

Celebrating language diversity



Department of Local Government,
Sport and Cultural Industries
Office of Multicultural Interests



WESTERN
AUSTRALIAN
MUSEUM

NEW MUSEUM
FOR WA

Contents



Contents

- 1 List of resources contained in the kit

Welcome

- 2 How to use the kit

Diverse WA

- 3 One State, many languages
- 3 See, hear and experience languages
- 4 Most common languages in WA
- 6 New and emerging communities
- 7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- 8 Auslan and sign language
- 9 Translating and interpreting

Benefits

- 10 Benefits of learning languages
- 11 Famous multilingualists
- 12 Celebrate!
- 13 Ready to learn?

Resources

- 14-15 In the classroom - WA Curriculum links

Partners

- 16 Office of Multicultural Interests
- 16 Western Australian Museum

Modules

Early

- 18-23 Language activities for early learners

Intermediate

- 25-33 Language activities for intermediate learners

Advanced

- 35-41 Language activities for advanced learners

The Office of Multicultural Interests and the WA Museum acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Western Australia and pay respect to elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the diversity that exists in languages and that the spelling of words may also vary. We aim to be inclusive of all nations and welcome feedback to ensure this is reflected in all of our work.

Welcome

The Western Australian Museum and the Office of Multicultural Interests are delighted to present this language learning resource.

We have partnered together for Languages Week to recognise and celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity of our State, and to promote language learning within our community.

Languages Week is held in the second week of August each year and is designed to raise awareness of the benefits of language, and highlight the linguistic diversity in our community.

Around 240 languages and dialects are spoken in Western Australia and ours is one of the most culturally diverse States in Australia.

With an increasingly multicultural community and interconnected world, learning a language is becoming an even more essential skill for life.

We have developed this learning kit to encourage you to find out more about Western Australia's diverse communities, and the many cultures and languages that make up our vibrant State.



How to use the kit

This resource kit has been designed to be used by anyone interested in learning and exploring languages.

We've included activities that can be used by parents to learn along with your children and families, and for teachers with your students. Whatever your age or ability you can have fun learning languages together!

The activities are divided into three sections:

1 Early

2 Intermediate

3 Advanced

We've highlighted the links to **WA Curriculum** Pre-primary to Year 10 subject areas and **General Capabilities** in the In the Classroom section.

The activities have been developed using a range of languages so feel free to choose the language you are most interested in, or studying, and tailor the activity to that language. There are a number of programs, apps and links to assist you as well.

Click on the bold words in this document to link to suggested external websites.

Looking for more? Feel free to contact the WA Museum or Office of Multicultural Interests for more information and resources.

Happy learning!

Diverse WA

One State, many languages

Western Australia is home to people of many cultures – in fact our State is one of the most culturally diverse places in Australia.

Around 240 languages are spoken in Western Australia. These include the many languages and dialects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the languages of communities who have migrated and settled here over generations, and our most recent migrants and refugees who come from all corners of the globe.

These voices, accents and intonations can be heard across our vast State, creating a rich tapestry of stories that make up our community and reflect the spirit of what it means to be Western Australian.

See, hear and experience languages

Languages are all around us. In Western Australia you can experience languages in many ways:

On a road trip



The Welcome to Katanning sign includes many languages representing the community.
©Creative Spaces

At a festival



Aboriginal man dancing.
©Wildlight Photo Agency/Alamy Stock Photo

In a public place



Sign offering a free interpreter service in the waiting room of the Emergency Department, Princess Margaret Hospital for Children.
©State Library of WA | BA2493/1564

At a religious service



Sudanese Dinka church service at St Anselm of Canterbury Anglican Church, Kingsley.
©State Library of WA | W3R1784

In a classroom



Frances Kofod conducting the Mirima Knowledge Cycle, Kununurra
©State Library of WA | BA2840/79

In a workplace



WA Museum staff sharing food, language and culture during Harmony Week.
©WA Museum

