

Exploring the Theme

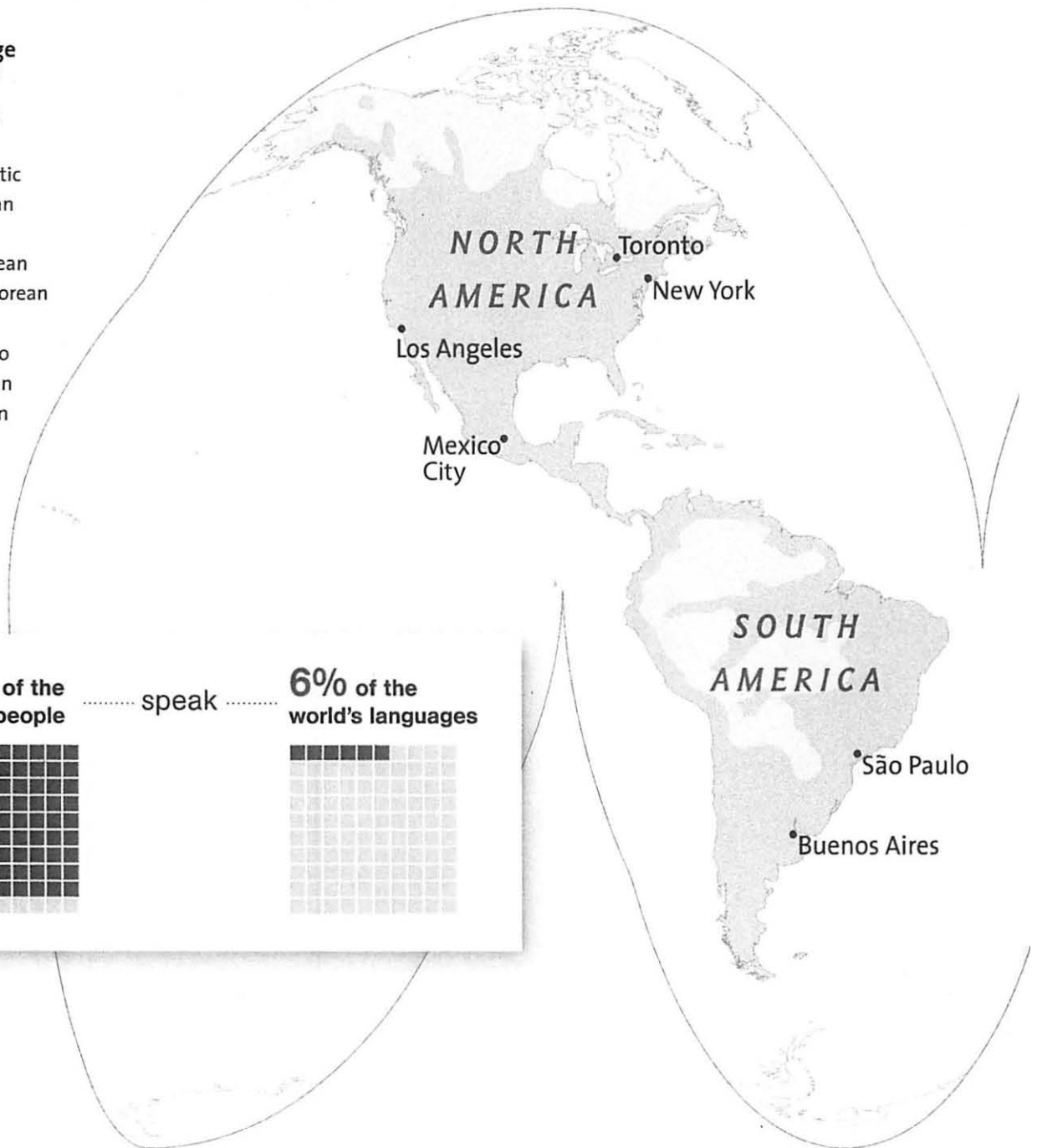
- A.** Look at the map and the information on world languages.
1. Which language family is the largest? What are some of the regions and countries where people speak the languages in this family?
 2. What can we infer about the areas listed as "other"?
- B.** Read the information in the charts and discuss the questions.
1. Why do you think the number of languages has decreased?
 2. Do you think this is a largely positive or negative trend? Why?

