Classification of languages

There are three methods of classifying languages. The first is by continent or country, but this geographical grouping ignores differences between languages that evolved separately from each other. The second, by historical development, stresses common evolutionary origins— for example, it maps the relation between Old English and modern English. The third method is by grammatical structure. This can be analytic, stressing word order, agglutinative, which is splitting words into components with different grammatical roles, or inflective, with words based on a root plus a variable component.

The Proto-Indo-European family of languages, the largest, is shown below.