

English in the world

1 Reading

Work in pairs and answer these questions.

- 1 Is global English a good thing?
- 2 What are the advantages and disadvantages of global English? Make a list.

Read the texts. Are any of your points mentioned?

Jake (USA)

Global English is definitely a good thing. Communication is much easier when everyone speaks the same language. I don't understand what the fuss is about. Nowadays you find almost everything on computers is in English. It's used in business, travel and in medicine.

Cairan (Ireland)

I'm 18 and I live in a small village in the west of Ireland. I speak Irish Gaelic, but many people of my age only speak English. It's a pity because Irish Gaelic is part of our heritage and if we lose our language, then we'll lose part of our culture. I think there are only about 250,000 people who speak Irish Gaelic!

Franz (Germany)

Languages have been disappearing for thousands of years, it's just a natural thing. For example, people in ancient Egypt used hieroglyphs but nobody uses these now. I've heard there are almost 6,000 languages in the world and that about half of these will disappear in the next 20 years! Well, you can't stop progress, can you?

Selma (USA)

Although I live in the USA and I use English at school, my mother tongue is Spanish. My parents were immigrants from Mexico and so at home we speak Spanish. For me, language is part of my cultural identity.

Moira (England)

My grandparents came here from Russia in 1945 and when they arrived, they spoke no English. To get jobs, they had to learn English, and I think this is part of integrating into a new country. I think it's silly when people insist on keeping their own language when they move to a new country.

Ravi (India)

One of the consequences of global English is that some languages are disappearing. In my country there are 415 different languages, but many of these are endangered. If you want a good job, you usually have to learn English.



2 Comprehension

- 1 What do these numbers in the texts refer to?
 - a 415
 - b 18
 - c 250,000
 - d 7,000
 - e 20

- 2 Complete each sentence with the correct name.

Example

Ravi comes from India.

- 1 doesn't think there's any problem with English as a global language.
- 2 speaks one language with his/her family and another when he/she is at school.
- 3 and think that language is an important part of who they are.
- 4 and mention learning English because of work.
- 5 says that about 50% of the languages in the world now will soon disappear.
- 6 lives in a country where there are lots of languages.

3 Vocabulary

Find words in the texts which mean:

- 1 the results or effects of something
.....
- 2 something that may not exist much longer because there are not many left in the world
.....
- 3 worry for nothing
.....
- 4 people who come to live in a country from another country
.....
- 5 what makes you who you are
.....
- 6 the things that people think are important parts of their history or culture
.....
- 7 becoming a full member of a society
.....

4 Speaking

Work in groups of three or four students and discuss the opinions in the texts. Who do you agree with? Why?

5 Writing

Write a paragraph about the advantages OR the disadvantages of English as a global language. Try to include at least three points in your paragraph.