

20 MORE THINGS

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT THE WORLD OF LANGUAGES

GERMAN and **LUXEMBOURGISH** are the only languages in the world to capitalise nouns – although it was once common practice in many Germanic languages, such as Danish, Swedish and English.



ITALIAN didn't 'officially' become the official language of Italy until 2007! It is based on the Florentine dialect, with most regions in Italy speaking their own dialects/languages (around 30 in total).

EARLY LANGUAGE LEARNING

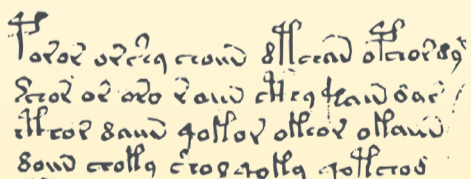
Babies only hours old are able to differentiate between sounds from their native language and a foreign language. A 2013 study indicated that babies begin learning language from their mother while still in the womb, earlier than previously thought.



SPECIAL QUESTION MARKS

In Spanish, an interrogative sentence is accompanied by two question marks: one at the end of the sentence, and the other at the beginning in an upside down position, e.g. "¿Cómo estás?". In the Greek language, a semicolon (;) plays the role of a question mark.

WHICH LANGUAGE IS IT?



The Voynich Manuscript is a book from the 15th century, written in a language no one can identify, let alone read. I am afraid we cannot provide a summary!



In the Australian Guugu Yimithirr language there are no words for left or right. People use cardinal directions instead, e.g. they would say: "There's an ant on your south-eastern leg".

Why are languages written in different directions? The leading theory is that it depended on the original materials used in writing. When writing with ink, left to right is preferred to avoid writers dragging their right hand through the ink.

In **SWEDISH**,

"gift" means both married and poison.



In **MACEDONIAN** "lele" can mean "oh wow" or "oh my goodness" and you can add lele as often as you like. So you can say: "Lele lele lele lele – what a pretty dog!".



European cities are the perfect place to observe multilingual diversity: In London, for example, more than 300 languages are spoken!

A very strange fact about the English language: **NOTHING** in the English language starts with N and ends in G!

Two non Indo-European languages, that are related to each other, are Hungarian and Finnish. Of course, the two languages diverged about 6,000 years ago but they are still considered brother and sister in the Finno-Ugric language family.



WHEN IS A BAT NOT A BAT?

In Spanish, if a word contains all five of the language's vowel forms it is called a "murciélago" which means "bat" – like the flying mammal or friend of vampires!

FRENCH was the official language of England for over 300 years (between the Norman victory at the Battle of Hastings (1066) and the end of the 14th century).



MANX is a Celtic language closely related to Irish and Scottish Gaelic spoken only on the Isle of Man.



FIRST LANGUAGE IN PRINT

The first language to be printed was German. Johannes Gutenberg's printing press, developed around 1440, is credited as being a game changer in increasing the levels of literacy and education of people in Europe.



With a few exceptions, there are really only two ways to say "tea" in the world. One is similar to the English term ("té" in Spanish, "tee" in Afrikaans,...). The other is a variation of "cha" ("chay" in Hindi, "chá" in Portuguese). Both versions come from China, but the words that sound like "cha" mostly spread across land, along the Silk Road, while "tea" spread over the sea with Dutch traders.

MOST COMMON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES IN COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD

English		(60 countries)
French		(29)
Arabic		(23)
Spanish		(20)
Portuguese		(10)
German		(6)

There are two official forms of written Norwegian: **bokmål** (book language) and **nynorsk** (new Norwegian).

HIPPOTOMONSTRO-SESQUIPEDALIOPHOBIA is the fear of long words.

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