Language Awareness for Key Stage 3
1: Introducing Language Awareness

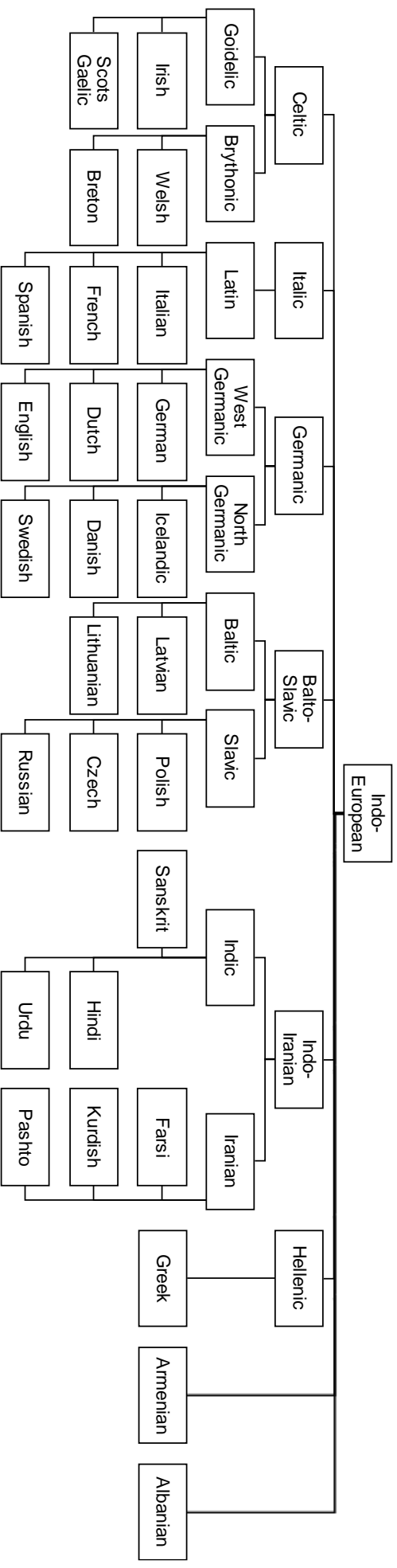| Key Terms	Optional Terms
• Language Types	• Syntax
• Word Order	• Morphology
• Word Formation	• V2
• Language Family	
• Mother Language	
• Daughter Language	
• Sister Language	
• Indo-European	

- Introduction: Learning about language
  - At school, each language is usually taught in its own separate class
  - In these lessons we will be looking at different languages at the same time
  - Some of these may be languages that you have never seen before
  - You won't need to know how to speak these languages
  - Instead, we'll provide enough information for you to understand what's going on
  - You may also know other languages besides the ones that we discuss here
  - If you do, you can think about how these languages are similar to/different from what we show
  - Reasons for looking at different languages:
    o Comparing languages lets us see what all languages have **in common**
    o Comparing languages also lets us see **how** and **why** languages differ
    o Understanding reasons for these differences can reveal the **patterns** that they form
    o The more you know about languages and their patterns, the **easier** it is **to learn them**!
- Language types
  - In order to understand the similarities and differences between languages, it can be useful to classify them into different types
  - There are several different ways of classifying languages
  - One type of classification has to do with how the parts of a sentence are ordered (Linguists use the term *syntax* for the part of language having to do with word order)
    o English has the word order Subject–Verb–Object
      ▪ For example, in the sentence 'Mary bought a book', *Mary* is the subject, *bought* is the verb, and *a book* is the object.
    o Japanese has the word order Subject–Object–Verb
    o Irish has the word order Verb–Subject–Object
    o There are also other languages with the other possible orders (Verb–Object–Subject, Object–Subject–Verb, Object–Verb–Subject)
    o In some languages, such as German, the verb always comes second, wherever the subject and object are
      ▪ Maria *brachte* ein Buch gestern
        'Mary brought a book yesterday'
      ▪ Gestern *brachte* Maria ein Buch
        'Yesterday Mary brought a book'
    o (Linguists call this sort of word order *verb-second*, or V2)

Activity 1:

In groups, make a list of any other languages that you know and write down what their word order is. (You can abbreviate: e.g. Subject–Verb–Object = SVO)