Diverse WA

Quick Thinking

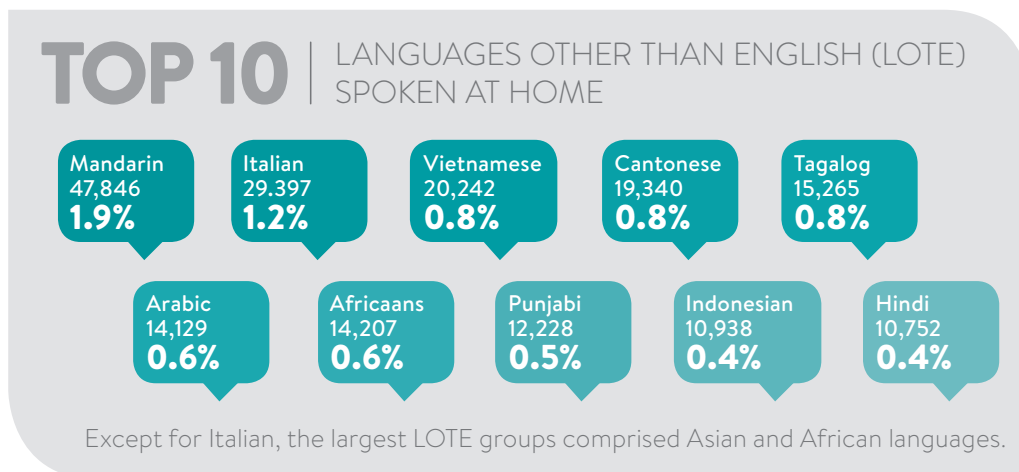
Can you list five examples where you have heard or experienced different languages in WA?

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

Most common languages in WA

In Western Australia, the dominant language is English, but around 17.7 per cent of Western Australians speak a language other than English at home.

Today, the most frequently spoken languages (other than English) are:



The number of people speaking these languages has changed over time. This is due to the mix of people migrating to WA, population increases and changes, and the trend to maintain and revive languages.

Quick Thinking

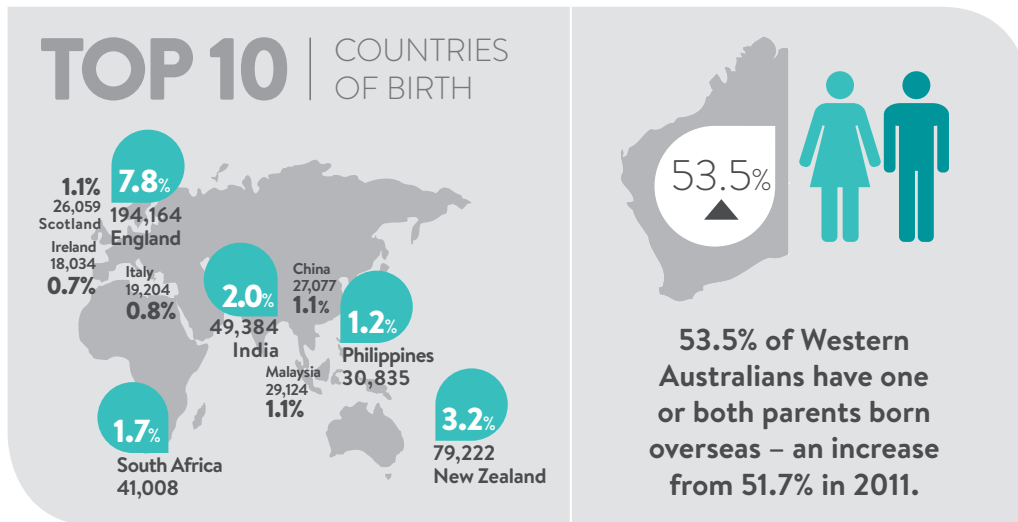
How many people do you know who speak these languages fluently?

.....

Diverse WA

For the first time since records have been kept **(Census data)** the number of people in WA who were born in a country where a language other than English is spoken outweighs the number of those born in an English speaking country!

In Western Australia more than half the people who live here have a parent, or both parents, who were born overseas.



