



The World of Languages
and Languages of the World

The Linguistic Tree

Today we will explore the connections between different language groups.

Get your thinking caps on...

Objectives

- We can see that different languages belong to same language groups
- We can observe that languages within a specific group have many similarities and a common ancestor
- We can examine similarities between words in different languages



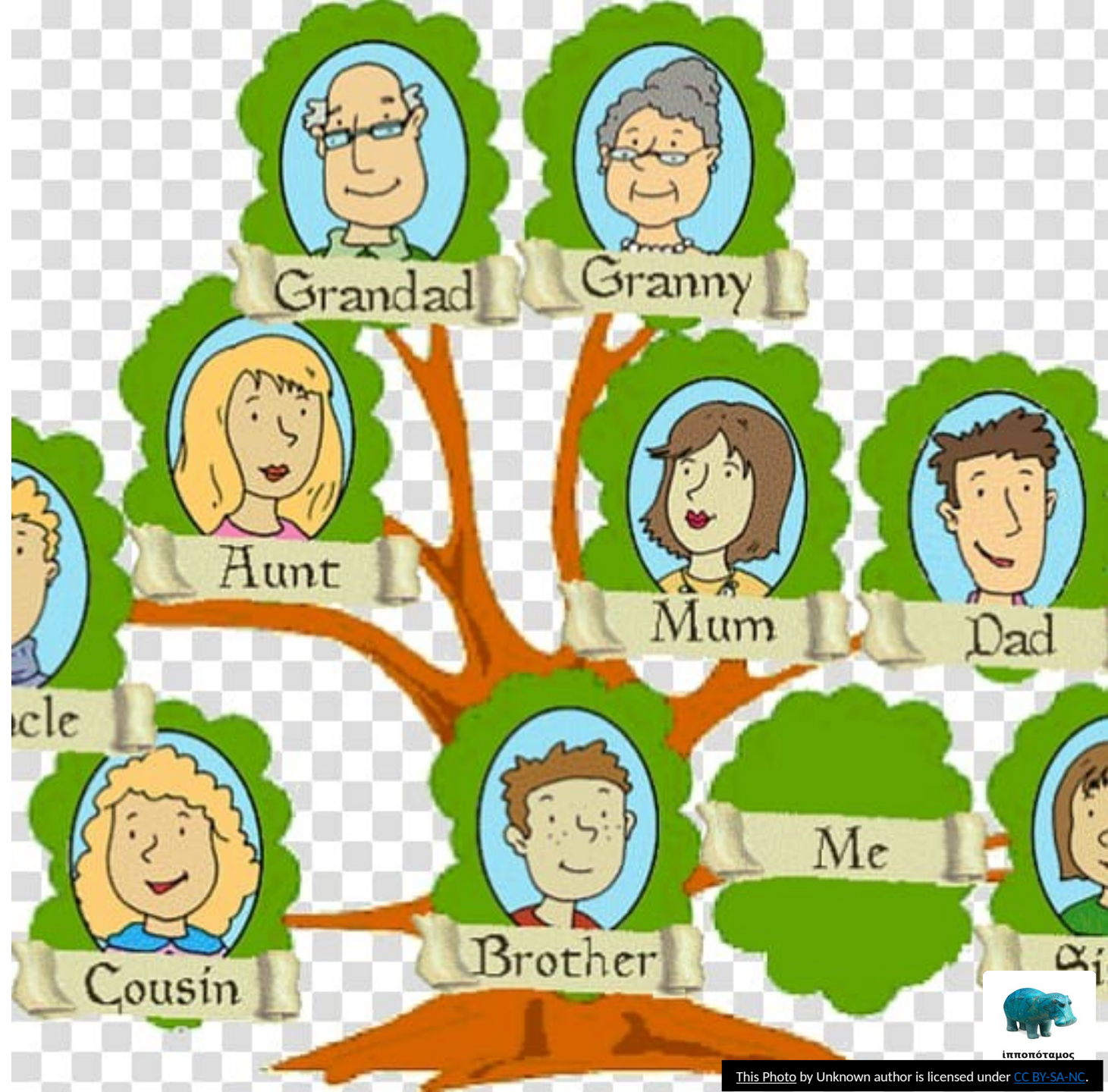
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WoLLoW the HiPPo



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WoLLoW the HiPPo

Let's go!

- What kind of tree is this?
- Have you ever drawn one of these trees?
- What connects all the images in the tree?
- Can you think of any connections between a family tree and languages?



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Language Family

- A language family is a group of languages that have *a common ancestral or parental language*, also known as a **mother language** or **proto-language**.
- All languages within the family, also known as **daughter languages**, share resemblances and linguistic links.

Can you think of any languages that are similar?

Which proto-language do you think they derived from?

Have you seen the word "proto" before?

Can you guess how many language families there are in the world?



