

Level: Intermediate (B1)

Age: Teenagers

Time: This lesson can be divided up in various ways to suit the time you have with your students. Below are two options which you can choose from depending on the length of your class.

90 minutes – Complete all activities in **World languages** and **Language survey**.

45 minutes – Complete all activities in either **World languages** or **Language survey**.

Summary: This lesson is divided into two sections: World languages and Language survey. In the lesson, students will:

1. do a quiz about English;
2. read facts about languages;
3. do a questionnaire about language learning experiences;
4. categorize vocabulary.

Key skills: Languages, European languages, giving reasons for doing something

Materials: One copy of each worksheet per student

WORLD LANGUAGES

1. Say *hello* to students in as many different languages as you can. Can students guess what they are? Invite students to say *hello* in any languages they know.

2. Hand out the World languages worksheet. Tell students that in activity 1 they have to identify the languages. Refer them to the phrasebook, which provides ways of expressing guesses, and tell them to use the phrases to discuss their guesses with their partner.

Key: 1. Greek (*calimera*); 2. Dutch; 3. Japanese (*konnichiwa*); 4. Hungarian; 5. German; 6. Mandarin Chinese (*ni hao*); 7. Portuguese; 8. French

3. If you have students who speak any of the languages in the activity, ask them to identify which one and model the pronunciation for the class. For all other languages, elicit guesses from the class, making sure they use the phrases from the phrasebook.

4. Tell students to turn over their worksheets. Ask each student to guess how many people in the world speak English as a first language. Who can get closest to the correct answer? (Answer: *approximately 400 million*). Tell students they are going to find out some more facts and figures about English.

5. Students answer the questions in activity 2.

Key: 1. c; 2. c; 3. b; 4. c; 5. c

6. Students read the text to check their answers. Find out who got most correct. What is the most surprising or interesting fact?

7. Discuss some of the issues raised in the article. For example:

- *Do your students know of any languages that are endangered? (Two examples are Hawaiian and Scottish Gaelic.)*

- *Is it necessary to protect these languages?*

- *How can it be done?*

8. Students discuss their answers to activity 3 in pairs or small groups. Conduct some whole class feedback.

LANGUAGE SURVEY

1. Write the following prompts about languages on the board and ask students to complete them.

- *My mother tongue is ...*
- *I can speak ... well.*
- *I can have a simple conversation in ...*
- *I'd like to learn to speak ...*

When ready, students discuss what they wrote as a class. Are there many differences? What are they?

2. Hand out the Language survey worksheet and tell students to do the questionnaire (activities 1 to 9). It looks at their attitude towards languages and language learning.

3. When they have finished, students can discuss their answers as a class. The questionnaire raises many important issues, such as whether language learning should be compulsory in school, and at what age people should start learning a foreign language.

4. Ask your students to compare their answers to the questionnaire with the information about languages in the EU. Students read through the text, stopping to compare with their answers at the points indicated.

5. When they have finished, ask for their reaction. Did anything surprise them? Do they disagree with anything?

6. Tell students to turn their worksheets over. To check comprehension, dictate the following questions and ask students to try and answer them from memory.

1. How many people live in the EU? (*over 500 million*)
2. What percentage of people in the EU can speak a foreign language well? (*31%*)
3. What's the second most commonly used language in the EU? (*German*)
4. What's the main reason for learning a foreign language? (*to go on holiday*)
5. At what age do the majority of Europeans think it is best to start learning a foreign language? (*age 6*)

7. Tell students to check their answers in the text.

HOMEWORK TASK

Tell students that for homework they are going to interview a partner and write a summary of their responses. They should ask the following questions and any other questions they wish.

- *Do you enjoy learning English? Why? Why not?*
- *What do you like best about learning English?*
- *What do you find most difficult about learning English?*
- *What are you best at in English: speaking, reading, writing or listening?*
- *What is your weakest area: speaking, reading, writing or listening?*
- *What can you do to improve in your weakest area?*

WORLD LANGUAGES

1. Can you identify the languages?

1. Καλημέρα
2. Goede dag
3. こんにちは
4. Jó napot kívánok
5. Guten Tag
6. 你好
7. Bom dia
8. Bonjour



PHRASEBOOK

**Making guesses. Discussing languages.**

- I reckon this one has got to be a European / an Asian language.
- I don't recognize this one at all.
- I'm hesitating between German and Dutch.
- These two look pretty similar so they must be related languages.
- This is a different alphabet from ours.
- This language uses characters instead of letters.
- Do you think this one is Chinese?
- What's your best guess for this one?

