

Summary and Review

KEY ISSUE 1

Where Are Languages Distributed?

Languages can be classified as belonging to particular families. Some families are divided into branches and groups.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.1.1 Name the largest language families.

- The two largest language families are Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.1.2: Identify the names and distribution of the two largest language families.

- Indo-European is the predominant language family of Europe, Latin America, North America, South Asia, and South Pacific. Sino-Tibetan is the predominant language family of East Asia.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.1.3: Identify the names and distribution of the largest language families in addition to Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan.

- In addition to Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan, most of the world's remaining major language families are centered in Asia.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 5.1: What features of the Sino-Tibetan family make it especially difficult to learn to speak and to write the languages?

GOOGLE EARTH 5.1: Asakusa Shin-Nakamise is a shopping area in Tokyo. What are examples of English-language signs in the area?



Key Terms

Creole, or creolized language (p. 163) A language that results from the mixing of a colonizer's language with the indigenous language of the people being dominated.

Denglish (p. 175) A combination of German and English.

Dialect (p. 158) A regional variety of a language distinguished by vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation.

Ebonics (p. 174) A dialect spoken by some African Americans.

Extinct language (p. 166) A language that was once used by people in daily activities but is no longer used.

Français (p. 174) A term used by the French for English words that have entered the French language; a combination of *français* and *anglais*, the French words for *French* and *English*, respectively.

Isogloss (p. 158) A boundary that separates regions in which different language usages predominate.

Isolated language (p. 166) A language that is unrelated to any other languages and therefore not attached to any language family.

Language (p. 143) A system of communication through the use of speech, a collection of sounds understood by a group of people to have the same meaning.

KEY ISSUE 2

Why Is English Related To Other Languages?

English is in the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. Nearly one-half of humans currently speak a language in the Indo-European family. All Indo-European languages can be traced to a common ancestor.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.1: Learn the distribution of the Germanic and Indo-Iranian branches of Indo-European.

- The four largest branches of Indo-European are Indo-Iranian, Romance, Germanic, and Balto-Slavic.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.2: Learn the distribution of the Balto-Slavic and Romance branches of Indo-European.

- Balto-Slavic predominates in Eastern Europe, Romance in Southern Europe and Latin America, Germanic in Northern Europe and North America, and Indo-Iranian in South Asia and Central Asia.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.3: Understand the origin and diffusion of English.

- English is a Germanic branch language because German-speaking tribes invaded England more than 1,500 years ago. Romance branch words entered English after French-speaking Normans invaded England nearly 1,000 years ago.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.4: Understand the two theories of the origin and diffusion of Indo-European.

- Indo-European originated before recorded history; two competing theories disagree on whether origin and diffusion occurred primarily because of conquest or agriculture.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 5.2: Should the United States make English the official language? Why or why not? Should more than one language be made official? If so, which ones?

GOOGLE EARTH 5.2: Fly to Kutuluk, Russia, near the northern shore of the Caspian Sea and switch to ground-level view. Does the ancient homeland of the Kurgan warriors appear flat or mountainous? Grasslands or forests?



Language branch (p. 143) A collection of languages related through a common ancestor that existed several thousand years ago. Differences are not as extensive or as old as with language families, and archaeological evidence can confirm that the branches derived from the same family.

Language family (p. 143) A collection of languages related to each other through a common ancestor long before recorded history.

Language group (p. 143) A collection of languages within a branch that share a common origin in the relatively recent past and display relatively few differences in grammar and vocabulary.

Lingua franca (p. 172) A language mutually understood and commonly used in trade by people who have different native languages.

Literary tradition (p. 143) A language that is written as well as spoken.

Logogram (p. 146) A symbol that represents a word rather than a sound.

KEY ISSUE 3

Why Do Individual Languages Vary Among Places?

A dialect is a regional variation of a language.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.3.1: Describe the main dialects in the United States.

- U.S. English is divided into four main dialects. Differences can be traced to patterns of migration to the American colonies from various parts of England.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.3.2: Understand the main ways that British and U.S. English dialects vary

- British and American dialects vary by vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.3.3: Understand why it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between a language and a dialect.

- The distinction is often based on political decisions rather than the actual characteristics of the languages or dialects.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 5.3: Based on a comparison of Figure 5-23 center and right, which dialects are forecast to expand, and which are expected to contract by 2030? What geographic factor would account for this changing distribution?

GOOGLE EARTH 5.3: *Circus*, such as Piccadilly Circus in London, is an example of a British word that differs from American usage. The name *Piccadilly* can be traced to a house by that name built around 1612 by Robert Baker, a tailor who had a shop that sold stiff collars known as *piccadills*. Based on the feature visible here in the middle of Piccadilly Circus what would be the American equivalent of a *circus*?



Official language (p. 143) The language adopted for use by the government for the conduct of business and publication of documents.

Pidgin language (p. 173) A form of speech that adopts a simplified grammar and limited vocabulary of a lingua franca; used for communications among speakers of two different languages.

Received Pronunciation (RP) (p. 160) The dialect of English associated with upper-class Britons living in London and now considered standard in the United Kingdom.

Spanglish (p. 174) A combination of Spanish and English spoken by Hispanic Americans.

Standard language (p. 160) The form of a language used for official government business, education, and mass communications.

Vulgar Latin (p. 155) A form of Latin used in daily conversation by ancient Romans, as opposed to the standard dialect, which was used for official documents.

KEY ISSUE 4

Why Do People Preserve Local Languages?

English has become the most important language for international communication in culture and business.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.1: Understand how several countries peacefully embrace more than one language.

- Switzerland, Belgium, and Nigeria have varying approaches to multilingual societies.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.2: Understand what is meant by an isolated language and an extinct language.

- Thousands of languages once in use are now extinct. Some isolated languages survive that are unrelated to any other.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.3: Understand why the number of Celtic speakers has declined and how the languages are being preserved.

- Celtic languages are being preserved through the efforts of advocacy groups and government agencies.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.4: Understand the concept of a lingua franca.

- A lingua franca is a language of international communication.
- English is currently the world's most widely used lingua franca.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.5: Understand how English has diffused to other languages.

- English is being combined with other languages, such as French and Spanish.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.6: Understand the role of Spanish and French in North America.

- French is widely used in Canada, especially in Québec. Spanish is widely used in the United States.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 5.4: Because of Québec's French language and culture, some in the province have advocated Québec's separating from Canada and becoming an independent nation. Is a monolingual nation preferable to a bilingual one? State your argument for or against Québec's independence.

GOOGLE EARTH 5.4: Fly to 47 Mostyn St, Llandudno, Wales. In what language are most of the shop signs? In what language are most of the street signs and the sign in front of the church?



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