50+ Language Facts In Detail

* There are over 7,000 languages worldwide, and most of them are dialects.
* Cambodian has the longest alphabet with 74 characters. Try making that into an alphabet song!
* The Bible is the most translated book, followed by Pinocchio.
* The English word “alphabet” comes from the first two letters of the Greek alphabet – alpha and beta.
* 2,400 of the world’s languages are in danger of becoming [extinct](https://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/get-extinct.cfm) and about one language becomes extinct every two weeks.
* The first printed book was in German.
* There are over 200 artificial languages in books, movies, and TV shows, such as “Klingon.”
* The Papuan language of Rotokas only has 11 letters, making it the smallest alphabet.
* Only 23 languages account for more than half of the world’s population!
* About ⅔ of all languages are from Asia and Africa.
* French is the main foreign language taught in the UK.
* Of all the language facts, this one fascinates us the most- at least half of the world’s population is bilingual!
* Many linguists believe that language originated around 100,000 BC.
* Basque is a language spoken in the mountains between France and Spain and it has no relation to any other known language. (They didn’t get out much).
* South Africa has the most official languages with 11.
* More than 1.5 million Americans are native French speakers.
* The Florentine dialect was chosen as the national language of Italy. Most regions in Italy primarily speak their own dialect to this day.
* Kinshasa is the world’s second largest French speaking city, after Paris. Kinshasa is the capital city in the Congo.
* There are about 24 official languages spoken throughout Europe.
* Other than English, French is the only language taught in every country.
* On average, people only use a few hundred words in daily conversation, while most languages have 50,000+ words.
* German words can have three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. Most languages only have either masculine or feminine.
* The United States has no “official language.” Most people just assume it’s English.
* The language of [La Gomera](https://theculturetrip.com/africa/canary-islands/articles/whistled-speech-in-la-gomera-an-intangible-cultural-heritage/) spoken off the coast of Spain consists entirely of whistles. (…but what if you can’t whistle?)
* Over 20,000 new French words are created each year.
* About 30% of English words come from French.
* Botswana has a language made up of five primary “click” sounds.
* Spanish contains about 4,000 Arabic words.
* German is the most spoken language in Europe. Four countries have it as their official language.
* Physical contact during a conversation is completely normal when speaking Spanish.
* Papua New Guinea has the most languages, at 840.
* Italian is a minority language in Brazil.
* Over 300 languages are spoken in London alone. No matter what, you have a pretty good chance of finding someone to speak with!
* The languages spoken in North Korea and South Korea are different. They have distinct vocabularies and grammatical rules due to being separated for so long.
* The English language contains the most words, with over 250,000.
* Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world.
* Multiple [studies](http://dana.org/Cerebrum/2012/The_Cognitive_Benefits_of_Being_Bilingual/) have shown that learning a second language can improve the memory and slow the process of aging. This is one of our favorite language facts!
* Argentina still has a high number of Welsh speakers, due to settlers inhabiting the Patagonia mountains hundreds of years ago.
* Russian was the first language spoken in outer space.
* People who speak and understand Chinese use [both sides of the brain](http://theconversation.com/if-you-speak-mandarin-your-brain-is-different-37993), whereas English only uses the left side.
* Twenty-one countries have Spanish as their official language, making it a great choice for travelers.
* Hindi didn’t become the official language of India until 1965.
* The Pope tweets in nine languages, but his Spanish account has the most followers.
* Hawaiians have over [200 different words](https://www.hawaiimagazine.com/content/hawaiians-have-more-200-words-rain) for “rain.”
* The culinary and ballet worlds use mostly French words and terms.
* In Indonesian, “air” means “water.”
* Japanese uses three different writing systems: Kanji, Katakana, and Hiragana.
* The U.S. has the second highest number of Spanish speakers, after Mexico.
* Mandarin Chinese is the most spoken language in the world. If you speak it, you can speak to 13% of the world’s population!
* Cryptophasia is a language phenomenon that only twins, identical or fraternal, can understand.