

Introduction to Linguistics: History of English - From IE to ME

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B.A. British And American Studies
Basic Module 2

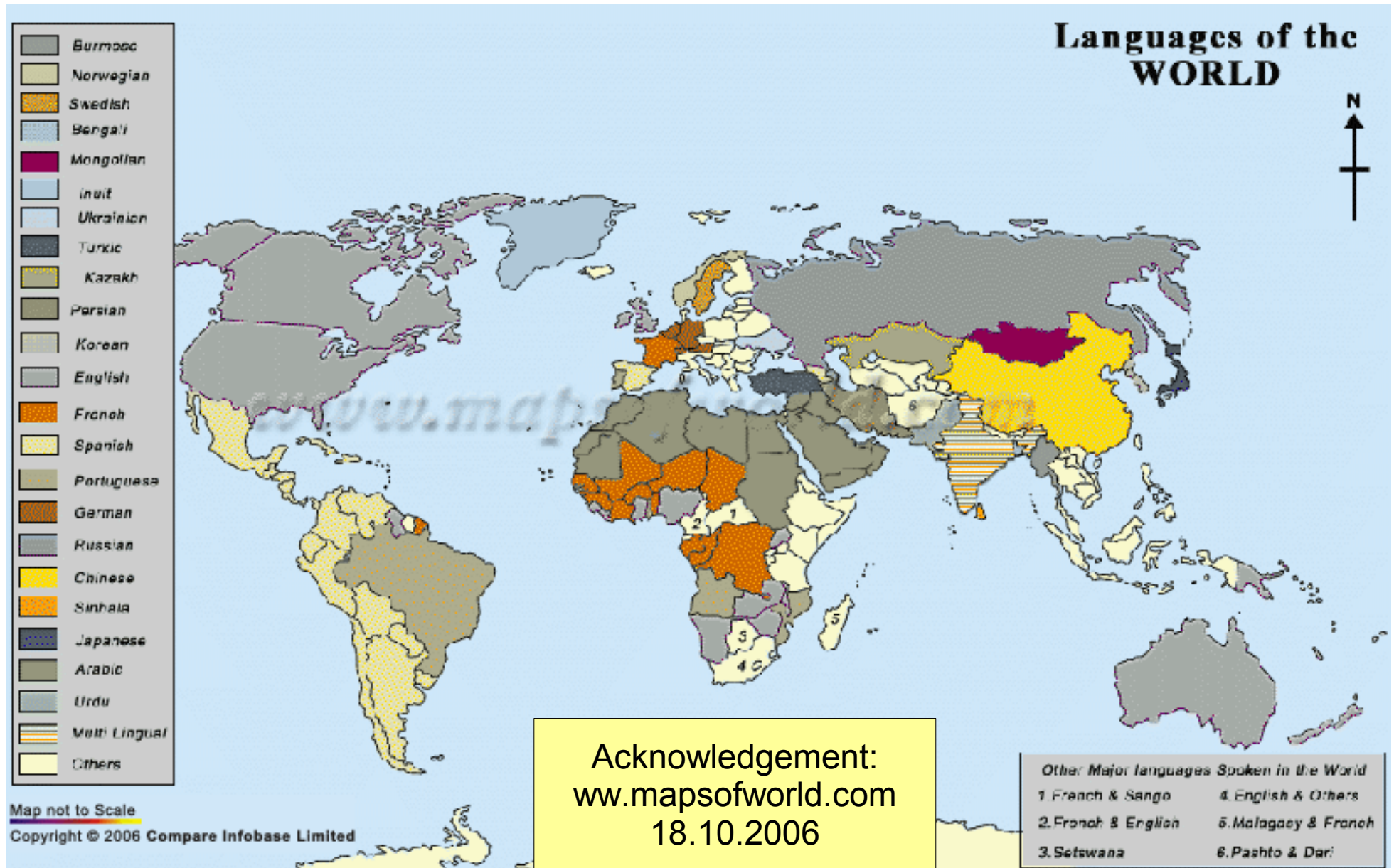