Language Families

- There are **142 language families** including over **7000** living human languages.
What does living language mean?
- The two largest language families are *Indo-European* (English belongs to this family!) and *Sino-Tibetan* (with Chinese as its largest member).
- Indo-European languages are spoken in the majority of Europe, in parts of the Middle East and in much of Southwest and South Asia.
- Some of the European languages in this family have expanded to other continents. *How and why do you think this is?*
- Indo-European is divided into several branches, such as Germanic, Romance and Slavic.



Indo-European Languages

- Around 48% of the world's population speak Indo-European languages.
- This family has over 200 languages, such as Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, Persian, Polish, Russian, Spanish...
- But all these languages are so different! And India and Europe are so far from each other... *How is it possible that they belong to the same family?*

* * *

- These languages derive from the same ancestor: *Proto-Indo-European language*, which was spoken a very long time ago by people living to the east of Turkey. This group split into two -one headed to Asia and the other to Europe.



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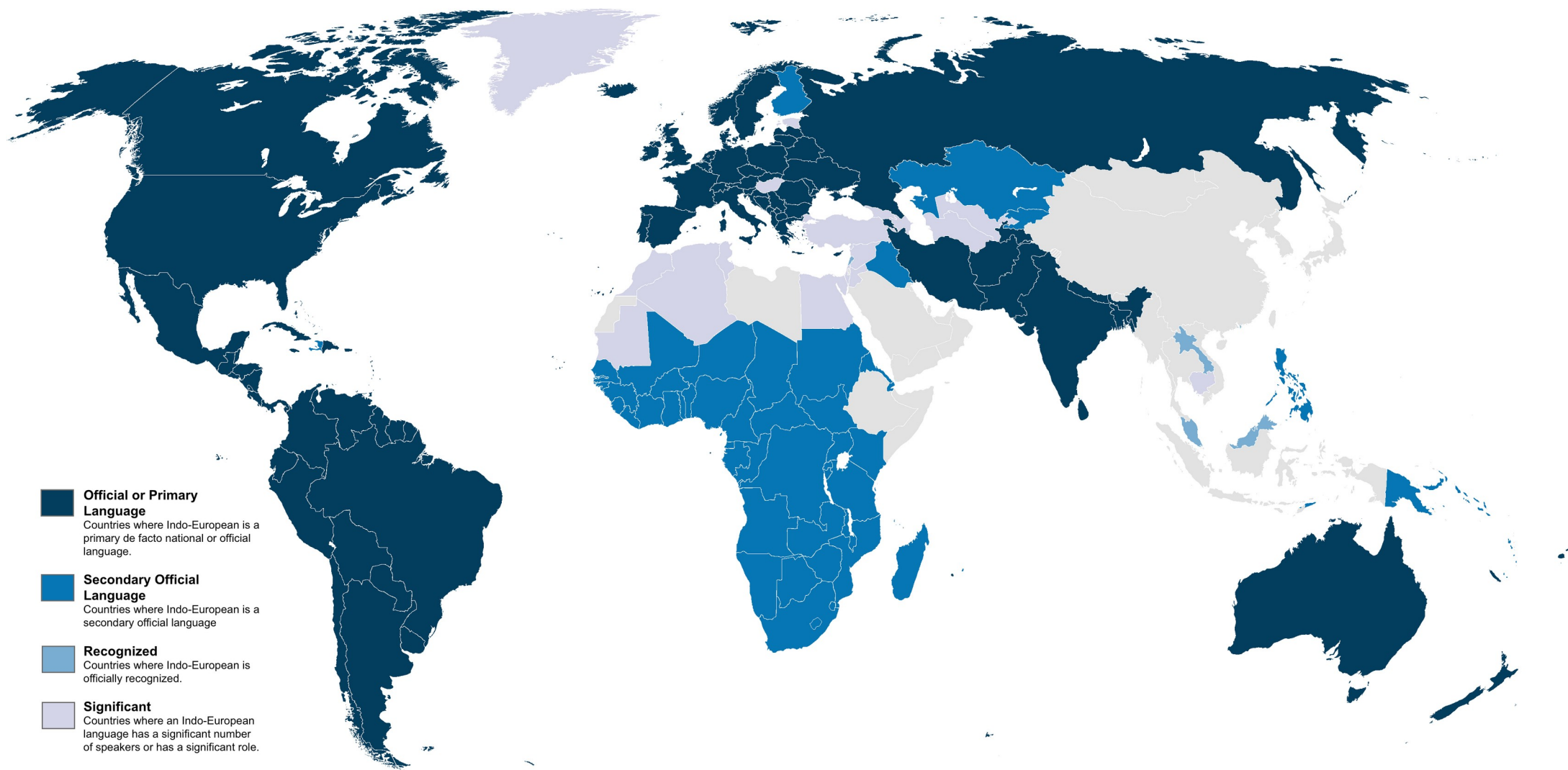


Image from Wikipedia

Language detectives... are you ready?



You are going to see a famous illustration by **Minna Sundberg**, a Finnish artist. It shows the relationships between Indo-European and Uralic language families.