Diverse WA

New and emerging communities

New and emerging communities are those which are not yet strongly established in Australia.

They tend to be the most recent migrants or refugees, many of whom arrived in the country through humanitarian programs or through family visa streams.

Some of the newest communities in WA include people from the following countries:

COUNTRY	LANGUAGES SPOKEN
Afghanistan	Hazaraghi, Dari, Persian and Pashto
Albania	Albanian, Italian
Burma	Burmese, Karen, Chin Haka
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Swahili, French
Eritrea	Arabic, Tigrinya
Ethiopia	Amharic, Tigrinya, Oromo, Somali
Iraq	Arabic, Kurdish
Libya	Middle Eastern Semitic languages
Republic of Congo	French, Lingala
Somalia	Somali, Arabic
South Sudan	Sudanese Arabic, Dinka, Nuer, Bari, Acholi and many others
Syria	Arabic, Hebrew

Quick Thinking

Many languages that were once 'emerging' are now among the most widely spoken in Western Australia.

What do you think our State's language landscape might look like in 20 years' time?
Which languages do you think will be in the top ten in 2030?

Diverse WA

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages

There are around 100 distinctly different Aboriginal languages spoken around Western Australia. Many have a range of dialects and are spoken across a number of regions.

Language is an important aspect of Aboriginal cultural heritage and knowledge. Within language groups there are special stories and knowledge that share important information about the country, peoples and ancestors of cultural groups.

Aboriginal languages have developed and survived over thousands of years even though language knowledge and sharing has been broken due to European settlement and displacement of people and communities.

However some languages have only a few speakers left. The **Wunanbal** language group in the Kimberley has less than 10 known speakers.

Around Australia, and here in WA, language revival projects are being delivered in an effort to share and revitalise traditional languages such as the Noongar Place Names Project being delivered by Community Arts Network (CAN).

Through language revival projects Aboriginal people are supporting and teaching the next generation of language speakers, promoting bilingual community and learning programs.



Sandra Harben is a Whadjuk, Nyoongar, Ballardong woman. Her moort (family) are from Brookton in WA.

She speaks Nyoongar language and teaches children Nyoongar stories, culture and language.

She says it is absolutely important to keep speaking language, to revive language and keep it alive.

“When I speak Nyoongar I feel very connected to my culture. I feel connected to my old people, my old ancestors. Knowing that I speak the language that they spoke more than 40,000 years ago, it’s amazing, I feel empowered and I feel really, really proud.”



Listen to Gina Williams, Nyoongar musician, sing *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* as part of the **Lullabies Project with CAN**.



Diverse WA

Auslan and sign language

There are around 130 sign languages used by Deaf communities around the world, with **Auslan** being most common in Australia.

Auslan is short for Australian sign language. It was recognised as an official language by the Australian Government in 1991.

It's a visual form of communication that uses hand, arm and body movements to convey meaning. Auslan is quite different from English and has its own grammar, structure and syntax.

Auslan has developed some distinct characteristics (in particular, some unique signs) since it first began to be used in Australia in the nineteenth century. Like all languages Auslan continues to evolve in response the needs of its community.



Shannon Scarovaci was born Deaf and was educated in the oral system until a teenager. Mixing with the Deaf community, its culture and embracing Auslan opened a new world for him.

Shannon and his Deaf partner are proud parents of three beautiful Deaf children, whose first language is Auslan.

This wonderfully expressive visual language enables them to live full and happy lives; they are able to be part of their community mixing in both Deaf and hearing worlds. As a family they feel connected and 'whole'. Auslan is integral to their identity and who they are, and it enables

them to express their feelings, emotions and true sense of themselves.

Seeing my children express their desires, frustrations and ambitions through sign language is a delight, allowing them to fulfill their life desires and ambitions as proud members of the Deaf community.



Practise Auslan with these **free posters** from the Western Australian Association of the Deaf Inc.

Diverse WA

Translating and interpreting

If you find it hard to communicate in English or need to have a document changed to English from another language, help is available to you.