Winter Semester 2006/2007

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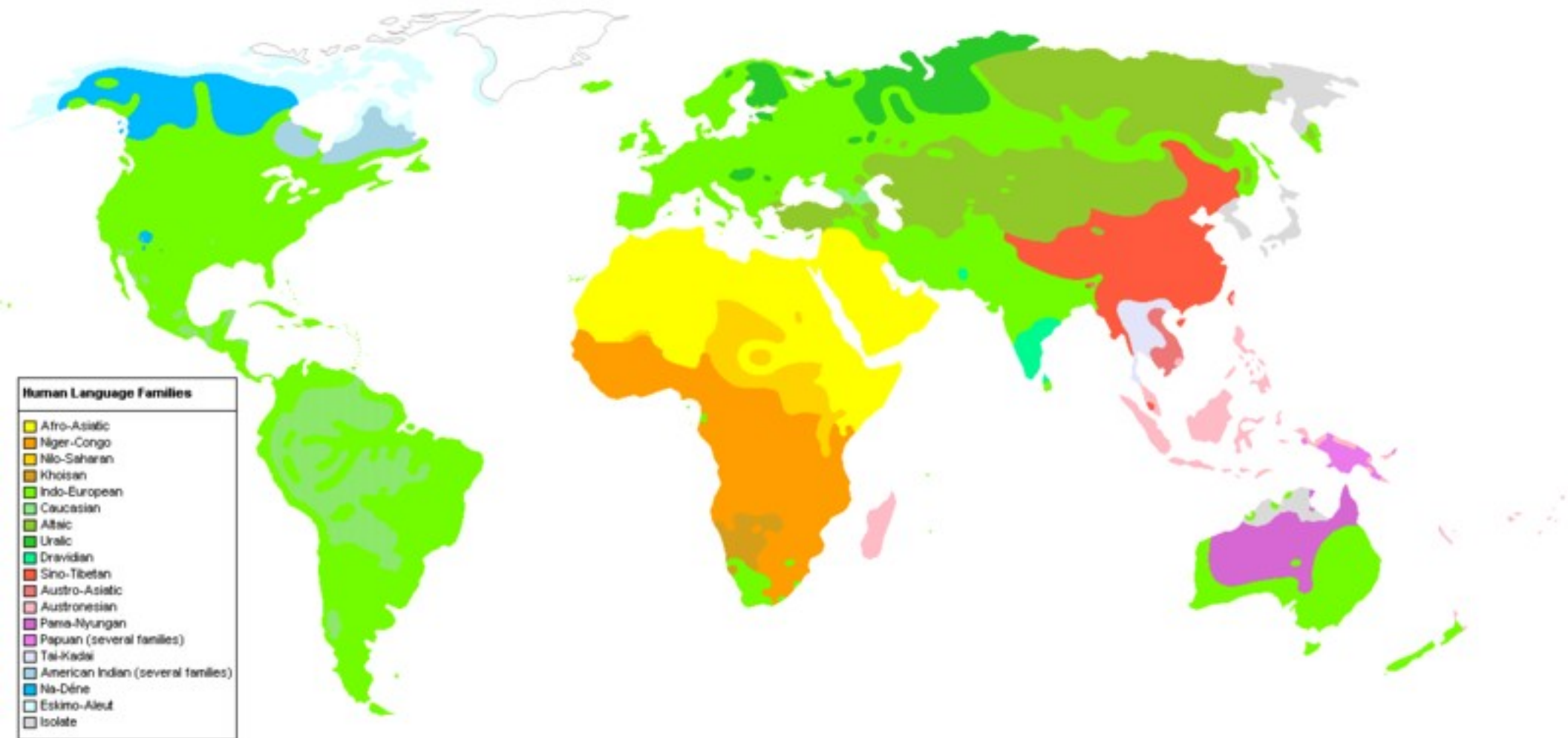
LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

