

The big idea: could the English language die?

Level 1: Elementary

Article summary: This article explains how and why languages change over time and how the English language is also likely to change or possibly even die out altogether.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Phrasal verbs

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences using words from the previous activity in the correct form.

Key:

1. *translated*
2. *endangered*
3. *lead to*
4. *superpowers*
5. *Migration*
6. *influenced*
7. *Linguists*
8. *impact*
9. *lasts*

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to get students thinking about the English language and how it may change over the next century. Encourage students to give reasons to explain their opinions and, where possible, to use examples. You can extend the activity by asking students to speculate about which other languages are likely to replace English in the future and why.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to work individually to match the words in bold from the article to the correct definitions. Remind them to look at the different forms of any verbs (e.g. simple past, present continuous, etc.) in the definitions as these will give them clues as to the form of the verb from the article. For an extra challenge, ask students to write down as many synonyms of the word *lasts* that they know (e.g. *continues*, *survives*, *remains*, *lives*, etc). Allow a few minutes for students to check answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class.

Key:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <i>translate</i> | 6. <i>lasts</i> |
| 2. <i>linguists</i> | 7. <i>influenced</i> |
| 3. <i>migration</i> | 8. <i>impact</i> |
| 4. <i>lead to</i> | 9. <i>superpower</i> |
| 5. <i>endangered</i> | |

3. Comprehension check

- a. Students can work individually or in pairs to do this activity. Encourage them to highlight the section of the article where they found the answers to the questions. You might like to ask students to rewrite the false answers.

Key:

1. *True*
2. *False – ... we only started recording our languages about 5,000 years ago ...*
3. *False – School education also slows down changes in languages because people usually learn standard grammar and vocabulary.*
4. *True*
5. *False – Both Latin and Egyptian were spoken for more than 2,000 years; English has been spoken for about 1,500.*

4. Key language

- a. Students work individually to find the phrasal verbs in the article and match them to the correct definition. You might like to do this as a timed activity to practice students' ability to find key words in a text quickly (scanning).

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Key:

1. *carry on*
2. *gets rid of*
3. *die out*
4. *takes over from*
5. *bring about*

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences with the phrasal verbs from the previous activity. To extend the activity, ask students to work in pairs to write example sentences of their own using the phrasal verbs.

Key:

1. *gets rid of*
2. *die out*
3. *takes over from*
4. *bring about*
5. *carry on*

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions in pairs or groups. Ask them to justify their opinions, referring to their own experiences whenever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. The aim of this task is to get students to think about how English vocabulary has changed over time. Put students into small groups. Have each group pick a word. Then ask them to research these words online.
- b. Students present their findings to the rest of the class.