

What is Language

- ❑ Organized system of speech
- ❑ Mutual comprehension of sounds
- ❑ Allows transmission of culture
- ❑ Cause and symbol of cultural differentiation
- ❑ Vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax, word meaning

Language Defined

- ❑ Organized system of spoken words by which people communicate with one another with mutual comprehension (Getis, 1985)
- ❑ Languages subtly gradate one to another. Dialects and other regional differences may eventually lead to incomprehensibility - a new language
- ❑ **Migration** and **Isolation** explain how a single language can later become two or more

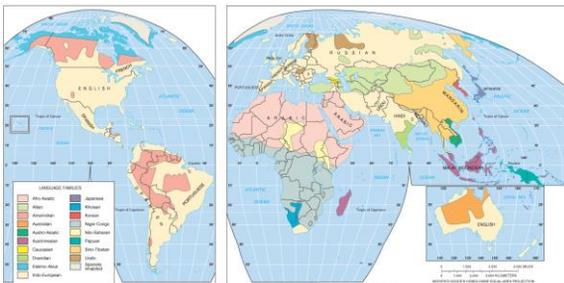
World Languages

- ❑ Estimated 6000-7000 languages
- ❑ But only 2000-3000 written
- ❑ Half the world speaks only 8
- ❑ Only 300 are safe from extinction

Geography of Language

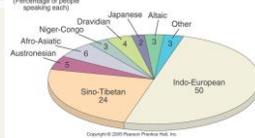
- ❑ Language depends on migration
- ❑ Diffusion of language
 - ❑ Spread by speakers
 - ❑ Picked up by others
- ❑ Language splitting
- ❑ Pidgins and creoles

Language Families



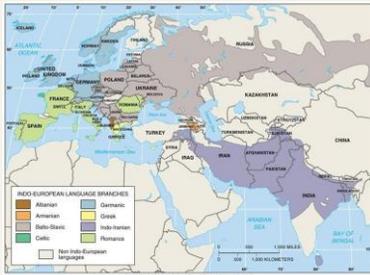
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Language Families of the World



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Indo-European Language Family



The main branches of the Indo-European language family include Germanic, Romance, Balto-Slavic, and Indo-Iranian. English is in the West Germanic group

Indo-European Language Family – Germanic Branch

- West Germanic
 - English (514 million)
 - German (128)
 - Dutch (21)
- East Germanic
 - Danish (5)
 - Norwegian (5)
 - Swedish (9)



Germanic Branch - Icelandic

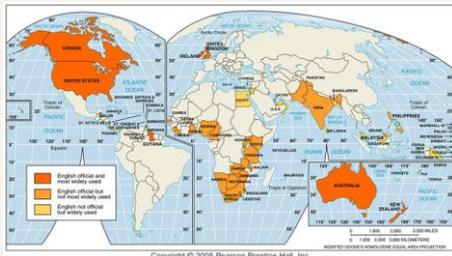
- Iceland colonized by Norwegians in AD 874
- Largely unchanged because of isolation combined with literary tradition
- Highly developed literary tradition
- Ancient sagas can be read by modern speakers of Icelandic



Germanic Branch - English

- ❑ Diffused throughout the world by hundreds of years of British colonialism
- ❑ Brought to New World by British colonies in 1600s
- ❑ Has become an important global lingua franca

Germanic Branch - English



English is the official language in 42 countries, including some in which it is not the most widely spoken language. It is also used and understood in many others.

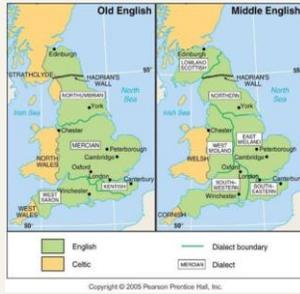
Development of English

- ❑ Germanic Tribes (Germany/Denmark)
 - ❑ Jutes
 - ❑ Angles
 - ❑ Saxons
- ❑ Vikings (Norway)
 - ❑ 9th - 11th Centuries
- ❑ Normans (French)
 - ❑ Battle of Hastings, 1066
 - ❑ French was official language for 150 years.



Old and Middle English Dialects

- The main dialect regions of Old English before the Norman invasion persisted to some extent in the Middle English dialects through the 1400s



Dialects in the Eastern U.S.

- Hans Kurath divided the eastern U.S. into three dialect regions, whose distribution is similar to that of house types



Development of English - Adopted Words

- Germanic Tribes (Germany/Denmark)
 - Kindergarten, angst, noodle, pretzel
- Vikings (Norway)
 - Take, they, reindeer, window
- Normans (French)
 - Renaissance, mansion, village, guardian



Indo-European Language Family – Romance Branch

- Like English these languages have been spread by Colonialism
- Spanish (425 million)
- Portuguese (194) - Brazil
- French (129)
- Italian (62)
- Romanian (26)



Indo-European Language Family – Romance Branch

- The Roman Empire, at its height in 2nd century A.D., extinguished many local languages
- After the fall of Rome in the 5th century, communication declined and languages evolved again
- Literature was all written in Latin until the 13th and 14th centuries
- Dante Alighieri's 1314 Inferno written in vulgar Latin (Florentine)

Indo-European Language Family – Romance Branch



Sino-Tibetan Language Family (20%)

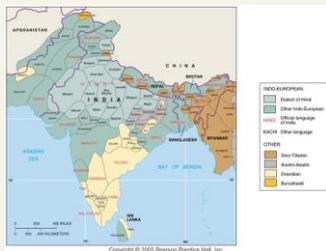
- Branches:
 - Sinitic
 - Mandarin (1075)
 - Cantonese (71)
 - Austro-Thai (77)
 - Thai, Hmong
 - Tibeto-Burman
 - Burmese (32)
- Chinese languages based on 420 one syllable words with meaning inferred from context and tone

