

Grimm's Law & Verner's Corollary

English 315
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What distinguishes the Germanic language family from other I-E languages?

- Large number of words without apparent IE cognates
- Only two tenses: present and preterit (past)
- Weak & strong declensions of adjectives
- Regular stress of the first syllable
- Evidence that some consonants underwent change described by "Grimm's Law"

Grimm's Law



- Formulated by Jacob Grimm, 1827
- I-E stops gradually assumed new sounds [see handout]
- Still, some words didn't follow the pattern exactly. Linguists wondered why.

Verner's Corollary

- Formulated by Karl Verner, 1875
- Suggests that some of the shifts proposed by Grimm were actually intermediate steps [handout]
- So what? Verner's Corollary confirmed Grimm's Law