Interpreters convert sign language or spoken words from one language to another to provide meaning for people. This involves listening to, understanding and memorising information in the original 'source' language, and sharing it back in another language.

Interpreters assist people in many ways including day to day activities such as at medical appointments or community meetings or at

official events such as gatherings and presentations.

Translators convert written text from one language into another. Time is needed to allow for corrections and modifications to ensure that meaning is clear and accurate.

In Western Australia there are many ways you can **find an interpreter or translator**, or **learn to become one**.



Hala Soliman speaks English and Arabic and is completing a Diploma of Interpreting. This will give her formal accreditation, although she has already been interpreting informally for about 15 years through her work in education, welfare and community sectors.

Hala says that working as an interpreter can be very varied. She has assisted intensive language students, disadvantaged women at a women's support centre, and ex-pat families working in the oil and gas industry.

It gives me a great satisfaction to know that I am able to make someone's life easier or happier by facilitating communication.

Did You Know?

Interpreters convert speech meaning from one language to another verbally.
Translators convert written text.

Benefits

Benefits of learning languages

Learning another language brings with it many personal, social and economic benefits including:

- **Helping us communicate** with friends, family and community in a way they are familiar and comfortable with.
- **Bringing people together** and sharing culture, knowledge and stories. Sharing language also improves your health and wellbeing by connecting people and communities.
- Helping us **understand another culture**. There are many expressions and phrases that are unique to some cultures.
- **Challenging our thinking**. Interacting with speakers of other languages, whether at home or on holidays, can help us see things from different perspectives and learn more about our own world.
- Opening up a world of **employment opportunities** in Australia and abroad! Even if you are not perfectly fluent, knowing another language is a skill that is valued by employers.
- Improving and **training our brain**. Memory, language structure and thinking in different ways are skills that can be applied to other learning and life areas.
- **Putting us in touch** with people from around the world and learning more about other cultures and countries.
- Helping us **show respect** by acknowledging and recognising that cultures, languages and people are diverse and unique!



Anna Harrison is the Chief Executive Officer of Umbrella Community Care which provides aged care to all communities.

Anna is a proud Western Australian of Polish heritage. She speaks Polish, English and Russian, and is learning Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Hungarian.

Anna says it's good to learn a bit from every language because it connects people and helps you make friends.

I can see the smile in the faces of my clients when I speak to them in their language. Even if it's three or five or six words, it doesn't matter how many, it creates a moment and people open up and they feel like you belong with them.

Did You Know?

The name for a person who speaks many languages is a 'polyglot'.

Benefits

Famous multilingualists

Are you ready to join the ranks of other multilingual people?

PERSON	LANGUAGES SPOKEN
Novak Djokovic, tennis champion	Serbian, English, German, Italian and French
Nikola Tesla, inventor and engineer	Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Czech, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, and Latin
Pope John Paul II	Polish, Slovak, Russian, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Ukrainian, English, and Latin
Natalie Portman, actor	Hebrew, English, Spanish, German and Japanese
Shakira, musician	Spanish, English, Italian, Portuguese, Catalan
Queen Silvia of Sweden	Swedish, German, Portuguese, French, Spanish, English and the Swedish Sign Language
Ludwig Zamenhof, Nobel Peace Prize nominee and inventor of the international language, Esperanto	Russian, Yiddish, English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Polish, Volapük ...plus Esperanto
Your name:	What languages do you speak?
	What languages would you like to speak?

Quick Thinking

Can you think of any other notable multilingualists?

Benefits

Celebrate!

Each year people in Western Australia gather together to take part in festivals and special events that celebrate our cultural diversity.

Language, dance, song, costume and food are often shared and people from all cultures and communities are welcomed together.