Sino-Tibetan Language Family (20%)



South Asian Language Families

- Indo-European is the largest of four main language families in South Asia
- The country of India has 18 official languages



Language Families of Africa

- The 1,000 or more languages of Africa are divided among five main language families, including Austronesian languages in Madagascar



Afro-Asiatic Language Family

- Main Branch:
 - Semitic
 - Arabic (256)
 - Language of the Koran; spread by Islamic Faith and Islamic (Ottoman) Empires
 - Hebrew (5)
 - Language of the old Testament (with Aramaic); completely revived from extinction in Israel, 1948

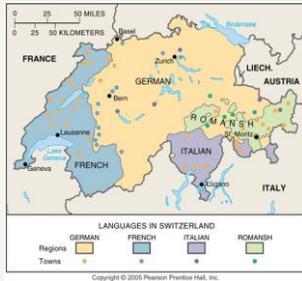


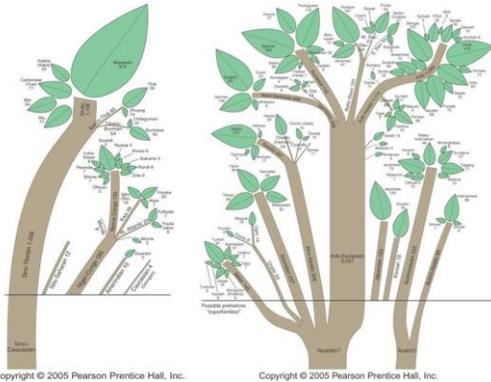
Islamic World circa A.D. 1500



Language Complexity

- In Switzerland, four official languages
- A history of peace and tolerance, and a political system that puts power in the hands of local leaders ensure peace





Family trees and estimated numbers of speakers for the main world language families.

Roots of Language

- Spoken Languages
 - Origins? Evidence?
 - Competitive Value for Culture?
- Written Languages
 - Value for Culture?
 - Sumerian 3000 B.C., Mesopotamia (Iraq)
 - Soon also the Assyrians, Babylonians, Hittites
 - Libraries established by 2500 B.C.
 - More than 200,000 of the tablets have been preserved
 - Connection to Neolithic Revolution?

How to Write Down a Language?

From basic characters:

日	人
Sun	Person

白	White, clear (Sun peeping out)
大	Big (person with arms extended)
天	Heaven (above the biggest person)
白入	White person
白天	Daytime (clear and heaven)
白日	Daytime (clear and Sun)

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How to Write Down a Language?



Geography of English

Geography of English

- ❑ History of invasions
- ❑ Original inhabitants: Celts
- ❑ 450 AD: Angles, Jutes, Saxons
- ❑ 1066 AD: Normans
- ❑ Germanic, French, and Latinate bases

Geography of English

- ❑ Diffused via colonization
- ❑ Now official language of 60 countries
- ❑ 1.5 billion speakers
- ❑ Lingua franca
- ❑ Several distinct dialects

Dialects

- ❑ Variation of a language
- ❑ Different vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation
- ❑ Vary by place, ethnicity, class
- ❑ Usually still understandable

American vs. British Dialects

- New words, new inventions
 - Moose, raccoon, canoe
 - Elevator/lift, flashlight/torch
- Deliberate new spellings
 - Color/colour, defense/defence
- Changes in pronunciation (“a,” “r”)

American Dialects

- Based on who migrated where and contact with England
 - New England
 - Mid-Atlantic
 - South
- Midwestern English standard dialect

American Dialects



Language Classification

Language Classification

- Language families
 - Languages with a common, prehistoric origin
- 20 major families
 - Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Afro-Asiatic
 - Indo-European languages cover half the world

Language Classification

- Branches or subfamilies
 - Common ancestor within thousands of years
 - Germanic, Armenian, Celtic
- Not mutually intelligible
- But similar sounds, grammar, words

Language Classification

- Groups within branches
 - West Germanic, Indic, East Slavic and Baltic
- More recent common origin
- Few grammar, vocabulary differences

Language Classification



Politics of Language

- Language as key to culture
- Official languages
- Bilingualism or multilingualism
 - Belgium vs. Switzerland

French-English Boundary in Canada

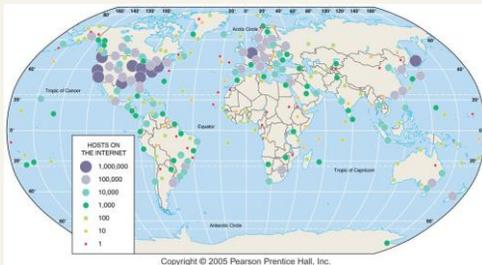


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Endangered Languages

- Why are they disappearing?
 - Globalization
 - Migration (Urbanization)
 - Economic Development
 - Lingua Francas
 - Media
 - Internet (Requires Arabic Character Set)
 - **Lingua Franca** - a language used for trade by two people who speak different native tongues

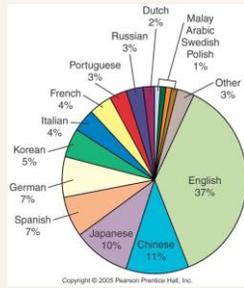
Internet Hosts



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Internet Hosts, by Language

- The large majority of internet hosts in 1999 used English, Chinese, Japanese, or European languages



Key Points

- Language is a fundamental element of cultural identity
- Languages diverge via migration and isolation
- Small languages are disappearing as a result of globalization
- Languages that share a common ancestor belong to the same family
- Language diversity is a source of political conflict in the world

McDonald's, Israel