



European Day of Languages

Assembly summary

Aim

- To increase awareness of the European Day of Languages
- To increase awareness of the wide range of languages spoken across Europe
- To understand the benefits of learning and experiencing new languages and cultures.

Context

Started in 2001, on **26th September** we recognise language and culture through the annual European Day of Languages. There are 24 official languages spoken across Europe.

The video explores the following:

- Some of the facts and figures about languages spoken across Europe
- Real stories from young people who have embraced new languages, using them to work and study across Europe
- How professional athletes like Jude Bellingham embrace languages as they play across Europe
- The benefits of learning new languages and exploring new cultures, for example for travel, careers, friendships or just fun.

This video can be used as part of an assembly or classroom discussion. It includes elements of the following curriculum standards:

English National Curriculum

- KS3 Modern Foreign Language: Grammar and vocabulary; linguistic competence.
- KS4 Citizenship: Diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the
- need for mutual respect and understanding.
- OFSTED: Communication and language skills.

Scottish Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

- Languages: Confidence in knowing other languages and understanding other cultures are skills for students as they prepare to live and work in a global society.
- Social Studies: People, past events and societies; people in society, economy and business.

Northern Ireland National Curriculum

- KS3: Modern Languages: It prepares students for moving comfortably between a range of cultural environments.
- KS4: Modern Languages: It provides some understanding of the richness of language and literature in any culture as a means of communication and creative expression.
- KS3 and KS4: Learning for Life and Work: Local and global citizenship.

Curriculum for Wales (CfW)

- Learning Purposes: Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society
- Areas of Learning and Experience: Languages, literacy and communication.

Possible discussion points before watching the video

Ask students if they know the most common languages spoken, first in the world and then in Europe. [By numbers the most common in Europe is Russian, and in the World it is English (native and non-native) or Mandarin Chinese (native)]

Locate as many countries as possible that are part of Europe on a map

Discuss with students the languages that are spoken in different countries across Europe, some are obvious, some countries speak more than one language

Ask students for examples of jobs or careers that would benefit from more than one language. Students may not be aware of roles that benefit from being able to speak two or more languages. These could be linked to travel, security, medical, educational or government careers.

Introduce key terminology, including:

- **indigenous:** linked directly to a place, or having always been there
- **linguistic:** the study of language
- **bilingual:** a person being able to speak two languages
- **multilingual:** a person that can speak multiple languages
- **translation:** the conversion of text in one language to another language

Possible discussion questions after watching the video

Do we teach enough about languages and culture in school?

Are there any times when you wish you could speak another language?

What other subjects link directly to languages? An example is designing international products.

How can I improve my language skills outside of the classroom; do the popular smartphone language apps really help?

How can learning new languages help to reduce prejudice and discrimination?

How does the language you speak shape your identity?

Many minority languages are disappearing. What could the government do to prevent this, should the government prioritise minority languages if only a few people speak them? Should everyone in Europe speak one language? What would that language be?

Activity ideas

Students could host their own international film festival and invite local councillors or the local mayor in. Is your town/city twinned with one in a European country? Find a host school and make cultural links with them.

Students could set up language corners around the school, each group taking a European language and teaching some key phrases and some key cultural information. Students could find out how many European students are in their school and create an EU map of the school.

Create a debate afternoon: Technology can never replace the skill of learning a language. The government should ensure everyone in the UK can speak at least two languages. [Why not become a European School Ambassador school?](#)

Divide the class into groups to research different employment opportunities that benefit from being able to speak two or more languages. Students could look up entry requirements, salaries, career progression, look at the Labour market information (LMI) which careers require languages? Create an business project that needs multi-lingual marketing create slogan and a brand name in different languages

Students could plan their own language and culture club, learning languages not taught in schools. There may be students with English as an additional language who might wish to lead a club on their own language skills.

The following links could be used as research or provided to students after the assembly.

[BBC Bitesize European Day of Languages \(primary and secondary resources\)](#)

[The official European Day of Languages website](#)

[European Commission – 26 September – European Day of Languages](#)

[Language Games – created by the European Parliament](#)

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Possible assembly framework (Hall or classroom)

1. Entry

Excerpts from different European national anthems could be played.

2. Introduction

Potential starting questions:

- How many national anthems did the students recognise as they entered? [Ask for responses.]
- How many of you speak more than one language? [Ask for responses.]
- How many of you speak a language not taught in this school? [Ask for responses.]
- Why is learning another language a good idea?
- Can you name any careers that require language skills? (International business, tourism)
- If you could spend a day in a different European country which would you choose and why?

3. Play the video

The final words are: '*...a world of opportunities - for travel, career, friendships or just for fun!*'

The duration is: 3mins 50secs

4. After the video – time to talk

An opportunity to discuss pupils' responses to the film. See above.

Some initial reaction questions to the video may include:

- How many official languages are spoken in Europe?
- What is an 'indigenous' language and how many are spoken across Europe?
- What are the most commonly spoken language in Europe and how many millions of people speak them? [Students may be surprised to hear Russian being stated as the most common; explain that it is the native language of many eastern European countries.]
- What are the social, economic and political impacts of sharing culture and language across different countries?

5. Closing the assembly

Some reflections on Pride Month and the need to support any community that still feel hate and intolerance in the 21st Century. [These questions should be considered by teachers before the assembly.]

- Would you like to learn another language, including ones not taught in this school? [Ask for hands up.]
- Other than in school, how else can we learn about other languages and cultures? [Ask for responses.]
- What things can happen if we don't have any experience of another country's culture or language? [Ask for responses.]
- Name a job that benefits from employees being able to speak more than one language. [Ask for responses.]
- How could knowing another language help you in future? [Ask for responses.]

6. Music

You could play suitable music as pupils leave in silence.