Here are just some of the events we can all **participate in:**

EVENT	USUALLY HELD
Chinese Lunar New Year	January–February
International Mother Tongue Day	February
Tet – Vietnamese New Year Celebration	February
Holi – Hindu Spring Festival	February
Jambo Africa Festival	February–June
Tangata Pacifica – Perth's Polynesia Festival	February
Harmony Week	March
Songkran – Thai New Year Celebration	March
Buddha's Birthday	April-May
Samoa Independence Day	May
Eid Milan	June
NAIDOC Week	July
International Film Festival	July
Languages Week	August
National Week of Deaf People	September
International Day of Sign Language	September
Bonjour Perth Festival	October
Diwali Festival	October–November

Check out this **calendar of cultural and religious dates** to find out when some national days, religious holidays and other significant days are celebrated.

But remember – there is no need to limit exploring other cultures and languages to just one day or week!

Benefits

Ready to learn?

There are many ways to learn a language. It doesn't matter how you go about it – it just matters that you have a go!

Here are some ideas:

- Install and use a language app
- Find a **class**
- Join a club
- Read books and check out resources available at your local library or at the State Library of WA:
Community Languages Collection
- Attend cultural events in your area:
omi.wa.gov.au
- Meet people who teach languages, supply resources and provide activity ideas:
Modern Language Teacher's Association of Western Australia
- Seek out multi language programs and activities at your WA Museum: **museum.wa.gov.au**

Try some or all of these activities with your kids, students or friends!



Set a learning goal today!

Challenge yourself to learn five (5) words every day.
How many words will you know in a year?

Resources

In the classroom – WA Curriculum links

This languages resource kit provides students with the opportunity to develop and demonstrate the following **general capabilities** from the **WA Curriculum**:

- Literacy
 - Numeracy
 - Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
 - Critical and creative thinking
 - Personal and social capability
 - Ethical understanding
 - Intercultural understanding
-

Resources

The activities in this kit can be incorporated into the **WA Curriculum Pre-primary to Year 10 subject areas** as follows:

ACTIVITY	HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION	ENGLISH	HASS	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE	LANGUAGES	TECHNOLOGIES	THE ARTS
EARLY LEARNERS								
Bilingual book hunt		✓	✓			✓		
My special word	✓	✓				✓		✓
Creatures and features		✓		✓	✓	✓		
Unique sayings		✓	✓			✓	✓	
Who is in your neighbourhood		✓	✓			✓		
Sign me a rainbow		✓				✓		✓
INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS								
New and emerging communities in WA		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Welcome wall		✓	✓			✓		✓
Almost French		✓	✓			✓		
Top 10 words dictionary		✓				✓		
What do you think?		✓				✓		
It all equals the same				✓		✓		
Traditional dress		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
It looks like 'welcome'	✓	✓				✓		✓
ADVANCED LEARNERS								
Cook up a storm	✓			✓		✓	✓	
Beautiful words						✓		✓
Debate it		✓						
Endangered languages		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Building positive communities	✓							
Language and Science				✓	✓	✓		
Hello!						✓		

Partners

Office of Multicultural Interests

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) is a division of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

Its key role is to advise the Minister on the development of State Government policies and programs to achieve the full potential of multiculturalism.

OMI develops strategies that include everyone – culturally diverse communities, the wider community, business and industry groups, government and non-government agencies—to help develop a society that values and maximises the benefits of its cultural diversity. Its strategies assist organisations to develop policies, programs and services that are accessible and responsive to the needs of a diverse community.

For more information visit omi.wa.gov.au



Department of **Local Government,
Sport and Cultural Industries**
Office of **Multicultural Interests**

Western Australian Museum

The Western Australian Museum is the State's premier cultural organisation, housing WA's scientific and cultural collections.

For more than 120 years the Museum has been making the State's natural and social heritage accessible and engaging through research, exhibitions and public programs.

WA Museum staff research and care for the State's collections of more than 8.5 million objects and specimens in the areas of natural sciences and cultural heritage.

The WA Museum operates five public museums and is developing a New Museum in the heart of the Perth Cultural Centre. Scheduled to open in 2020, it will share the stories of Western Australia's people and places, acting as a gateway for visitors to explore the extraordinary history, distinctiveness, creativity and diversity of our State and region.

For more information visit museum.wa.gov.au



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