55%

of languages today have fewer than 10,000 speakers each.

Major language families today

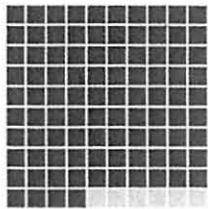
- Afro-Asiatic
- Altaic
- Austro-Asiatic
- Austronesian
- Dravidian
- Indo-European
- Japanese/Korean
- Kam-Tai
- Niger-Congo
- Nilo-Saharan
- Sino-Tibetan
- Uralic
- Other



94% of the world's people

..... speak

6% of the world's languages



World Languages

Languages are grouped into families according to word origin and structure.

Afro-Asiatic

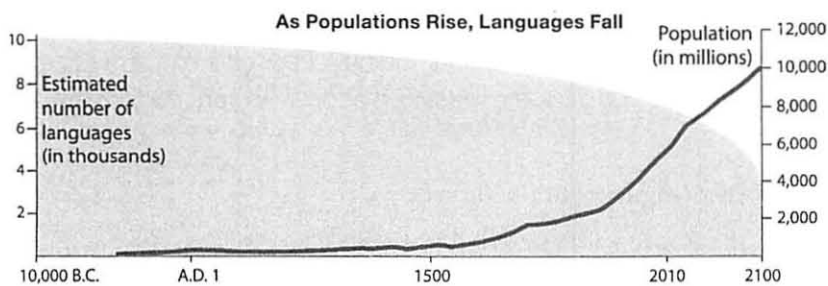
- includes 375 languages
- spoken in North Africa and Southwest Asia
- largest language: Arabic, spoken by 200 million worldwide

Indo-European

- world's largest language family
- 500 languages and three billion speakers
- includes English, German, Spanish, and Hindi

Sino-Tibetan

- family of languages spoken in East Asia as well as parts of South and Southeast Asia
- written forms use characters known as ideograms
- Chinese Mandarin has more native speakers than any other language



Even though Earth's population is increasing, the number of languages that people speak is decreasing.


- A | Building Vocabulary.** Find the words in **blue** in the reading passage on pages 191–193. Use the context to guess their meanings. Then write the correct word from the box to complete each sentence.

acquire	anticipate	considerably	constitute	facilitate
furthermore	linguistic	prominent	scale	switch


1. “_____” relates to languages and the way they are used.
2. To _____ an action or a process means to make it easier or more likely to happen.
3. If you _____ an event, you realize in advance that it may happen and you are prepared for it.
4. Something that is _____ is large or important.
5. If you _____ a skill, you learn it.
6. You use the word “_____” to introduce another piece of information or idea.
7. If a number of things or people _____ something, they are parts or members that form it.
8. If you _____ between things, you replace one with the other.
9. “_____” means to a large degree, or greatly.
10. The _____ of something refers to its size or extent, especially when it is very big.

Word Link

The word root *lingu* means “language,” e.g., **linguist**, **linguistics**, **multilingual**, **multilingualism**

-  **B | Using Vocabulary.** Answer the questions. Share your ideas with a partner.

1. Do you know anyone who can **switch** easily from one language to another? Why do you think this person has this ability?
2. What are the best ways to **acquire** a new language?
3. Do you **anticipate** any big changes in your life in the near future? If so, what are they?

-  **C | Brainstorming.** Discuss your answers to these questions in small groups.

1. Is English an important language right now? Will it be important in the future? Why, or why not?
2. What other languages might be important by the year 2050?

- D | Predicting.** Read the title and captions, and look at the photos and graphs of the reading passage on pages 191–193. What do you think the reading is about? As you read, check your prediction.

- a. the role of English and other languages in the future
- b. evidence that English in the future will be a dying language
- c. reasons why more people will speak English in the future

The Future of

English



track 2-07

THE WORLD'S LANGUAGE SYSTEM is at a crossroads and a new linguistic order is about to emerge. That is the conclusion of a recent study authored by David Graddol, a researcher on the future of language.