2. You're an English student, but how much do you know about English? Test your knowledge by answering these questions.

1. How many people speak American English as a first language compared with British English?
 - a. one person in two
 - b. one person in three
 - c. two people in three
2. How many people like you are learning English around the world?
 - a. 10 million
 - b. 100 million
 - c. 1 billion
3. In total, what fraction of the world's population speaks some English?
 - a. an eighth
 - b. a quarter
 - c. a third
4. How many languages are there in the world?
 - a. 3,000 to 4,000
 - b. 4,000 to 5,000
 - c. 6,000 to 7,000

5. How many languages are in danger of disappearing?
- 500
 - 1,500
 - 2,500

Now read the text below and check your answers.

According to the Welsh linguist David Crystal, there are about 400 million people who speak English as their first language around the world. Two out of three of those people are speakers of American English. Apart from countries like Britain, Canada, Australia and the United States, there are about 70 countries, including Nigeria, Singapore and India, where English is an official language, but not the first language. There are approximately 500 million people in those countries who can speak English.

There are also people who speak English as a foreign language. These are people who learn English at school or in language academies. The British Council has estimated that there are about 1 billion people learning English. Of those, approximately 600 million have a good enough level to communicate.

That means the total number of people who speak English is about 1.5 billion, more than 25 per cent of the world's population. Curiously, in the year 1600 only 4 million people spoke English and the future of the language was in doubt.

While English has grown, other languages haven't been so lucky. There are between 6,000 and 7,000 languages in the world today. Two and a half thousand of those languages are endangered. David Crystal estimates that 'every two weeks, a language dies'. Speaking at the first Universal Forum of Cultures in Barcelona, he said young people need to be made more aware of the situation so that they can help save languages. As the critic and novelist George Steiner said, 'When a language dies, a world dies with it.'

3. The influence of English

- **Which of these English words do you use in your mother tongue?**
 1. cool
 2. OK
 3. weekend
 4. computer
 5. football
 6. film
 7. fashion
 8. business
- **What other English words do you use?**
- **Are there any equivalents from your language? For example, the French use 'week-end' and the equivalent French term is *fin de semaine*.**
- **Do you think it matters that you use English words in your language? Why? Why not?**
- **Are any words from your language used in English?**



LANGUAGE SURVEY

1. How many foreign languages can you have a conversation in? one three or more two**2. What European languages do you speak or study, apart from your mother tongue?** English Polish French Romanian German Spanish Italian other (please specify)**3. What non-European languages do you speak or study?****4. Tick (✓) your main reasons for learning a language.**

- to study in another country
- to meet people from other countries
- to learn about other cultures
- to get a better job in my country
- to work in another country
- to understand music, films and websites in a different language
- for fun
- to use at work or when travelling on business
- to use on holiday
- other

5. Tick (✓) the different ways of learning a foreign language that you have used.

- teaching myself using audio-visual material (CD-ROMs, online, etc.)
- watching films/TV programmes in their original version
- formal conversation language exchanges with a native speaker
- reading books in the language
- visiting a country where people speak the language
- talking informally to a native speaker



- language lessons at school
- language lessons at a language school

6. Is the following statement true or false?

“In general, people in my country are good at speaking other languages.”

7. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“Learning languages should be compulsory in school.”

8. Which two languages, apart from your mother tongue, do you think children should learn?

9. At what age should children start learning another language?



Now read about languages in the EU.

There are over 500 million people from different ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds living in the European Union. 63% of citizens in the EU member states can have a conversation in a language other than their mother tongue, but only 31% say they know that language well. English is the most commonly used language, with 51% speaking it either as their mother tongue or as a foreign language. The other languages most commonly used are German (27%), French (24%), Italian (16%), Spanish (15%), Polish (9%) and Romanian (5%).

Compare with your answers to questions 1–3.

According to a survey conducted by the EU, the main reasons for learning languages are to go on holiday (35%), to use at work (32%) and to work abroad (27%).

Compare with your answers to question 4.

On average, 10% of EU citizens say they have watched films in their original version as a way of learning languages. However, the majority of Europeans (56%) prefer to watch foreign films and programmes dubbed in their own language.

Compare with your answers to question 5.

62% of Britons cannot speak a foreign language, compared with an EU average of 37%. Only 24% of Britons agree with the statement ‘People in my country are good at speaking other languages’, compared with an EU average of 44%.

Compare with your answers to question 6.



In contrast to Britain, where the number of secondary students learning foreign languages has fallen, other European countries have increased their language learning. In the majority of other EU countries, at least 90% of secondary pupils learn English.

Compare with your answers to question 7.

Most British people (71%) think that French is the best foreign language for British children to study, followed by Spanish (39%) and German (34%). Outside Britain, 77% of EU citizens think that children should learn English as their first foreign language.

Compare with your answers to question 8.

The majority of Europeans think that the best time for children to start learning foreign languages is at primary school, from the age of six onwards.

Compare with your answers to question 9.