6000 LANGUAGES ...

The main issue: language diversity



The main issue again: language families

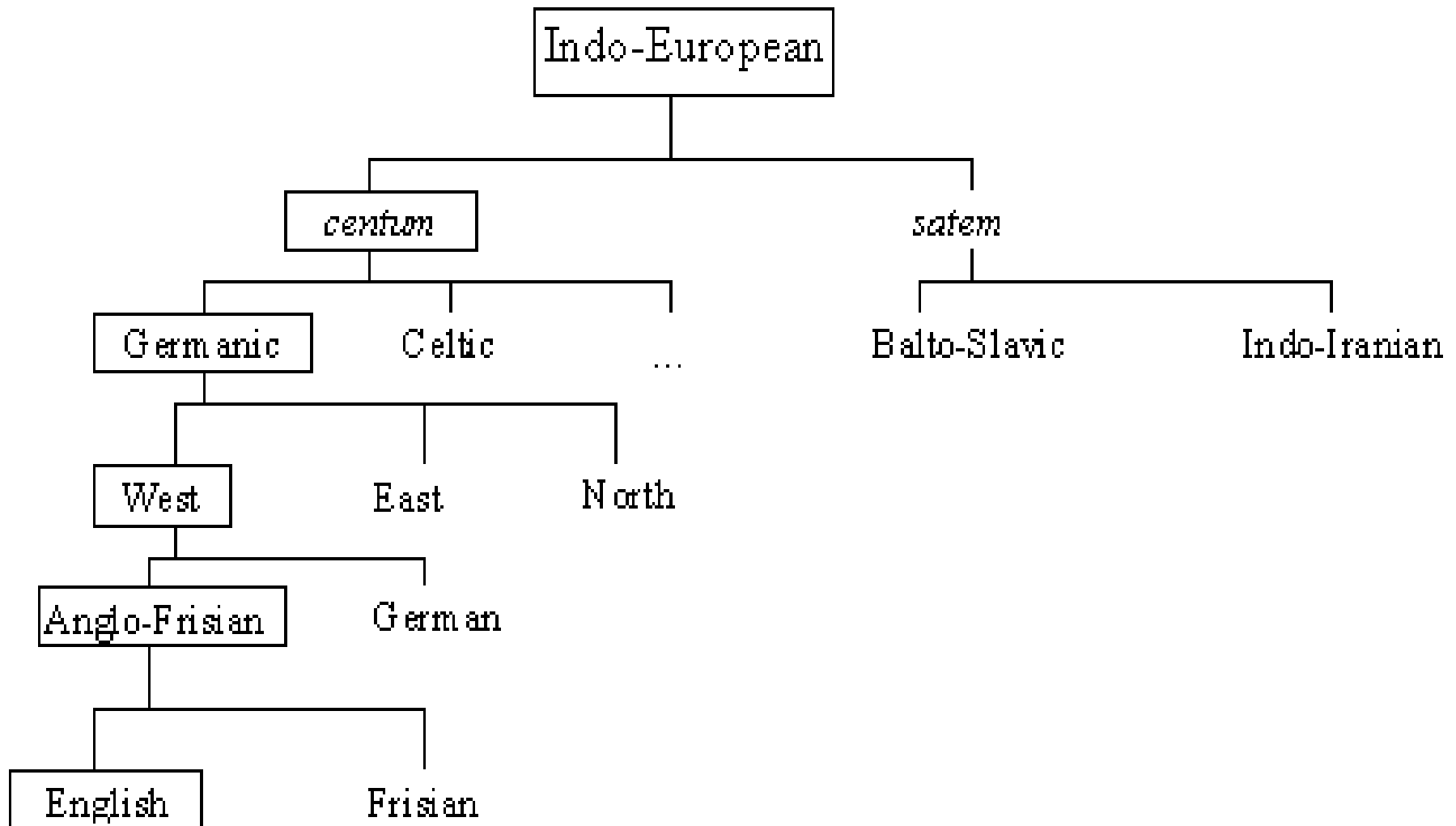


THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

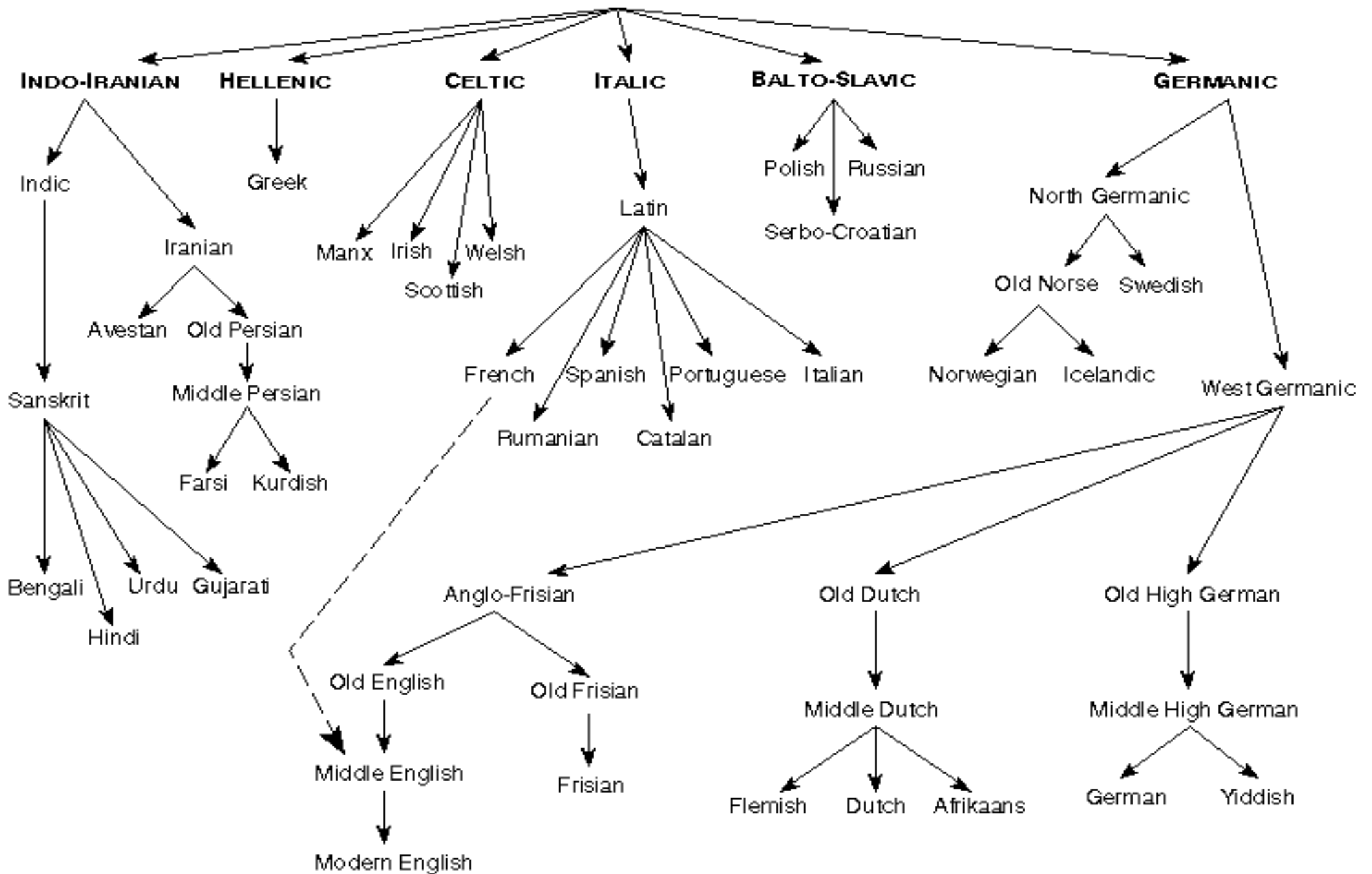
The Indo-European Language Family

- Languages may be similar because they have developed from the same original language.
- By comparing words in known languages with similarities of *form* and *meaning*, and, based on the oldest possible documents, relationships have been found between
 - almost all European languages (except Basque and the Finno-Ugric languages Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian)
 - several languages of South Central Asia such as Farsi/Persian in Iran, Hindi in India)
- The relationships between descendants of a common ancestral language are usually shown as a tree graph (see the following graphs, which contain increasing amounts of detail)

