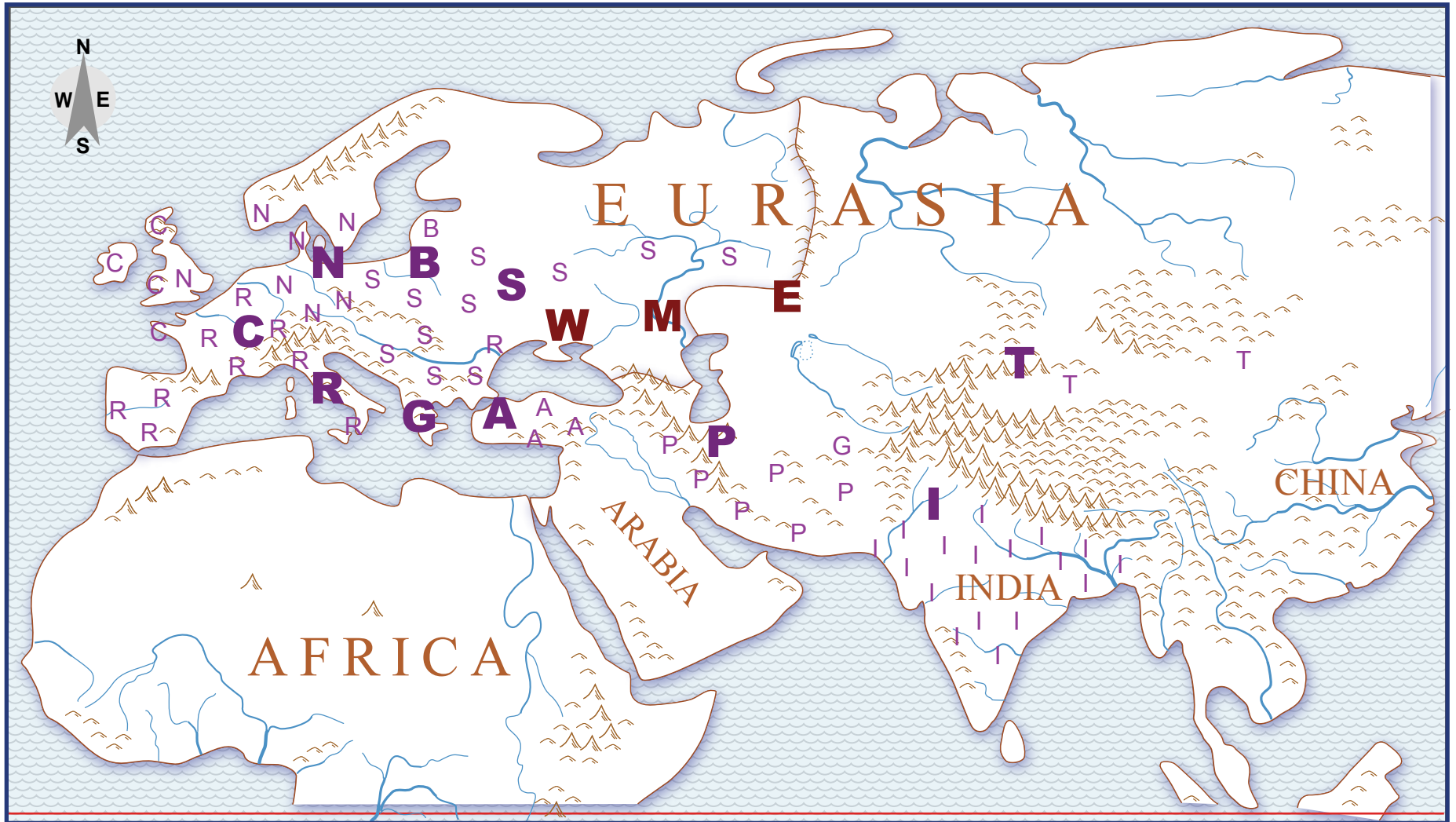


Spread of the Indo-European Languages

TIME	What Happened Then	How they say <i>wheel</i> and <i>axle</i>
5000 BCE	A group of people lived in the zone of transition between grassland and forest, north of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea. Their language is called Proto-Indo-European (PIE for short). <i>Draw a line around the W, M, and E (west, middle, and east).</i>	Rot-eh ak*s
4200 BCE	Climate turned colder. Some PIE people moved south, probably around the west side of the Black Sea. They came to Anatolia (modern Turkey). Much later, some became the Hittites, who had had iron weapons and fought Egyptian Pharaohs with chariots. <i>Draw an arrow from the W to the big A in Anatolia.</i>	
3600 BCE	Climate became snowier. Some PIE people moved far east. These people (the Tocharians) brought domesticated animals and metal technology with them. They eventually disappeared. (Some may have joined the Xiongnu and even Mongols, farther east.) <i>Draw an arrow from the E to the big T in central Asia.</i>	(wagons first used about 3700 BCE)
3300 BCE	Climate became warmer. Some PIE people moved northwest. They became known as Teutonic, Germanic, or Norse people. Later, they spread over much of northern Europe. One group crossed into the British Isles; their language later became English. <i>Draw an arrow from the W to the big N in northern Europe.</i>	rad ahsa assis
3000 BCE	A little later, other groups moved west and spread over much of Europe. These people (the Celts) were pushed farther west by later migrants. Today, their languages are found only small, isolated places like Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and Brittany. <i>Draw an arrow from the M to the big C in western Europe.</i>	roth rodh
??? BCE	Some Celtic people moved south into Italy. One group became the Romans. Their Empire spread, and their language (Latin) became Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, and Romanian. <i>Draw a branch arrow from the C arrow to the big R in Italy.</i>	rota axis
2800 BCE	Climate became even warmer. Some PIE people moved north. They became the Slavs. They spread, and their language became the basis for modern Russian, Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, and the Baltic languages of Lithuanian and Latvian. (A few moved south and became Armenians, east of the Black Sea.) <i>Draw an arrow from the W to the big S, then on to the big B.</i>	ratis asis reth
2500 BCE	Climate turned colder. Some PIE people moved south to Greece. (Much later, Alexander made a big empire, but it did not last long.) <i>Draw an arrow from the M to the big G in southern Europe.</i>	roda akso
2200 BCE	Climate turned colder. Some eastern PIE people moved south. They split, and some of them became the Persians, ancestors of modern Iranians. Others moved into South Asia. Their language became Sanskrit – the basis for modern Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, and many other languages in Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. <i>Draw an arrow south from E to the big P, with a branch to big I.</i>	ratha aksas
Today	In English, we say <i>wheel</i> and <i>axle</i> , but we still have words that trace their roots back to Proto-Indo-European	rotate rotary axis radius axial radial tire