Look carefully and answer the following questions:

1. Which language family has more speakers?
2. What does the size of the leaves on the trees indicate?
3. How do origins of Finnish compare to those of other languages in Scandinavia?
4. What are some of the branches on each tree?
5. What are the main sub-families of European languages?



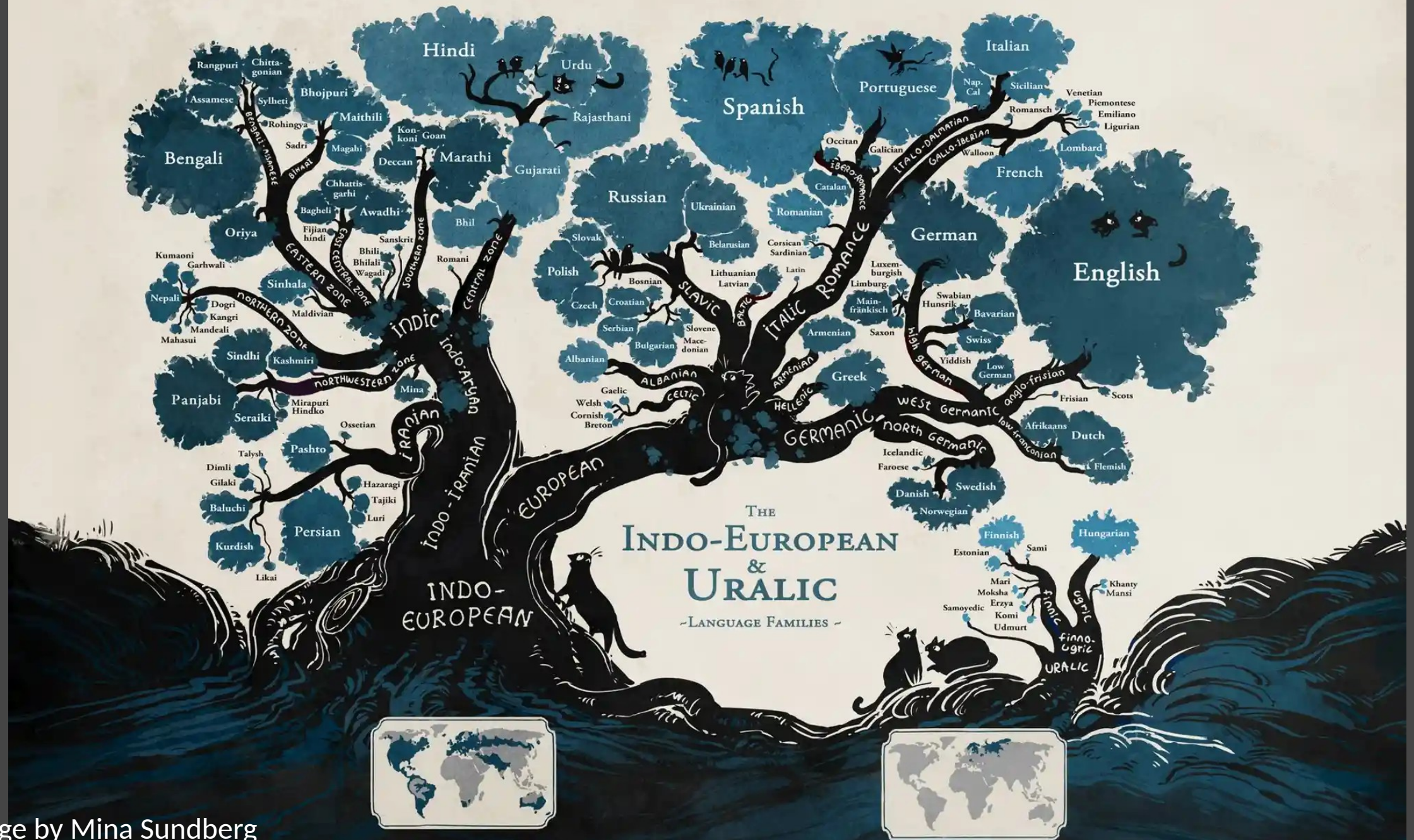


Image by Mina Sundberg

Let's go into the Language Forest...

- Based on the illustration, name three Romance languages.
- Can you guess their ancestral language?
- And now name three Germanic languages.
- Do you know the name of their parental language?



A final challenge...

Look carefully at the following words from different languages. Can you observe any similarities? Would you be able to group some of these words together?

star *to read* *Blumen* *pensar* *numerous* *to last*

durar *to think* *stella* *lesen* *durable* *to bloom*

lectura *número* *flowers* *stellar* *number* *penser*



WoLLoW would like to know...

Why do linguists often use an image of a tree to represent the relationship between different languages?

What is a language family?


What is a proto-language?

How many language families are there, and which are the two largest ones?



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Resources



<https://www.theguardian.com/education/gallery/2015/jan/23/a-language-family-tree-in-pictures>

<https://www.tradoc.fr/en/the-linguistic-family-tree/>

Acknowledgements



Lesson created by
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