Language   Word Order
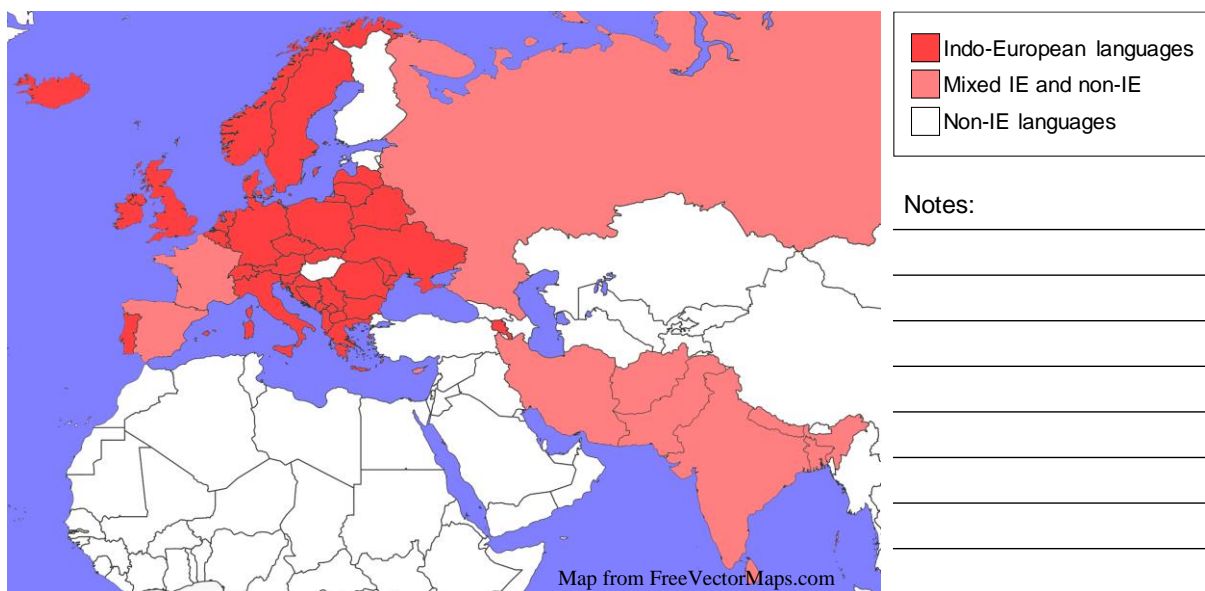
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- Languages can also be classified in terms of what they **combine** into a **single word** and what they leave **separate** as **multiple words**
- All languages can create complex words by combining smaller units
  (Linguists call this part of language <u>morphology</u>)
    - un- + happy → unhappy
    - develop + -ment → development
    - chair + -s → chairs
    - talk + -ed → talked
- However, languages differ in how much use they make of these combinations
    - A language like English has a single word *my*, and expresses past tense by adding a suffix *-ed* to a verb to form a single word like *walked*
    - A language like Chinese always says 'of me' (*wǒ de*) instead of 'my', and even the past tense in Chinese is a separate word (*le*)
    - There are also laguages like Mapudungun (spoken in Chile and Argentina), which have single words like *ngillawakan*, corresponding to a whole English sentence 'I bought a cow'
- Language families
  - One of the most important ways of classifying languages is in terms of their relationships with one another
  - Over time, all languages change
  - When varieties of a language change enough, they can become separate languages, whose speakers are no longer able to understand each other
  - One of the best-known examples of this process is Latin
  - Latin gradually developed from a single language into all the modern Romance languages, such as Italian, French, and Spanish
      - In this sort of situation, Latin can be called the <u>mother language</u>
      - The Romance languages are the <u>daughter languages</u> of Latin
      - Each Romance language is a <u>sister language</u> of the other Romance languages
  - Because Italy, France and Spain are so far apart, people in each place wouldn't know how people in the other places spoke
  - But of course, Latin has a history too
  - By tracing back the history of Latin and other languages, we can build up a family tree showing Latin, its descendants, and its other relatives

Indo-European language family tree:

- **Indo-European**
  - **Celtic**
    - **Goidelic**
      - Irish
      - Scots Gaelic
    - **Brythonic**
      - Welsh
      - Breton
  - **Italic**
    - **Latin**
      - Italian
      - French
        - Spanish
      - (Spanish)
  - **Germanic**
    - **West Germanic**
      - German
      - Dutch
        - English
    - **North Germanic**
      - Icelandic
      - Danish
        - Swedish
  - **Balto-Slavic**
    - **Baltic**
      - Latvian
      - Lithuanian
    - **Slavic**
      - Polish
      - Czech
        - Russian
  - **Indo-Iranian**
    - **Indic**
      - Sanskrit
      - Hindi
        - Urdu
    - **Iranian**
      - Farsi
      - Kurdish
        - Pashto
  - **Hellenic**
    - Greek
  - Armenian
  - Albanian

- As this tree shows, most European languages and many Asian languages belong to the <u>Indo-European</u> language family
- Just as the ancient Romans travelled from Italy into France and Spain, speakers of Indo-European languages spread out gradually from one place to another, until these languages were spoken in places as far apart as Spain and Nepal
- All the Indo-European languages descend from a single language, called Proto-Indo-European, which was spoken about 6000 years ago
- We have no direct records of Proto-Indo-European, as it was spoken before writing had been invented
- However, linguists have been able to reconstruct some of it, by studying the similarities among later languages
- In the lessons to come, you'll see examples of this type of reconstruction
- There are many other language families besides Indo-European, including:
    o Finno-Ugric (Finnish, Hungarian)
    o Semitic (Arabic, Hebrew)
    o Niger-Congo (Swahili, Zulu)
    o Sino-Tibetan (Burmese, Chinese)
    o Austronesian (Indonesian, Maori)
    o Athabaskan (Apache, Navajo)
- Other languages have no known relatives, such as Basque (spoken in France and Spain)
- All these languages and language families may have further relationships, which are too far back in time for us to recover

Activity 2:

Look at the map of Indo-European languages. Do you notice anything unusual? If any countries seem different from the surrounding area, see if you can identify them and guess what's going on

Map from FreeVectorMaps.com

- Conclusion
    - Languages can be classified in terms of how they form words and how the words are ordered
    - Over time, languages change and develop into one or more new languages
    - Languages with the same origin can be grouped into language families
    - Classifying languages can help us to see the many different types of similarity that languages can share