■ EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES

More Than Words: Why Languages Matter

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

READING TEXT

Every year, on **26 September**, people throughout Europe celebrate the **European Day of Languages**. The day was established by the Council of Europe in 2001 to promote language learning, multilingualism and cultural understanding.

Europe is a continent of remarkable linguistic diversity. Although some European languages are spoken by millions of people, others are used by much smaller communities. There are also regional and minority languages which have played an important role in the history and identity of particular groups. Protecting this diversity is important because when a language disappears, we may lose not only words but also stories, traditions and ways of understanding the world.

Learning a foreign language can change the way we communicate with other people. At first, students may think that learning a language is mainly about memorising vocabulary and grammar rules. In reality, however, languages are closely connected with culture. The way people greet each other, express politeness, tell jokes or describe emotions can be different from one culture to another.

Languages can also influence the way we see the world. Some words have no exact equivalent in another language. They may express a particular feeling, social situation or cultural idea. This does not mean that people who speak different languages think in completely different ways. It simply shows that every language has developed unique ways of describing human experience.

There are practical reasons for learning languages, too. Knowing another language can make travelling easier and can help people communicate with local residents. It can also be useful for studying abroad or working with people from other countries. More importantly, learning a language often makes us more confident when communicating with people whose background is different from our own.

Technology has made language learning more accessible than ever. Students can watch films, listen to podcasts, communicate with people in other countries and use digital tools to practise vocabulary. However, technology cannot replace the human side of communication. Understanding another culture requires curiosity, respect and a willingness to listen.

The European Day of Languages therefore has a message that goes beyond learning vocabulary. **Every language represents a different window onto the world.** The more languages we learn, the more opportunities we have to communicate, understand and connect with other people.

A. Choose the best answer.

1. What is the main purpose of the European Day of Languages?
A. To encourage people to speak only European languages.
B. To promote language learning and cultural understanding.
C. To teach students difficult grammar rules.
D. To make English the main European language.

2. Why does the writer believe that linguistic diversity is important?
A. All European languages are spoken by millions of people.
B. Learning minority languages is easier than learning major languages.
C. Languages are connected with history, traditions and identity.

D. Minority languages are more useful for travelling.

3. According to the text, learning a language is more than learning vocabulary because…
A. grammar is not important.
B. languages are connected with culture.
C. vocabulary is difficult to remember.
D. students should avoid using textbooks.

4. What does the writer say about words that have no exact equivalent in another language?
A. They prove that translation is impossible.
B. They show that languages have developed different ways of describing experiences.
C. They only exist in minority languages.
D. They are always impossible to understand.

5. What is the writer's opinion about technology?
A. It has made language learning more accessible, but human interaction is still important.
B. It has completely replaced traditional language learning.
C. It is mainly useful for learning grammar.
D. It prevents people from understanding other cultures.

B. Reading Between the Lines

1. Why might a language disappearing affect more than communication?

_____

_____

2. Why might speaking another language make someone more confident?

_____

_____

3. Why does the writer mention films and podcasts?

_____

_____

4. What does the expression “a different window onto the world” suggest?

_____

_____

C. TRUE, FALSE OR NOT GIVEN?

Write T (True), F (False) or NG (Not Given).

1. The European Day of Languages was established in 2001. ___

2. English is the most widely spoken language in Europe. ___

3. Some European languages are spoken by relatively small communities. ___

4. The disappearance of a language can result in the loss of cultural knowledge. ___

5. Learning grammar is completely unnecessary when learning a foreign language. ___

6. Technology allows students to communicate with people from other countries. ___

7. The writer believes that technology is more important than human communication. ___

8. Learning another language can help people understand different cultures. ___

D. VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Find words or phrases in the text that have a similar meaning to:

1. variety → _____

2. communities with fewer people → _____

3. protecting something from disappearing → _____

4. connected to → _____

5. exactly the same meaning → _____

6. made easier to reach or use → _____

7. interest in discovering something → _____

8. the ability to communicate or have a relationship with others → _____

E. WORD FORMATION

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the word in brackets.

1. Europe is famous for its linguistic _____. (DIVERSE)

2. Learning languages can promote cultural _____. (UNDERSTAND)

3. Many languages are closely connected with people's cultural _____. (IDENTIFY)

4. Technology has made language learning more _____. (ACCESS)

5. Learning a foreign language can increase students' _____. (CONFIDENT)

6. Language learning can create new _____ for young people. (OPPORTUNE)

7. We should show _____ for people from different cultural backgrounds. (RESPECTFUL)

8. The disappearance of a language can lead to the loss of important cultural _____. (TRADITIONAL)

F. COLLOCATIONS

Match the words in Column A with the words in Column B.

A	**B**
1. cultural	a. diversity
2. language	b. learning
3. linguistic	c. understanding
4. foreign	d. background
5. digital	e. tools
6. cultural	f. language

Write your answers: 1. ___ 2. ___ 3. ___ 4. ___ 5. ___ 6. ___