History of English



Proto-Indo-European



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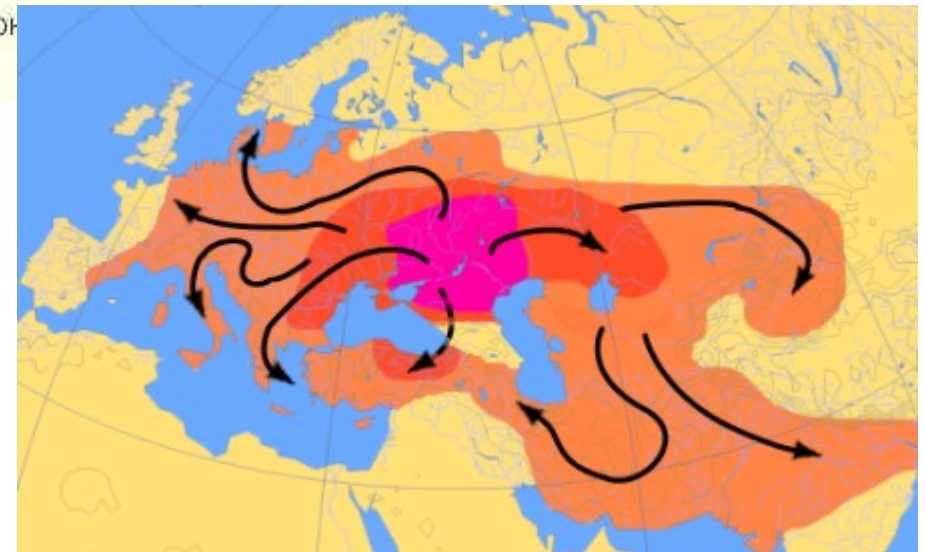
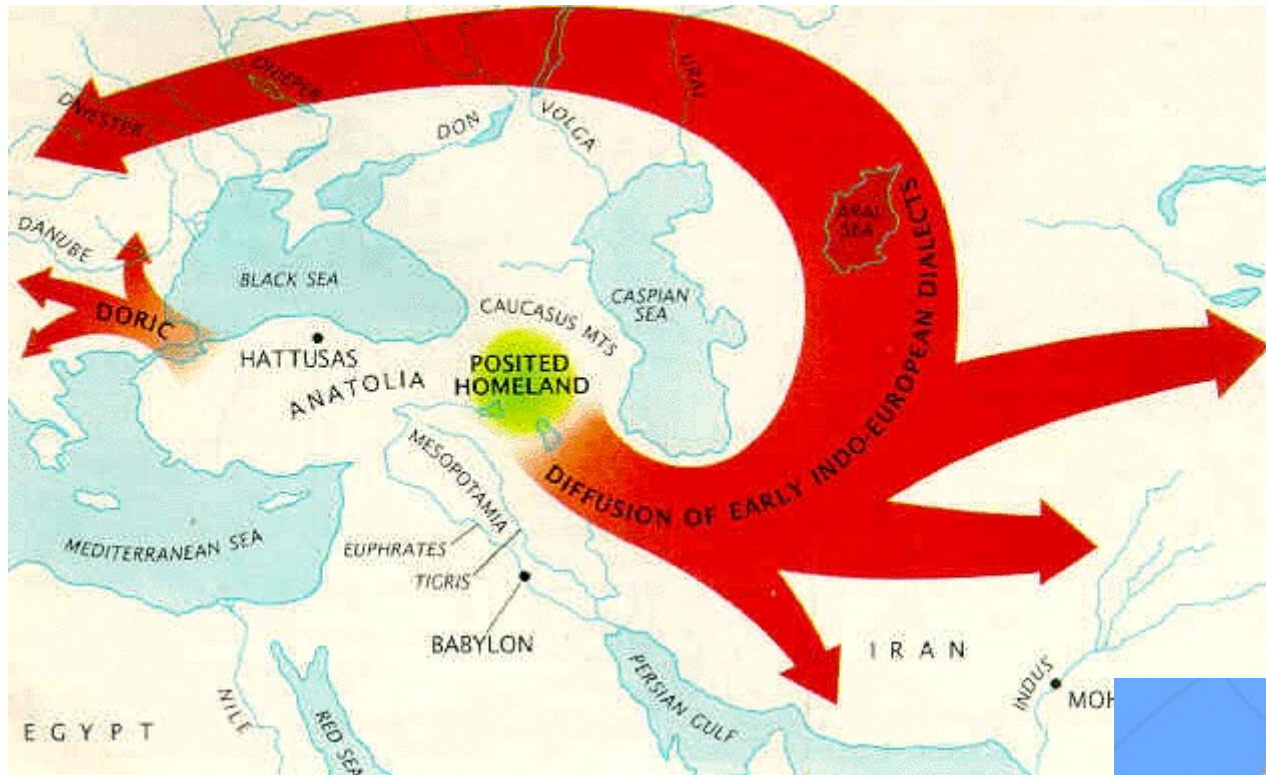
The Origins of Indo-European (1)

