

Great students' tip

Reading for general information

The first time you read a text, read it quickly to understand the general meaning. Don't worry if there are words that you don't understand. You can look at the text in more detail the second time you read it.

1 Read the article quickly. Match the titles (1-4) to the paragraphs (A-D).

- 1 A possible solution
- 2 Why all languages are important
- 3 Languages are disappearing!
- 4 Is it a problem?

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AROUND 18 LANGUAGES HAVE ONLY ONE REMAINING SPEAKER

SOS: Languages are dying!

A You probably know that, every year, some plant and animal species disappear forever. **(1)** Experts think that 40% of the languages that exist at the moment are in danger of disappearing. And they estimate that one language disappears every two weeks! The cause of this is simple: parents in some communities don't speak their mother tongue to their children. As a result, they never pick it up. This is happening all over the world. **(2)** In Australia, Tjupany is a language that has only ten native speakers.

B Some people think all this doesn't matter. The world changes, they say. Before, people used to travel by horse and send telegrams for urgent messages. **(3)** No one wants to go back to a time when these things didn't exist. The same is true for some languages, they say. **(4)** But why try to keep them alive now when very few people use them?

C These are good questions, but there's a good answer to them. When we lose a language completely, we lose our ability to understand whole communities and cultures that helped to build the world before us. **(5)** The question is: what can we do to preserve all of these endangered languages? Now, there's an organisation that's dedicated to doing precisely this: The Endangered Language Project (the ELP).

D The ELP, which started in 2012, is a relatively new project. **(6)** Its aim is simple but ambitious: to collect examples of languages that are in danger – both text examples and audio or video. Audio and video are very important because many of these languages don't have a written form. **(7)** What's more, people who want to learn, practise or research them can use the website as a unique self-study library. It's an unusual and wonderful idea!

2 **10** Read the article again. Put the sentences into the correct places in the text (1-7). There is one extra sentence that you do not need.

- a In this way, the organisation can preserve these languages online.
- b In short, we lose part of our history.
- c But why are plants and animals disappearing?
- d Now they go by car, train or plane and send emails or instant messages.
- e However, did you know that the same thing is happening with languages, too?
- f Google, the technology company, created it.
- g These languages were useful when whole communities used to speak them.
- h For example, in Italy, only about 2,000 people still speak a language called Cimbrian.

3 Match the underlined words in the article to the meanings.

- 1 learning without a teacher
- 2 someone who speaks a particular language as their first language
- 3 first language
- 4 investigate / study
- 5 learn a language without formal study

4 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in 3.

- 1 Approximately 15% of the world population are of Mandarin.
- 2 Alice's children went to primary school in Germany, so they German without any problem.
- 3 Learning a language by demands a lot of effort.
- 4 A linguist the structure and use of language.
- 5 There are 41 million people (13% of the population) in the US whose is Spanish.

Critical thinkers

5 Write if the statements are facts (F) or opinions (O) according to the text.

- 1 Forty percent of existing languages are in danger of disappearing. F / O
- 2 Tjupany is a language which has only 10 native speakers. F / O
- 3 Why try to keep languages alive now when very few people use them? F / O
- 4 When we lose a language completely, we lose our ability to understand whole communities and cultures. F / O
- 5 Many of the languages that may disappear don't have a written form. F / O
- 6 The ELP project is an unusual and wonderful idea. F / O