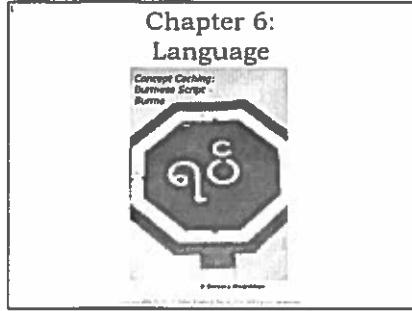
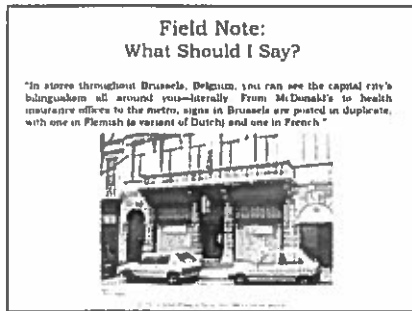


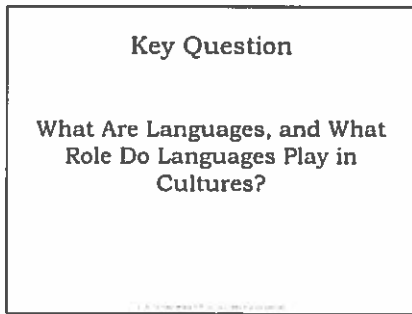
Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3



Slide 4

What Are Languages, and What Role Do Languages Play in Cultures?

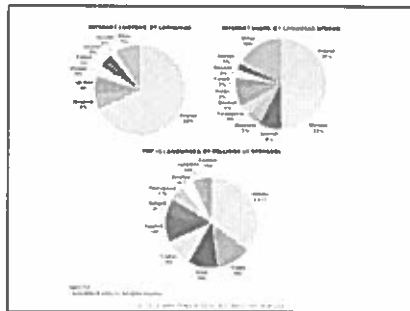
- **Language** is a set of sounds and symbols that is used for communication.
- Language is an integral part of culture.

Language and Culture

- Language reflects where a culture has been and what it values.
- Language makes people in a culture visible to each other and to the world.

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What Are Languages, and What Role Do Languages Play in Cultures?

Language and Culture

- American, Canadian, Australian, Russian, and New Zealand governments had policies of forced assimilation during the twentieth century, including not allowing indigenous peoples to speak native languages.
- Language is so closely tied to culture that people use language as a weapon in cultural conflict and political strife.

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- In 1993, the Quebec government passed a law requiring the use of French in advertising.



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What Are Languages, and What Role Do Languages Play in Cultures?

What is a Language?

- **Mutual intelligibility:**
 - Two people can understand each other when speaking.
 - Is almost impossible to measure
 - Some languages are separate but are mutually intelligible
 - Decision of what a standard language will be has to do with influence and power.

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What Are Languages, and What Role Do Languages Play in Cultures?


Dialects

- Variants of a standard language along regional or ethnic lines
- Differences in vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, cadence, and pace of speech
- **Dialect chains** across space
- Dialects frequently marked by actual differences in vocabulary
- **Isogloss:** geographic boundary within which a particular linguistic feature occurs

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 **thinking**

Linguist Bert Vaux's study of dialects in American English points to the differences in words for common things such as soft drinks and sandwiches. Describe a time when you said something and a speaker of another dialect did not understand the word you used. Where did the person with whom you were speaking come from? Was the word a term for a common thing? Why do you think dialects have different words for common things, things found across dialects, such as soft drinks and sandwiches?

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Key Question⁰¹

Why are languages distributed the way they are?

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Why Are Languages Distributed the Way They Are?

Reconstructing the Vocabulary of Proto-Indo-European and Its Ancient Ancestor

- **Backward reconstruction:** to track sound shifts and hardening of consonants "backward" toward the original language
- **Extinct language,** a language without any native speakers
- **Deep reconstruction:** recreating the language that preceded it
- **Vladislav Illich-Svitych and Aharon Dolgopolsky: Nostratic language**

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Why Are Languages Distributed the Way They Are?

Locating the Hearth of Proto-Indo-European

- German linguist August Schleicher: **language divergence**, where new language forms from old one
- **Language convergence:** collapsing two languages into one
- **Language extinction** occurs when all descendants perish or they choose to use another language (typically occurs over several generations).
- Linguists theorize that the hearth of the Proto-Indo-European language was somewhere in the vicinity of the Black Sea or east-central Europe

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