

# Chapter 23

6th

**SS6G11** The student will describe the cultural characteristics of Europe.

- a. Explain the diversity of European languages as seen in a comparison of German, English, Russian, French, and Italian.
- b. Describe the major religions in Europe; include Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- c. Explain how the literacy rate affects the standard of living in Europe.

## What Language Do You Speak?



### Word Definition

**diverse:** different and varied

Europe is a continent of diverse languages. Some are in the same language family, so people from one country can often understand the language of people from another country. Many Europeans are bilingual (speak two languages) or multilingual (speak several languages). The native languages in Europe belong to the Indo-European language family. Branches of the Indo-European family include the Germanic languages, Romance languages, and Slavic languages. The Germanic languages and Romance languages use the same alphabet, while the Slavic languages use a Cyrillic alphabet based on ancient Greek letters.



- **Germanic:** Examples include German and English. English is spoken in more parts of the world than any other language.
- **Romance:** Examples include French and Italian. The Romance languages are based on Latin, the language of the ancient Romans.
- **Slavic:** Russian is an example of a Slavic language.



### Essential Skills

Copy statements.

Look online for a map!

Read each clue below. First, fill in the answer at the end of the clue. (Look up things you don't know on a map of Europe.) Then, write G for Germanic, R for Romance, and S for Slavic in the box.

1. This language is spoken in the United States. \_\_\_\_\_
2. This language is spoken in the country that is shaped like a boot. \_\_\_\_\_
3. This language uses an alphabet based on Greek letters. \_\_\_\_\_
4. People who speak this language live directly south of the United Kingdom. \_\_\_\_\_
5. This language is in the same family as English. \_\_\_\_\_

# What's Your Religion?

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Three major religions in Europe include Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

- **Judaism** is the religion and culture of the Jewish people and the first recorded faith to worship only one God. The beliefs and history of Judaism make up the historical foundation of many other religions, including Christianity and Islam.
- **Christianity** is a religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Its sacred scripture is the Bible.
- **Islam** is the religious faith of Muslims founded by Muhammad in the 7th century. Allah is the sole deity and Muhammad was his prophet.

**Christianity** is the dominant religion in both Western Europe and Eastern Europe. There are two major divisions: Catholic and Protestant. The majority of Christians in Europe are Catholic, and are concentrated in the southern region in countries like France, Spain, and Italy. More Protestants are found in northern countries like Germany and the United Kingdom. Most Eastern Europeans (including Russians) practice Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

There have been small populations of Jews in Europe for centuries. Today, most European Jews live in France, the United Kingdom, Russia, and other countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union.

Many Muslims are immigrating to Western Europe, making Islam the fastest growing religion in Europe. Muslim populations are highest in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. There are large Muslim populations in Eastern European countries like Albania and Bosnia.



## Essential Skills *Follow directions.*

Read each statement below. Write J for Judaism, C for Christianity, or I for Islam next to each one.

*Copy Allah.*

- \_\_\_ 1. This faith is the historical foundation for Christianity and Islam.
- \_\_\_ 2. This faith is the dominant religion in Europe.
- \_\_\_ 3. France, Spain, and Italy follow this religion.
- \_\_\_ 4. This religion is the fastest-growing religion in Europe.
- \_\_\_ 5. Most Russians follow this religion.
- \_\_\_ 6. Many followers of this religion live in countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union.
- \_\_\_ 7. Muhammad founded this religion in the 7th century.



# Reading is Essential!

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One factor that has a huge effect on a country's economic health and its citizens' standard of living is the **literacy rate**. Literacy is the ability to read and write. A standard of living is often determined by one's education and income. A country that improves the literacy rate among its citizens will improve the standard of living within that country and improve its economy. Educated and skilled workers are an important factor in a country's economic growth!



**Word Definition**  
**standard of living:**  
measure of a nation's quality of life based on income, education, life expectancy, and other factors

In general, European countries have high literacy rates close to 100 percent and good standards of living. France and Germany are good examples. Both countries have 99 percent literacy rates and high standards of living. Both countries place great emphasis on education and have many universities. The concept of kindergarten to get children learning at an early age was started in Germany.



However, literacy rates do not always tell the whole story. In Russia, for example, there is a high emphasis on education and the literacy rate is 99 percent, but the economy has struggled since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Russian emphasis on science and math education did not provide many students with skills needed in the new market economy. Unemployment was a serious problem. The good news is that change is taking place in Russia, and the standard of living and economy are improving.



## Enrichment

Circle the correct answers below.

Copy question and correct answer.

- The standard of living is determined by:
  - income
  - education
  - both
- Literacy is the ability to:
  - read
  - write
  - both
- A country with a high literacy rate typically has a high \_\_\_\_\_.
  - standard of living
  - death rate
  - number of doctors
- The literacy rate and standard of living in Europe are:
  - low
  - high
  - not measured



## Look-It-Up!

Use the Internet or an encyclopedia to look up the literacy rates for other European countries you are studying, including Belgium, Italy, Poland, Spain, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.

Make a chart on a separate piece of paper. Do you see much difference in their literacy rates?