

**1. Languages**

This week's lesson focuses on the subject of languages. The 'European Day of Languages', aimed at encouraging language learning in the countries of the European Union, takes place every year on 26<sup>th</sup> September.

**Level**

Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level A2-B1 and above)

**How to use the lesson**

1. Brainstorm on the subject of the languages. You could ask students why they are studying English, and what they find particularly difficult, or enjoyable, about it. Do any of the students speak any other foreign languages? If so, how would they compare the experience of learning these languages with that of learning English?
2. Hand out Worksheet A and give the students five to ten minutes to read through the text, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary.
3. When the time is up, divide the students into pairs and hand out copies of Worksheet B, in which they have to answer different types of comprehension question based on the text.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Keeping the students in their pairs, tell them they are going to look at some statements about languages and decide if they are true or false. They are then going to have to 'bet' anything from 10 to 50 points on their guesses.
6. Give each pair a copy of Worksheet C and ask them to read and discuss the statements. In the first column after the statement they should write T (true) or F (false). In the second column they have to write the number of points they are willing to bet on their answer (10 points if they are forced to guess, going up to 50 if they are very confident about the answer).
7. After the pairs have given their answers, it's time to score. Each pair calls out their answer and how many points they have bet. If they have answered correctly, students enter their points in the final column (points won). If they have answered incorrectly, they should enter their points in the third column (points lost). At the end, students subtract the total of the third column from the total of the fourth column to give the total number of points they have won. The pair with the most points wins.

## Answers

### Part A

#### 1

1. Paul finds the grammar difficult.
2. Because her fiancé is from India, and she is going there soon to meet some of his family.
3. Because she doesn't think the students care enough about foreign languages.
4. Because English is the main language of international business, and in most of the world's tourist destinations the locals are able to speak at least a bit of English.
5. Because China is growing very fast as an economic power.

#### 2

1. All of them.
2. Louise

#### 3

1. F 2. D 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. F 7. T

### Part B

1. **True.** Perhaps surprisingly, this has been the case since 2004.
2. **True.** See, for example, the 'Eurobarometer' findings on Europeans' language skills.
3. **False.** It will be compulsory from 2010, however.
4. **True**
5. **True.** In fact, according to many estimates, Europe's indigenous languages constitute less than 5% of the global total.
6. **True**
7. **False.** Spanish is in second place, English is in third.
8. **False.** According to most estimates there are no more than 380 million native speakers of English (about 6% of the world's population).
9. **True**
10. **True.** This is due mainly to there being more than 185 million native speakers of Portuguese in Brazil.

## 2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking\\_point/743463.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/743463.stm)

A forum on the BBC website from the year 2000 asks 'Why are the British hopeless at languages?' Some comments are accessible to pre-intermediate level.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid\\_6080000/newsid\\_6086800/6086850.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_6080000/newsid_6086800/6086850.stm)

A short piece from BBC *Newsround* (2006) on an amazing piece of technology that gives a new meaning to 'simultaneous translation'. Using electrodes attached to a person's face and neck, it can translate the mere mouthing of words in one language into spoken words in another. Accessible to pre-intermediate level

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/3739690.stm>

Again from the BBC, an article on scientific research suggesting that the stimulation involved in learning a second language can boost a person's brain power. Intermediate level and above.