- There are several theories about the geographical origins of Indo-European, illustrated in the following slides:
 - The Baltic theory: the oldest, based on shared botanical vocabulary such as “beech, Buche, ... fagus”, and the putative geographical location of these plants.
 - The South-East European Theory
 - The Flood Theory
 - The Caucasus Theory (the most plausible)

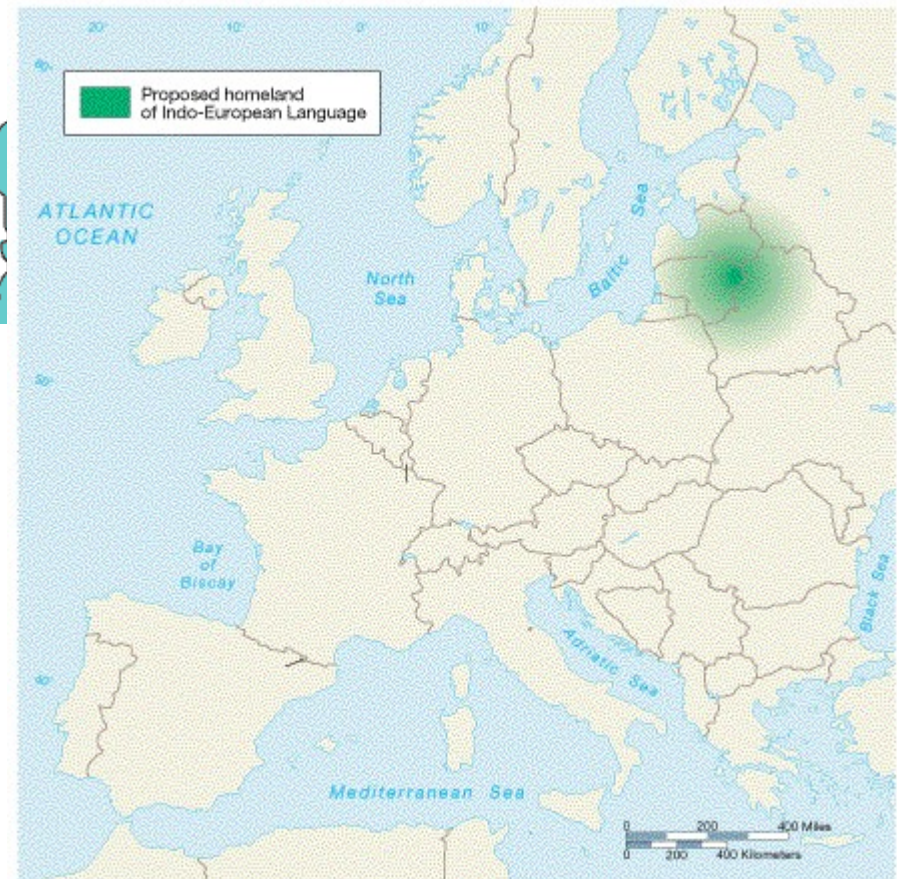
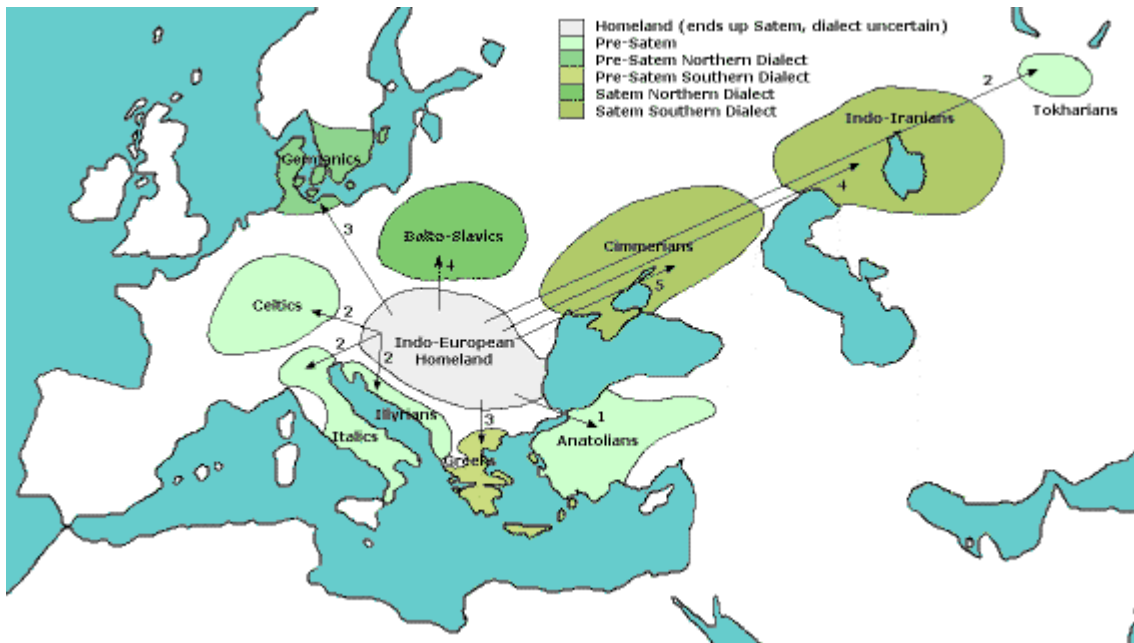
The Origins of Indo-European (2)

