

## In Focus 2 - Speed Reading Unit 2

### The Killer Language—Disappearance of World Languages

Languages are like colors in a big painting called Earth. They make our world rich and interesting. But, did you know that day by day, languages are lost? When a language is lost, we lose more than just words; we lose a culture's way of life and history. We also lose the view of the world of the people who spoke that language. This is a big problem. Let's discover why languages are being lost and what it means for our world.

First, let's understand what a language is. A language is a system of communication. It can be spoken, like English or Spanish, or it can use signs, like American Sign Language. There are about 7,000 languages in the world. But, every two weeks, one language is lost. This is very fast. What causes language loss? One main reason is that fewer people speak them. This can happen when communities who speak less common languages shift to more common ones for better job chances or wider communication. When people stop using a language, it becomes endangered. Like animals that are endangered, a language can become extinct. This means it is no longer spoken.

There are many reasons why people stop using a language. Sometimes, people who speak a small language learn a bigger language. They do this to find jobs or to talk to more people. Big languages like English, Chinese, and Spanish are spoken by many people. They are like big cities where everyone wants to live. Small languages are like small villages that people leave. Another reason is that some countries have many languages. But, they choose one language for school and government. This is easier for the country but hard for small languages. For example, in Papua New Guinea, there are over 800 languages. But, the government uses only three.

What happens when a language is lost? We lose more than just words. Each language has its own way of seeing the world. It has stories and knowledge. When a language dies, we lose this view of the world. It's like losing a color from a painting. The painting is still there but has less color.

What can we do to save languages? First, we can learn about them. When people know about a problem, they can help. Some people record languages and put them online, so more people can learn about them. We can also encourage people to keep speaking their language. In some places, people are teaching small languages in schools. This helps children learn the language of their grandparents, keeping the language alive. Finally, we can value all languages. Every language is important. They all add something very special to our world.

In conclusion, the disappearance of languages is a big problem. It's like losing the colors from a painting. We need to work together to save languages. We can learn about them, encourage people to speak them and value all languages. This way, our world will stay full of color and interesting.

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When you have finished, write your time in the box.

Now, go to the next page and answer the questions. **Do NOT look back at the text.**

**Now, let's test your understanding of the text with some questions.**

1. What are languages compared to?
  - A) Colors
  - B) History
  - C) A view of the world
  - D) A system of communication
2. How often does a language disappear?
  - A) Every day
  - B) Every week
  - C) Every two weeks
  - D) Every month
3. How many languages are there in the world?
  - A) About 7,000
  - B) About 700
  - C) About 70
  - D) About 7
4. What are languages in danger compared to?
  - A) A new language
  - B) Endangered animals
  - C) A language that is no longer spoken
  - D) A language spoken by grandparents
5. Why do people sometimes stop using a small language?
  - A) To find jobs
  - B) Because they forget it
  - C) Because it is too hard
  - D) Because it is not beautiful
6. What are big languages like English and Spanish compared to in the text?
  - A) Small villages
  - B) Big cities
  - C) Forests
  - D) Oceans
7. What happens when a language dies?
  - A) We get a new language.
  - B) It becomes more popular.
  - C) We lose a view of the world.
  - D) It becomes easier to learn.
8. What is one way to save languages?
  - A) Teach them to grandparents.
  - B) Record them and put them online.
  - C) Use them on TV and other media.
  - D) Write books in them.
9. Why is it important to teach small languages in schools?
  - A) To make schools bigger
  - B) To help children learn the language of their grandparents
  - C) Because it is a rule
  - D) To make learning harder
10. What is the main message of the text?
  - A) Learning languages is hard.
  - B) All languages are important.
  - C) Big languages are better.
  - D) Small languages are not useful.