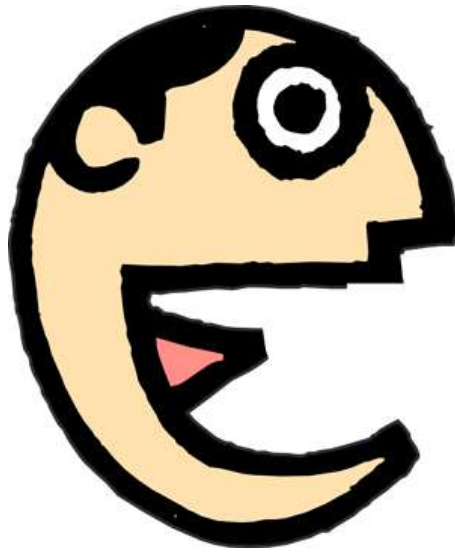


How do the people of Europe overcome the barriers created by the diversity of cultures?

Background Essay 1: Languages of Europe



Source: Marsh, C. (2012). *Student Workbook*. (pp. 112). Peachtree City, GA: Gallopade International.

Europe is a continent of diverse languages. Some are in the same language family, so people from one country can often understand the language of people from another country. Many Europeans are bilingual (speak two languages) or multilingual (speak several languages). The native languages in Europe belong to the Indo-European language family. Branches of the Indo-European family include the Germanic languages, Romance languages, and Slavic languages. The Germanic language and Romance languages use the same alphabet, while the Slavic languages use a Cyrillic alphabet based on ancient Greek letters.

- **Germanic:** Examples include German and English. English is spoken in more parts of the world than any other language.
- **Romance:** Examples include French and Italian. The Romance languages are based on Latin, the language of the ancient Romans.
- **Slavic:** Russian is an example of a Slavic language.

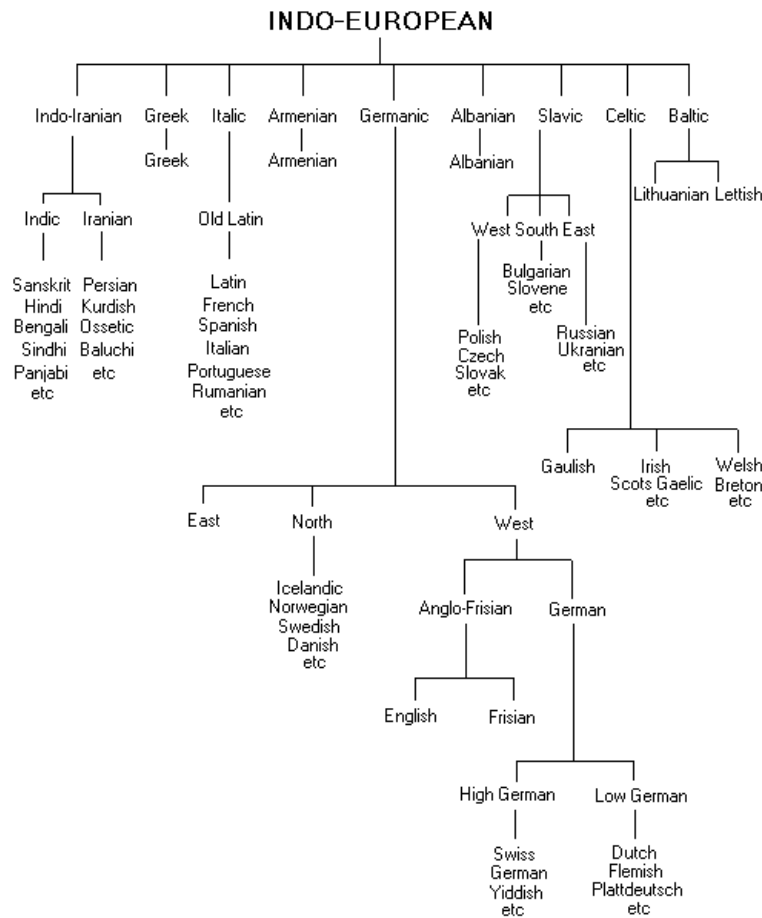
Having so many languages can be a problem. It is difficult to live, work, and trade with people who cannot communicate with each other. Europeans have worked hard to solve this problem. Most schoolchildren learn one or two other languages beside their own. The European Union has twenty-three “official” languages to make sure that people can understand laws and decisions made by the government. There are special laws to protect languages too. Europeans want to keep alive the languages spoken by only a few people. At the same time, they are working to build a united Europe.

Name _____ **Period** _____

How do the people of Europe overcome the language barriers in their countries? Write a minimum of 6 sentences as your answer.

Document H – European Languages

Source: This Indo-European language family hierarchy is adapted from W. P. Lehmann's *Language: An Introduction* (1983, Random House, p. 190).



Document H - European Languages Analysis:

1. In what language origin is the German language?
2. In what language origin is the English language?
3. In what language origin is the Russian language?
4. In what language origin is the French language?
5. In what language origin is the Italian language?
6. Why do you think the French and Italian and then the German and English languages are related?