

YET ANOTHER 20 THINGS

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT THE WORLD OF LANGUAGES

ENDANGERED UNWRITTEN LANGUAGES

The majority of the languages and dialects in the world are unwritten. In Mexico there are over 100 unwritten indigenous languages and dialects, and India has over 1,000. A study by the MIT estimates that 3,000 of the world's languages are endangered because few children are learning them.

EIGHT MAJOR ALPHABET GROUPS

are in use today: Arabic, Hebrew/ Aramaic, Armenian, Brahmi, Cyrillic, Georgian, Greek, Latin.

Niamh, Aoife, Fionnuala or Saoirse are all

IRISH NAMES,



but can you pronounce them correctly? On edl.ecml.at/irishnames listen to how these and many other names from Ireland sound!





In **FRENCH** there are 16 ways of writing the sound "o" within a word: au, aux, aud, auds, aut, auts, eau, eaux, o, ô, ods, op, ops, os, ot, ots.

Ο ο Ω ω

In the **GREEK** alphabet, the letters omicron and omega are "connected": the first literally means "little o" (o mikron) and the latter is referring to "great o" (o mega).



The **SPANISH** word for olive (aceituna) actually comes from the Arabic word "zaytun" (زيتون). This tells us something interesting about the connection between these two cultures, since both words refer to the olive itself as well as the oil that comes from it.

The two countries with the most native **GERMAN** speakers outside of Europe are Brazil  and the United States .

THE MOST CONFUSING BIRD IN THE WORLD



is called "French chicken" in Greek, "peru" in Portuguese, "hindi" in Turkish and "turkey" in English.

FALSE FRIENDS



are words or phrases in two languages that resemble each other but have different meanings. E.g. the Italian "squisito" means *delicious* while the Portuguese "esquisito" means *strange*.



The **INDUS SCRIPT** is the oldest script that has not yet been deciphered. It was used around 2600 BC in the Indus valley in today's Pakistan. Maybe you can be the one to crack it and become a decoding hero!

HELLO AND BYE

The informal Polish salutation "cześć" can be used for both "hello" and "goodbye". The same is true for the Italian "ciao", French "salut" and Austrian "servus".

תִּירְבֵּעַ

HEBREW is the most successfully revived language in history. It wasn't used as a mother tongue and in everyday speech for about 15 centuries – until its revival in the 19th century. Hebrew now has over 9 million speakers.



Many languages have their fair share of untranslatable words, e.g. the **SWEDISH**

Gökotta (to rise at dawn in order to go out and listen to the birds sing), the **ITALIAN** *culaccino* (the wet mark left by a glass on a table) or the **DUTCH** *niksen* (sitting down and doing nothing at all).

In **FRENCH** the word for potato is "pomme de terre", meaning "apple of soil", while in **ITALIAN** the word for tomato is "pomodoro", meaning "golden apple" (pomo + d'oro).



In **GERMAN** many words are created by combining two existing words: Vorfreude (before + happiness), Handschuh (hand + shoe), Zweisamkeit (two + loneliness), Drahtesel (wire + donkey), Luftschloss (air + castle), Lampenfieber (lamps + fever), Ohrwurm (ear + worm), Schadenfreude (damage + joy). Can you work out their exact meaning?

გამარჯობა

In **GEORGIAN** words are usually pronounced exactly the way you write them, as each letter has a single, fixed pronunciation and in most cases the first syllable of a word is stressed. This makes it relatively easy for foreigners to learn. That is, once you have mastered the Georgian characters! ღარმატკებობი!

The word **JANUARY** can be traced back to Janus, the Roman god of portals, gates, and doorways. The words "janitor" and "janela" (Portuguese for "window") have the same origin.



Icelanders buy so many books as gifts for Christmas that they have a word for it: "Christmas Book Flood" (jólabókafloð)

SCRABBLE is the king of all word games!

Invented in 1931, it currently exists in 38 different language versions, including Faroese and Latin. The best players even battle it out in world championships!

Have you ever heard of **ARAGONESE**? Once widespread, Aragonese is now a hidden gem of Northern Spain. Spoken by around 11,000, it's a fascinating cousin of Spanish with its own unique vocabulary and sounds.

European Day of Languages 26 September