- The Baltic theory: the oldest, based on shared botanical vocabulary such as “beech, Buche, ... fagus”, and the putative geographical location of these plants explains a possible origin, but not reasons for dispersion.
- The South-East European Theory: similar to the Baltic theory; no reasons for dispersion.
- The Flood Theory gives reasons for dispersion - a natural catastrophe.
- The Caucasus Theory: The origins of agriculture are said to have spread East-West from the Fertile Crescent (Iraq) between about 7,000 - 3000 BC, which coincides with what has been postulated about the East-West spread of the Indo-European languages.

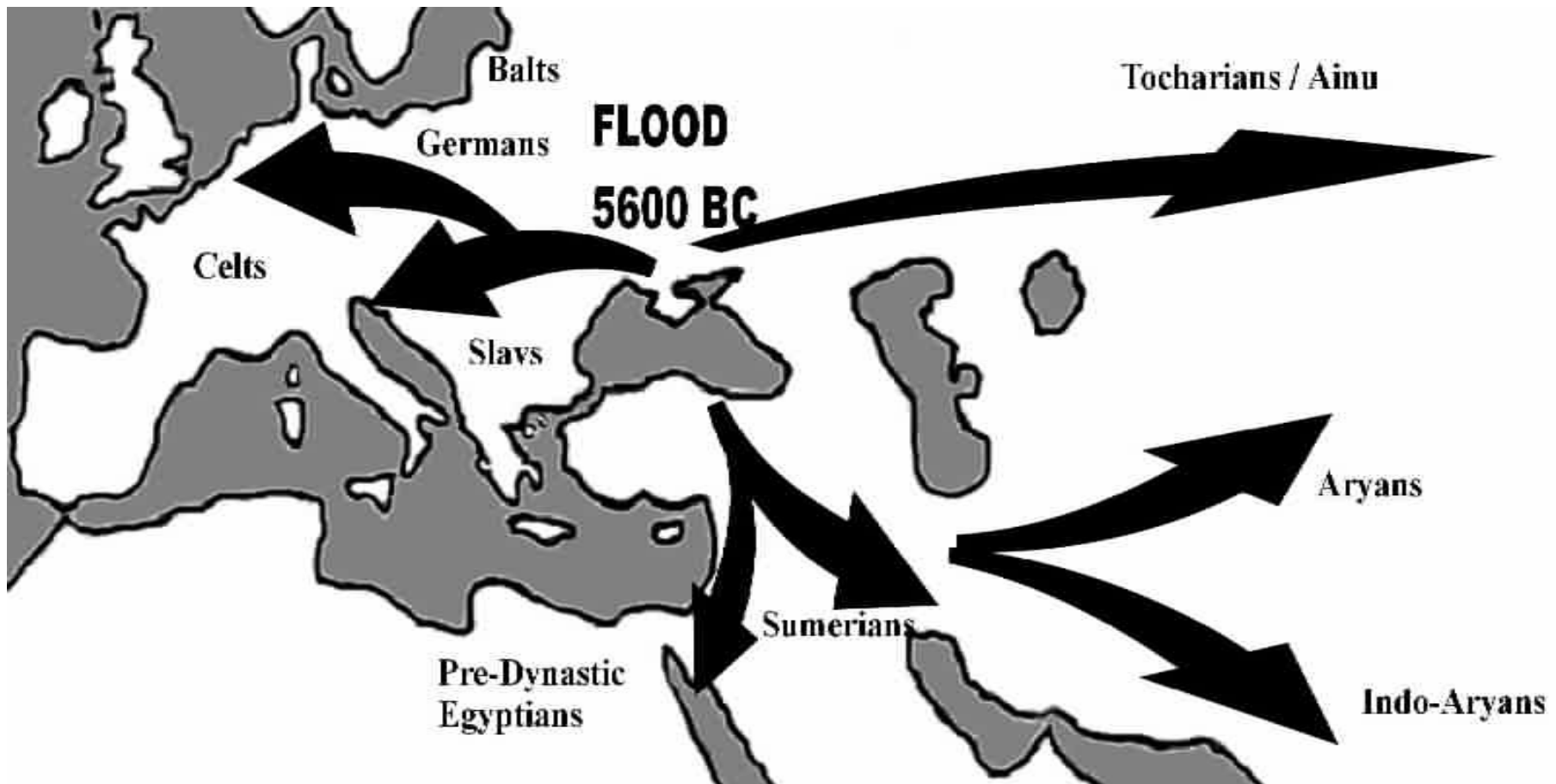
IE: The Caucasian theories



IE: Eastern Europe & Baltic theories



The Flood Theory of IE expansion



Indo-European expansions

- IE expansion: about 5000 - 3000 BC, at the same time as the spread of agriculture
- Hellenic expansion: about 330 BC, the Hellenic empire under Alexander the Great, which left extensive Greek influences, e.g. the New Testament of the Bible
- Roman expansion: about 100 BC - 400 AD, the Roman empire, which left many Latin influences, e.g.
 - The Romance languages Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Romanian, Romansch
 - The Roman Catholic Church
- Colonial expansion: after 1492,
 - Romance languages: Portuguese, Spanish, French
 - Germanic languages: Dutch, English

Distribution of Indo-European



Quiz

