



UNIT 1 — Celtic Languages

INFO SHEET 1: Celtic Languages

There are generally six Celtic peoples recognised in the world today. They divide into two groups, the **Brythonic (or British) Celts**, and the **Gaelic Celts**.

The **Brythonic Celts** are the Welsh, Cornish and Bretons.

The **Gaelic Celts** are the Irish, Scots and Manx (inhabitants of the Isle of Man).

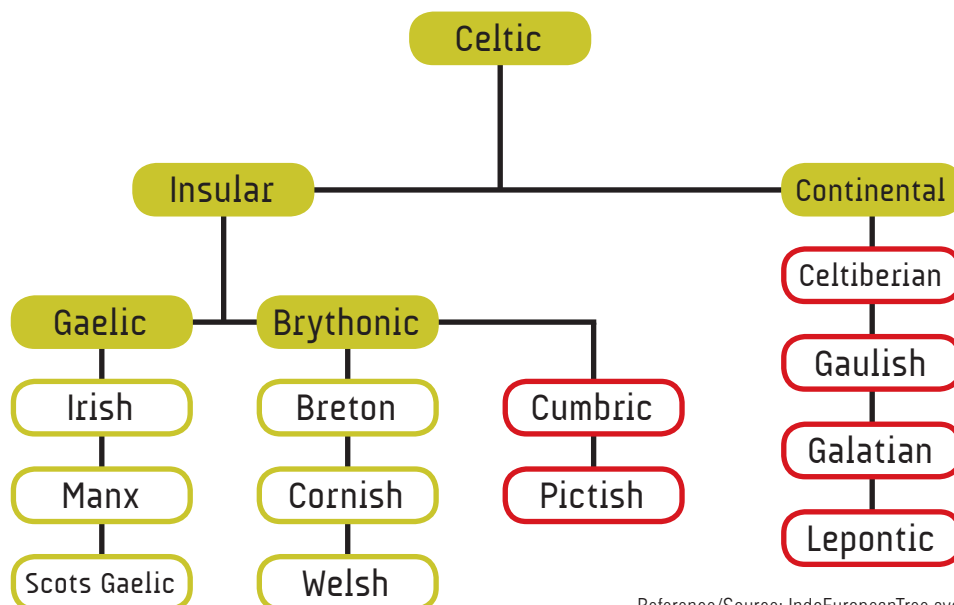
Insular Celtic languages are a group of Celtic languages that originated in Britain and Ireland, in contrast to the Continental Celtic languages of mainland Europe and Anatolia. All surviving Celtic languages are from the Insular Celtic group, including that which is now spoken in Continental Europe; the Continental Celtic languages are extinct.

The six Insular Celtic languages of modern times can be divided into:

- >> the Gaelic languages: Irish, Manx, and Scottish Gaelic
- >> the Brythonic languages: Breton, Cornish, and Welsh (including extinct languages or dialects, Cumbric and generally Pictish).

The “Insular Celtic hypothesis” is a theory that the Brittonic and Goidelic languages evolved together in those islands, having a common ancestor more recent than any shared with the Continental Celtic languages such as Celtiberian, Gaulish, Galatian and Lepontic, among others, all of which are long extinct.

Source: Various, including gaelicmatters.com & Anne Habermehl B.Sc.



Reference/Source: IndoEuropeanTree.svg

Do all Celtic speakers understand each other?

The speakers of the different languages within the in-groups (Goidelic and Brittonic) might understand each other but this is not necessarily true outside of the in-groups. For example Scots-Gaelic speakers can often understand spoken Irish (especially Ulster Irish) and when a speech was given in Brittany in Cornish the crowd could understand it.