SPREAD OF INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES



- W M E** The western, middle, and eastern groups of pastoral people who lived in wagons on the steppes (grasslands).
- A A T T** Early (large letters) and then later (small letters) spread of Anatolian and Tocharian people, 4200 - 3700 BCE.
- N N C C R R S S B B** Spread of Norse (Germanic), then Celtic and Roman, then Slavic and Baltic people, 3300 - 2800 BCE.
- G G P P I I** Spread of Greek and Balkan, then Persian (Iranian), and finally Indic (Hindi, Bengali, etc.), 2500 - 2100 BCE.

SPREAD OF THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES



Sources: Anthony The Horse, the Wheel, and Language

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Teacher's Guide: **Spread of Indo-European Languages**

Overview: Student draw arrows on a map to show how people from the steppes (grasslands) north of the Black and Caspian Seas migrated in different directions, taking their technology and language with them.

By doing this, they gain a better understanding of how languages spread (and then changed) as people traded and/or moved.

Grade: 6, 7, 10

Related Discipline: History

GLCEs: 6G411-3, 6G432
7H121, 7W121, 211, 315

Time: 10-40 minutes

Setup: Where did our language come from? (English, Spanish, German, Russian, Hindi, . .)

Procedure: Read, summarize, or have students read paragraphs from the Spread of Indo-European Languages, and have students draw arrows on one of the 3 work maps to illustrate the migrations.

Vocabulary: language (family) steppe forest-grassland transition pastoralism migration

Debrief: This activity meets many standards, more than listed above. **WARNING:** Some of the story of Indo-European languages is new, because pastoral people, living in wagons and herding horses, leave less archaeological evidence than people who build temples and pyramids with stone – and the Soviet Union ruled this area until 1990 – and this part of the world is a risky place to do research (eastern Ukraine, Crimea, Chechnya, and many other areas have civil wars or terrorism).

As a result, few people are even aware that the steppes supported an early civilization different from, but as important as, the great river-valley civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and China. In fact, the pastoral people of the steppes had trading networks with all of those areas long before the Silk Road. Here are some more background facts about the cultures in this region:

Timeline of events in the *Pontic steppes* (grasslands north of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea)

- 6500 BCE **Pottery.** People north of the Black Sea made fired-clay pots to store food (the oldest known pottery in Europe). This invention helped them live in grasslands, with their long, cold winters.
- 5000 BCE **Hunting.** People still lived as hunters and gatherers. They had no domesticated animals. They gathered wild plants, caught fish from rivers, and hunted horses in the grassland.
- 4500 BCE **Herding.** People kept horses as a source of meat and milk at times when hunting was hard. They lived in villages in river valleys, where they could cut and store hay for horses in winter.
- 4000 BCE **Riding.** People learned to ride horses (and invented the necessary equipment, like ropes and bridles). Horse riding, in turn, made hunting, herding, and attacking more efficient. Populations grew, and people began to raise horses for sale to people in other regions.
- 3500 BCE **Villages.** Some villages were very large – nearly a mile across, with protective walls and more than 50,000 people. They were the largest “towns” in the world at the time.
- 3000 BCE **Wagons.** Horse herders learned to build wagons. Carrying supplies in wagons allowed them to live on the much larger grassland areas between the river valleys. Population grew rapidly. People moved west, north, and east, in the first big wave of migration out of the steppes. They also had trade connections with northern Europe (amber), eastern Mediterranean (glass), Afghanistan (metal and beads), and China (selling horses, maybe trading for silk).
- 2500 BCE **Greeks.** Climate turned colder. Some people moved to SE Europe (Balkans and Greece).
- 2000 BCE **War chariots.** Climate was much colder. The second big wave of migration out of the steppes was aided by another invention – war chariots with spoked wheels. The use of chariots spread rapidly – they reached Egypt, Mesopotamia, and China within a few hundred years.
- Trading copper.** Also, copper miners in the eastern part of the steppes were selling many thousands of pounds of copper every year to buyers as far away as Europe, India, and China.

COUNT THE “FIRSTS:” Pottery, horse herding, riding, big towns, living in wagons, chariots, copper trading

Extension: Students can look at other similarities and differences among languages. See *writing*.