

College Updates from World View

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World Languages *Resources for Educators*

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Kolik jazyků znáš, tolikrát jsi člověkem.
“You live a new life for every new language you speak.
If you know only one language, you live only once.”
- Czech proverb

As the quote suggests, language is much more than grammar and pronunciation; it is a gateway into another world of understanding, exchange, and ideas. Whether it's a Romanized, Cyrillic, or Arabic alphabet, written words also allow us to see the world as other cultures see it. American citizens, especially students, need to learn, improve, and expand their knowledge of world languages. This issue of *College Updates* will offer facts, resources, and top ten reasons to engage our students in language learning.

WORLD LANGUAGE FACTS



- The world has **6912** living languages.
- Of these languages, nearly **516** are close to extinction.
- The language with the greatest number of speakers is **Mandarin Chinese**.
- The language spoken by the greatest number of non-native speakers is **English** (250 to 350 million non-native speakers).
- **Papa New Guinea** is the country with the most languages spoken- 820 living languages!
- The first language ever written was **Sumerian or Egyptian** (about 3200 BC), and the oldest written languages still in existence are **Chinese** and **Greek** (about 1500 BC).
- The most translated document is the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, which was written by the United Nations in 1948. It has been translated into **321** languages and dialects.

Adapted from www.vistawide.com/languages/why_languages.htm

Top 10 Language Families by Number of Speakers

Data Source: Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 15th ed. (2005).

Language Family	Approx. # of Speakers	% of world population
1. Indo-European	2.562 billion	44.78%
2. Sino-Tibetan	1.276 billion	22.28%
3. Niger-Congo	358 million	6.26%
4. Afro-Asiatic	340 million	5.93%
5. Austronesian	312 million	5.45%
6. Dravidian	222 million	3.87%
7. Altaic	145 million	2.53%
8. Japanese	123 million	2.16%
9. Austro-Asiatic	101 million	1.77%
10. Tai-Kadai	78 million	1.37%
	Total % of world's population	96.4%

TOP TEN REASONS TO LEARN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

1. **To increase global understanding**
2. **To improve employment potential**
3. **To increase native language ability**
4. **To sharpen cognitive and life skills**
5. **To improve chances of entry into university or graduate school**
6. **To appreciate world literature, music, and film**
7. **To make travel more feasible and enjoyable**
8. **To increase understanding of oneself and one's own culture**
9. **To make lifelong friends**
10. **To better connect with parents, students, or peers from other countries.**

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE ASSOCIATIONS



International Mother Language Day

International Mother Language Day, February 21, has been observed since 2000 to promote lingual and cultural diversity and multilingualism. Learn more about celebrating the power of language at www.un.org/en/events/motherlanguageday/.



American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

The ACTFL is the only national organization dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of all languages at all levels of instruction. It is an individual membership organization of more than 9,000 foreign language educators and administrators from elementary through graduate education, as well as government and

industry. Find out more at www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1.



Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP)

TCLP is a cross-cultural program funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State designed to increase the number of Americans teaching and studying Arabic and Mandarin. To find more out about this program, visit www.americancouncils.org/TCLP/.

The Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS)

JNCL-NCLIS represent over 60 national and regional organizations encompassing virtually all areas of the language field: the major and less-commonly taught languages, including English and English as a second language, bilingual education, the classics, linguistics, exchanges, research, technology, and translation. Foreign languages grants are also listed on their site. www.languagepolicy.org



Living Tongues – Institute for Endangered Languages

Half of the world’s languages are likely to vanish in the next 100 years. Minority languages are being increasingly replaced by various politically, economically, or socio-culturally dominant ones. Living Tongues has partnered with National Geographic for a five-year joint project to assist indigenous communities in their struggle for cultural linguistic survival. Learn about and follow the progress of these projects or support them in their efforts at www.livingtongues.org/.

LANGUAGE WEB RESOURCES

WORLD LANGUAGES

This site is a one-stop information website on the world’s most important and populous languages. www.aboutworldlanguages.com/

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC – “Enduring Voices”

This page features an interactive map demonstrating where and to what extent languages are in danger of becoming extinct. travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/enduring-voices/

6 BILLION OTHERS

This website allows students to hear and compare the short testimonies of over 5,000 members of humanity as they answer the same questions about their fears, dreams, ordeals, hopes in their native language (with English subtitles). www.6billionothers.org

THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION LANGUAGE MAP

This site provides an interactive map of where languages are spoken in the United States. arcgis.mla.org/mla/default.aspx

Dialects and Accents

THE NORTH CAROLINA LANGUAGE AND LIFE PROJECT

Learn more about North Carolina’s regional and socio-cultural English dialects.

ncsu.edu/linguistics/ncllp/index.php

DO YOU SPEAK AMERICAN?

This curriculum unit, based on the documentary *Do you speak American?*, examines the origins of regional dialects in the United States and the prevailing stereotypes often associated with certain dialects or accents.

www.pbs.org/speak/

RESOURCES ON LEARNING WORLD LANGUAGES

VISTAWIDE- WORLD LANGUAGE AND A CULTURE

An information source for language learners and language learning on the web. www.vistawide.com/

STARTALK

STARTALK is part of a federal initiative to enhance the national capacity for critical need languages. The goal of the STARTALK program is to increase the number and expertise of students and teachers in critical languages.

startalk.umd.edu/

THE LANGUAGE MENU

Free language resources for teachers. teachers.thelanguagemenu.com/

PEACE CORPS LANGUAGES

Enhance your world language study with authentic resources and lesson plans from Peace Corps Volunteers.

www.peacecorps.gov/wvs/multimedia/language/

MANGO

Check your local library for this unique language learning resource.

www.mangolanguages.com/libraries/

BBC WORLD LANGUAGES

Learn a new language in fun and unique ways off the BBC Language website.

www.bbc.co.uk/languages/



ONLINE VIDEOS & DOCUMENTARIES ON WORLD LANGUAGES

Speaking in Tongues Film- PBS

This documentary shows one city's daring move to expand foreign language education in its schools - Four kids. Four languages. Once city. One world.

speakingintonguesfilm.info/

Enduring Voices – Youtube Channel

The Enduring Voices Project's Youtube Channel provides video updates on language hotspots.
www.youtube.com/enduringvoices

TED TALK: Steven Pinker on language and thought

Stephen Pinker gives viewers a crash course in simple grammar and then proceeds to extrapolate on the not-so-simple topics of human intelligence, human language, and indirect human verbal communication. Most importantly, though, viewers get to hear Pinker tell jokes about guacamole. www.ted.com/talks/view/lang/eng/id/164

Carolina Brogue

The Carolina Brogue is a documentary on the life and language of North Carolina's Outer and Inner Banks, in which residents tell the story of their unique culture and dialect. www.carolinabrogue.com/

ARTICLES AND BOOKS ON LANGUAGE

Difficult Languages: Tongue Twisters

The Economist www5.economist.com/node/15108609

Do You Speak My Language: Considering the Role between Language and Culture

learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/30/do-you-speak-my-language-considering-the-relationship-between-language-and-culture/

OMG! Exploring Slang

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/04/07/omg-exploring-slang/>

What Will Globalization Do to Languages? A Freakonomics Quorum

www.freakonomics.com/2008/05/28/what-will-globalization-do-to-languages-a-freakonomics-quorum/

The Mother Tongue: English and how it got that way by Bill Bryson

American Regional Dialects: A word geography by C. Carver