



Indo-european languages

First discovered in the 1780s by a British judge, William Jones, who first compared the ancient Indian language Sanskrit with classical Greek. He noticed that basic words the the various Indo-european languages are the same, as well as the way that words end, depending on how they are used in a sentence. This was not just wishful thinking, but the product of the development of these languages from the same original tongue, termed *proto-Indo-european*.

English	Two	Three	Me	Father	Foot	He Carries (bears)
Sanskrit (ancient Indian)	duvá	tráyas	Mám	pitár	pád	bhárati
Avestan (ancient Persian)	duva	thräyó	Mam	pitar-	paióya	baraiti
Classical Greek	duo	treis	Eme	pater	pod-	phérei
Latin	duo	tres	Me	pater	ped-	fert
Gothic (ancient Germanic)	twai	threis	Mik	faör	fōt	baírith
Old Irish	dó	trí	-m	athir	traig	berid
Turkish	iki	uç	ben-i	baba	ayak	tašiyor

Scholars have deduced that the earliest speakers of proto-Indo-european **lived in the north**, because there are proto-Indo-european words for northern animals (wolf, bear, and otter) but not for animals living in the south (such as lion or tiger). There are lots of terms for mountains, lakes, and rivers, so scholars hypothesize a mountain region in the north, particularly Anatolia or the Caucasus region (whence the term *Caucasian*).

Examples of Indo-european languages are **almost all the languages of Europe**: Latin and its descendants (French, Spanish, Italian, Romanian), the Germanic, Slavic, Greek, **Persian**, and **Sanskrit**.

Indo-european languages are **heavily inflected**, which means the exact way to spell a word will change depending on how it is used in a sentence.