Languages on the Move

Trace how languages spread and weigh the effects of diversity.

SS24.HG.6 "Explain the extent and forms of linguistic distribution around the world. 6a Identify the world's most widely spoken languages and trace their origins and development..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each language's place or family of origin and circle a force that helped it spread. Write 1 beside an example of cultural richness and 2 beside an example of conflict.

Where Languages Travel

1. At an airport, a traveler may hear English, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Hindi, and Arabic. These are among the world's most widely spoken languages, but their reach takes different forms. Mandarin has more first-language speakers than any other language. English has more speakers overall when people who learned it later are included. Spanish is spoken across much of the Americas as well as Spain. Hindi is widespread in northern India, while Arabic is spoken in many countries across North Africa and Southwest Asia. Counts for Arabic can vary because its spoken varieties differ, even though many speakers share a written standard.

2. Those patterns have histories. Mandarin developed from earlier Chinese varieties in northern China; migration and public education helped extend its use. English began as a Germanic language in Britain, took in many French words, and spread through British colonial rule and later global commerce. Spanish grew from Latin on the Iberian Peninsula and reached the Americas through Spanish colonization. Hindi developed from Indo-Aryan speech in northern India and gained a wider public role through schools and media. Arabic arose on the Arabian Peninsula and spread with trade and the expansion of Islam. These paths show that language distribution changes over time.

3. India shows why linguistic diversity can be both a resource and a source of tension. Its constitution recognizes 22 scheduled languages, including Hindi and Tamil. Tamil literature and Hindi films give audiences different ways to tell stories and express identity. Hindi and English serve as official languages of India's central government, but some Tamil speakers have protested efforts to expand Hindi's role in public life. They fear that one language could gain opportunities at the expense of others. English can help people from different language communities communicate, yet access to English-language education is unequal. Language policy can connect people while also raising questions about power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How can Mandarin have the most first-language speakers while English has the most speakers overall?

2. Compare the origins of English and Spanish. What helped each language spread beyond its place of origin?

3. How did the development and spread of Mandarin and Hindi differ?

4. Use evidence from India to support the claim that linguistic diversity can create both cultural richness and conflict.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A city library serves speakers of several languages. Write one paragraph proposing a policy for its events and signs, using at least two facts from the passage to explain how your policy could support cultural richness and reduce a possible conflict.

ANSWER KEY

Languages on the Move

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HG.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each language's place or family of origin and circle a force that helped it spread. Write 1 beside an example of cultural richness and 2 beside an example of conflict. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How can Mandarin have the most first-language speakers while English has the most speakers overall?	**Mandarin has the most people who learned it first. English has more speakers when people who learned it later are also counted.**
2	Compare the origins of English and Spanish. What helped each language spread beyond its place of origin?	**English began as a Germanic language in Britain and spread through British colonial rule and later commerce. Spanish developed from Latin on the Iberian Peninsula and spread to the Americas through Spanish colonization.**
3	How did the development and spread of Mandarin and Hindi differ?	**Mandarin developed from earlier Chinese varieties in northern China and spread through migration and public education. Hindi developed from Indo-Aryan speech in northern India and gained a wider public role through schools and media.**
4	Use evidence from India to support the claim that linguistic diversity can create both cultural richness and conflict.	**Tamil literature and Hindi films offer different ways to tell stories and express identity. Some Tamil speakers have protested a larger public role for Hindi because they fear unequal opportunities for other languages.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The library should post essential signs in the three languages most requested by local patrons and offer translated event summaries on request. India recognizes 22 scheduled languages, showing that public institutions can acknowledge more than one language. Its Tamil literature and Hindi films also show how language carries different stories, so the library could host readings in several languages. Some Tamil speakers have opposed expanding Hindi's public role because they fear unequal opportunities. By asking patrons which languages they need and reviewing the choices each year, the library can avoid treating one group's language as the only one that matters.

Accept other accurate passage evidence and reasonable library policies. The paragraph should connect a specific policy to both cultural expression and a potential source of unequal treatment.