



# EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

# **STANDARDS:**

**SS6G10 Describe selected cultural characteristics of Europe.**

- a. Describe the diversity of languages spoken within Europe.

# Many Languages

- Europe is full of diverse languages.
- There are over twenty major languages in Europe.
  - Some examples include English, Spanish, Italian, and French.
- Even though they are different, many European languages have the same roots—the early Indo-European language.



# Same Roots

- The term “Indo-European” refers to the ancient people who lived in Central Asia over 5,000 years ago.
- Indo-European tribes migrated into Europe and settled throughout the continent.
- Over thousands of years, their language changed and developed into the many languages spoken in Europe today.



# Germanic

- The Germanic language family has the most native speakers.
  - Most live in northwest and central Europe
- English & German are part of this family.
  - About 20% of Europeans speak one of these two languages.
- Most Europeans learn English as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language in their schools.
- Other examples include Danish, Dutch, and Swedish.

# Romance

- The Romance language family includes French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian.
- Most speakers live in the south and west of Europe.
- These languages come from Latin, the language of the ancient Roman Empire.
  - **Romance** Languages



# Slavic

- The Slavic language family is mostly found in central and eastern Europe.
- This family includes Russian, as well as Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, and Croatian.
- These languages are written with a Cyrillic alphabet.



# Diversity Today

- Many European countries have more than one official language.
  - This is a part of life in many countries due to the ethnic background of the people living there.
  - Also, many countries share borders and people move back and forth across them.
- About 400 million people in the world speak English because it is often the choice for a 2<sup>nd</sup> language.
  - Over 1/2 of all Europeans speak English.



# Diversity Today

- Having speakers of so many different languages in one area can be a problem.
  - Language barriers make it difficult to live, work, and trade with people who cannot communicate with each other.
- So...
  - Schoolchildren learn 1 or 2 other languages besides their own.
  - European Union has 23 “official” languages to make sure that people can understand laws and decisions made by the government.