



Lesson Activity: Indo-European Language Tree

AP[®] Human Geography

Duration Approximately 40 minutes

Materials Needed

- UWorld “[Indo-European Language Family Tree](#)” page:

Indo-European language family

Roughly 3.5 billion people speak a language from this family, making it the largest in the world. There are approximately 450 languages and dialects spread throughout the major branches of the family including English, Hindi, Russian, and Spanish.

What encouraged the diffusion of Indo-European languages, such as English, Spanish, and Portuguese, into North America and South America?
 What is one reason for the contemporary distribution of languages around the globe?
 What is the significance of a lingua franca in economics today?

(full-size included at the end of the lesson activity)

- Notebook paper and pencils
- Optional: presentation software—Google Slides, PowerPoint, etc.

College Board[®] Standards

- **IMP-3.B:** Explain what factors lead to the diffusion of universalizing and ethnic religions.
- **IMP-3.B.2:** Diffusion of language families, including Indo-European, and religious patterns and distributions can be visually represented on maps, in charts and toponyms, and in other representations.



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Activity Objectives

Explain how images illustrate or relate to geographic principles, processes, and outcomes.

Activity Instructions

- Place** students into small groups and assign them one of the three included questions from the UWorld “Indo-European Language Family Tree” page. Ask them to discuss their assigned question and record their group’s ideas and conclusions on a piece of notebook paper or in a slide presentation:
 - What encouraged the diffusion of Indo-European languages, such as English, Spanish, and Portuguese, into North America and South America?
 - What is one reason for the contemporary distribution of languages around the globe?
 - What is the significance of a lingua franca in economics today?
- Ask** each group to present the information they discussed to the class. This will create “jigsaw puzzle pieces” of information that will come together to form a complete picture of the topic.
- Ask** students to submit any presentation slides so they can be shared with the whole class (if applicable).

Possible Variations

- Ask students to create a slide presentation of their small group’s conclusions about their assigned question. Have students use this to **present** their findings to their classmates at the end of the jigsaw activity.
- Ask students to create their own visual representation of the Indo-European Language Family Tree and how it pertains to their small group’s assigned question. Have students use this to **present** their findings to their classmates at the end of the jigsaw activity.

Lesson Extension

The following UWorld’s Learning Tools for AP Courses questions can be used for additional practice, a quick formative assessment, homework, or small group interventions: UWorld Question IDs 701331, 701377, 701192, 701114, 701115.

Guiding Questions

How does the interaction of people contribute to the spread of cultural practices?

How do historical processes impact current cultural practices?

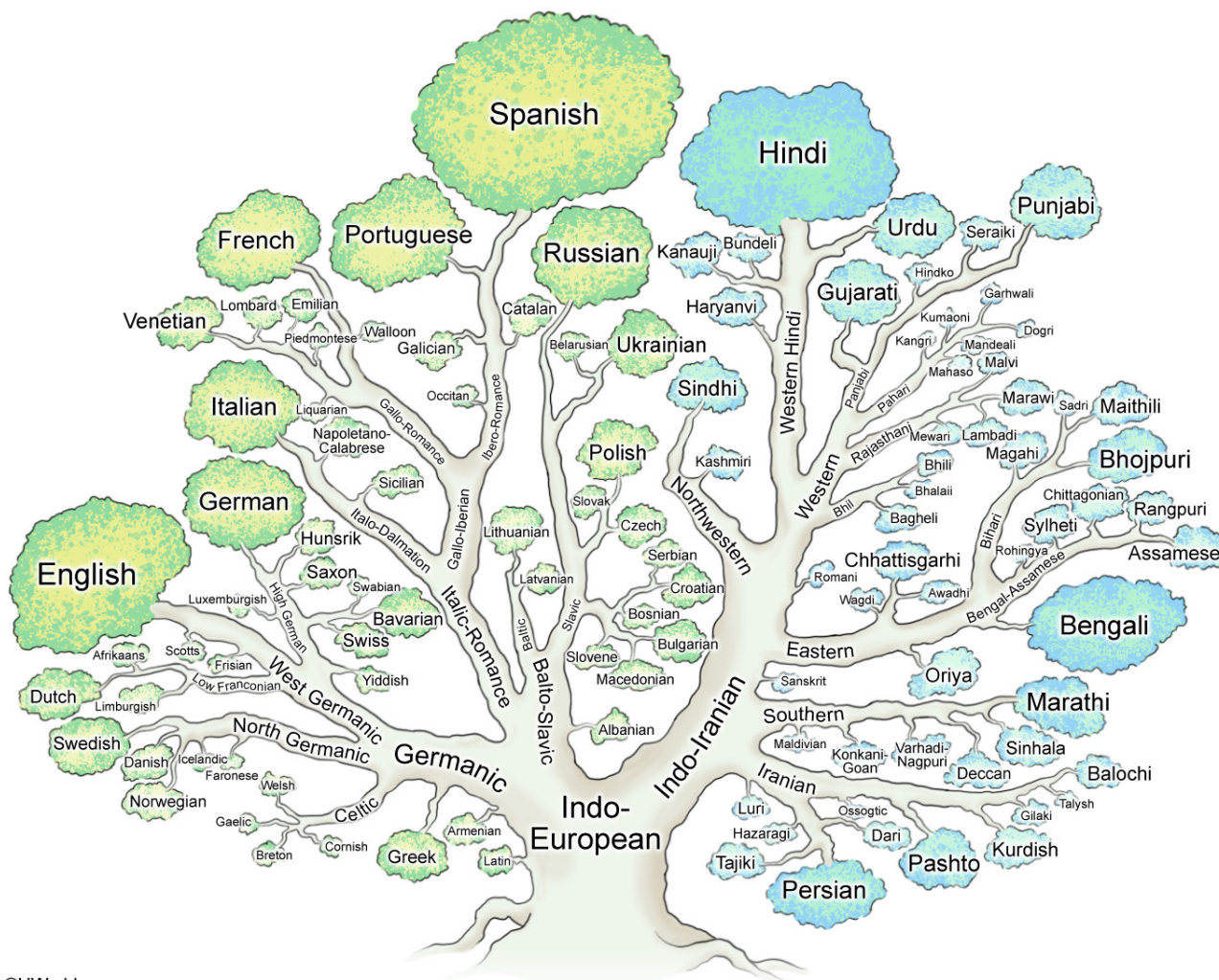
How do cultural practices vary across geographical locations?



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1. What encouraged the diffusion of Indo-European languages, such as English, Spanish, and Portuguese, into North America and South America?
2. What is one reason for the contemporary distribution of languages around the globe?
3. What is the significance of a lingua franca in economics today?