- Indo-European languages now dominate the language maps of the world:
 - Why are Portuguese and Spanish the official national languages of South American states?
 - Why are varieties of Dutch among the official national languages of Indonesia and South Africa?
 - Why is English the official national language of the USA, Australia, New Zealand?
 - In which African countries are the following Indo-European languages among the official national languages?
 - English
 - French
 - Portuguese

SETTLEMENT OF BRITAIN

Who was in GB before the English?

- The original human inhabitants of the British Isles are unknown, though there are architectural remnants
 - Search for information on these
- Earliest known inhabitants of the British Isles: Celts (migrations East and West from Danube), 2 branches:
 - Goidelic Celtic (e.g. Gaelic, spoken today in the West of Ireland and North-West Scotland)
 - Brythonic Celtic (e.g. Welsh, now spoken in Wales, and Breton, re-introduced to European mainland from Wales and Cornwall)
- West & North Germanic migrations:
 - West Germanic: Angles, Saxons: after about 400 AD
 - North Germanic: Vikings after about 600 AD
 - Norman French (French-speaking descendants Viking): 1066

THE CELTS

British Celts



Quiz

- Where did the Celts originate?
- Name 3 Celtic town names in the area of modern Germany and give their meanings
- Where do the Celts live now?
- What is their significance for English studies? -
 - historically
 - currently