How do linguistic patterns affect the spread of religion?

Cultural diffusion is the spreading of cultural traits from one group or place to another.

Language: ideas of a religion spread more easily to speakers of similar languages. Religion: often tied to the use of a particular language, the spread of a religion will spread the use of that language. Both: a colonizer can bring both language and religion to a new area (relocation diffusion)

How can one cultural trait influence the spread of another cultural trait? How could language or religion influence the diffusion of the other?

Common language, colonialism, and economic interaction help spread religion.

How are languages and religions distributed?

Click the map URL above to launch the map.

With the Details button underlined, click the button, Show Contents of Map (Content).

Religions diffuse more along lines of latitude than longitude; indigenous religions are located in lightly populated areas.

Click the checkbox to the left of the layer name, Languages Families of the World.

Which language family is the most widely diffused?

Indo-Europeans

How do Patterns of Religion Vary?

Click the button, Bookmarks. Select South America.

Turn the language and religion layers on and off to explore patterns.

Which religions are dominant in South America?

Roman Catholic & Indigenous
Pan the map to North America.

Which religions are dominant in North America?

Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Mormon

What relationship exists between language and religion in North America?

Catholicism is tied to Romance languages, and Protestantism is tied to Germanic languages.

Compare the patterns of European languages and religions.

Click the button, Bookmarks. Select the Europe bookmark.

Turn on only two layers, Major World Religions and Indo-European Language Branches.

What connections do you see between the religions of Europe and the major Indo-European language branches?

Catholicism is tied to Romance languages, Protestantism is tied to Germanic languages, and Eastern Orthodoxy is tied to Slavic languages.

Turn to the layer, Indo-European Language Branches.

Click the other bookmarks.

Which region has the greatest religious diversity?

Africa and Southeast Asia have the greatest diversity.

What factors influence the diffusion of a religion?

Press the button, Measure. Select Distance. Use Miles.

Measure how far Islam has spread east & west from Mecca.

~ 6,700 miles and ~3,800 miles, respectively.

How did physical and human factors serve as barriers and supports for the spread of Islam?

Mountains and cultural differences were barriers to diffusion, whereas plains, rivers, sea access, and cultural linkages enabled it.