

Indo-Europeans The **Indo-Europeans** were a group of nomadic peoples who came from the **steppes**—dry grasslands that stretched north of the Caucasus (KAW•kuh•suhs). The Caucasus are the mountains between the Black and Caspian seas. These primarily pastoral people herded cattle, sheep, and goats. The Indo-Europeans also tamed horses and rode into battle in light, two-wheeled chariots. They lived in tribes that spoke forms of a language that we call Indo-European.

Language Family Resemblances				
English	Sanskrit	Persian	Spanish	German
mother	mātár	muhdáhr	madre	Mutter
father	pitár	puhdáhr	padre	Vater
daughter	duhitár	dukhtáhr	hija	Tochter
new	návas	now	nuevo	neu
six	sát	shahsh	seis	sechs

The Indo-European Language Family The languages of the Indo-Europeans were the ancestors of many of the modern languages of Europe, Southwest Asia, and South Asia. English, Spanish, Persian, and Hindi all trace their origins back to different forms of the original Indo-European language.

Historians can tell where Indo-European tribes settled by their languages. Some Slavic speakers moved north and west. Others, who spoke early Celtic, Germanic, and Italic languages, moved west through Europe. Speakers of Greek and Persian went south. The Aryans (AIR•ee•uhnz), who spoke an early form of Sanskrit, penetrated the mountain passes of the Hindu Kush and entered India. Notice the similarities of words within the Indo-European family of languages.

An Unexplained Migration No one knows why these people left their homelands in the steppes. The lands where their animals grazed may have dried up. Their human or animal population may have grown too large to feed. They may also have tried to escape from invaders, or from disease. Whatever the reason, Indo-European nomads began to migrate outward in all directions between 1700 and 1200 B.C. These **migrations**, movements of a people from one region to another, happened in waves over a long period of time.

