Society's publications.

[Ekwall] Ekwall, Eilert. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names.*

[Mills English] Mills, A. D. *A Dictionary of English Place-Names.*

**Sources about English place-names for more general information:**

Scolastica la souriete. “A Survey of the History of English Place­names” http://heraldry.sca.org/names/engplnam.html

Cameron, Kenneth. *English Place Names*.

Gelling, Margaret. *Signposts to the Past*.

Gelling, Margaret and Ann Cole. *The Landscape of Place-Names.*

Also, the dictionaries by Watts, Ekwall and Mills contain introductions that give general overviews of English place-names.

**Example of documentation for constructed English place-name Ferenhope:**

“The name Ferenhope is constructed from OE fearn meaning “fern” and OE hop meaning “valley”.

“In the Survey of English Place-names under the spelling Farnborough, the spelling Ferenburgh’ is dated to 1220. <https://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/browse/Berkshire/Farnborough/53282e4fb47fc407ba001b59-Farnborough>

“In the Survey of English Place-names under the spelling Vernditch, the spelling Ferendich is dated to the time of Henry 3. <https://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/browse/Wiltshire/Broad+Chalke/532886d2b47fc40d3800019f-Vernditch>

“In the Survey of English Place-names under the spelling Ferngore, the spelling Ferengore is dated to 1307. <https://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/browse/Dorset/Motcombe/53285293b47fc4099d001759-Ferngore>

“Watts p30 under Bacup dates the spelling ffulebachope to the 14th century. (ffulebachope means “dirty Bachope”.)

“Watts p78 under Bramhope dates the spellings Bramhop(a), Bramhop(p)e between 1156 and 1561.

“Watts p413 under Midhope Moors dates Myd- Midhop(e) “before 1279-1494”.

“Watts p458 under Oxenhope dates Oxenehope to the 12th century and Oxenhop(e) from the early 13th-1605.”

Useful for citations is Appendix H of the Administrative Handbook.

**Downloads**

Site for a few English Place-name Survey volumes and Keith Brigg’s *An index to personal names in English place-names*: https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/epns/downloads.aspx