

Name: _____

Key

Date: _____

Period: _____

European Languages

- Europe is home to more than 200 native languages!
- Most European languages are in 3 main language families (or categories):
 - Germanic
 - Romance
 - Slavic

Germanic Language Family

- Has the most native speakers
- Most live in northwest and central Europe
- English and German are part of this family
 - About 20% of Europeans speak one of these two languages
- Most Europeans learn English as a 2nd language in their schools

Romance Language Family

- Includes French, Italian, and Spanish
- Most live in the south and west of Europe
- These languages come from Latin, the language of the ancient Roman Empire
 - Romance Languages

Diversity in European Languages Today

- Many countries have more than one official language
 - Part of life in many countries in Europe due to the ethnic background of the people living there
- Many countries share borders, and people move back and forth across borders
 - About 400 million people in the world speak English because it is often the choice for a 2nd language
 - Over ½ of all Europeans speak English
- Having so many languages can be a problem
- 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