A Graddol argues that the transformation is partly due to demographics. The world's population rose rapidly during the second half of the twentieth century, but much of this major increase took place in developing countries. This has led to a relative decline in the use of English as a first language.

In the mid-twentieth century, nine percent of the world's population was estimated to have spoken English as a first language. By 2050, the number is expected to be just five percent. English is still ranked as the language with the third largest number of native speakers, but Arabic and Hindi—currently lagging¹ considerably behind English in fourth and fifth places, respectively—are expected to catch up by around 2050. **B** Even so, these are not the fastest growing languages; the most rapidly growing language groups are Bengali (spoken in Bangladesh and India), Tamil (spoken in Sri Lanka and India), and Malay (spoken in parts of Southeast Asia).

¹ If a thing is **lagging** behind another thing, its progress is slower than the other thing.

Instead of one language acting as a “world language,” it seems likely that no one language will dominate in the near future. Linguists expect that English will continue to be important, but Mandarin Chinese will probably be the next must-learn language, especially in Asia. As a result of these trends, “the status of English as a global language may peak² soon,” says David Graddol. **C**

English for Science

However, just as the relative number of native speakers of English is decreasing, a separate study shows that English is expanding its dominance in the world of science. The dominance of one language in the area of science allows for greater international collaboration and research, making it possible to publish scientific articles to broader audiences. **D**

Science writer Scott Montgomery, author of *The Chicago Guide to Communicating Science*, describes how science is creating new words and expressions in English. “Because of its scale and dynamism,³ science has become the most active and dynamic creator of new **E**

² When something **peaks**, it reaches its highest value or level.

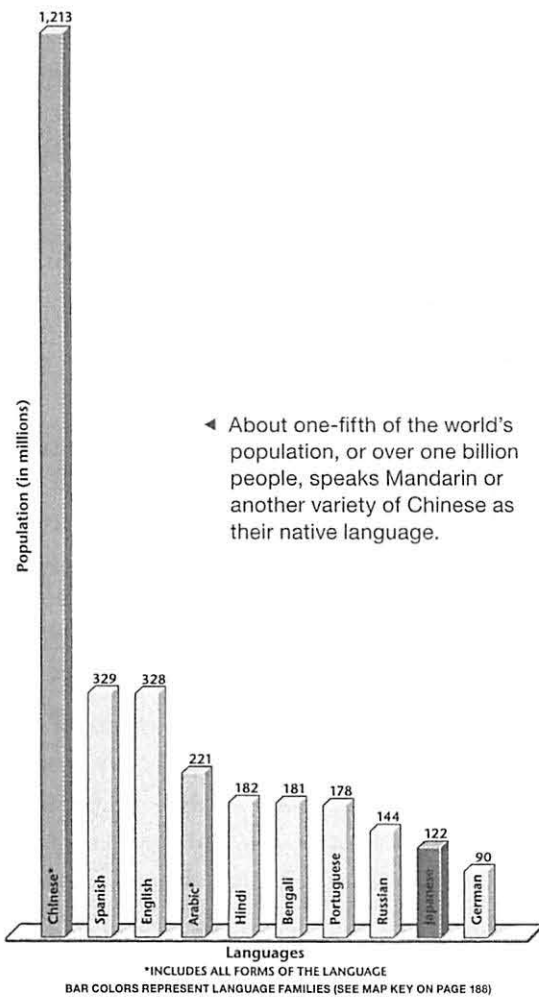
³ If something has **dynamism**, it is full of energy or full of new and exciting ideas.

language in the world today. And most of this creation is occurring in English, the *lingua franca*⁴ of scientific effort,” Montgomery says. He believes that in the future, English will almost certainly continue to expand its role in science, especially in international settings. More than 90 percent of journal literature in some scientific fields is already published in English. “More and more scientists who are non-native speakers of English will need to become multilingual,” Montgomery says.

Rise of Multilingualism

David Graddol notes that in many parts of the world, English is regarded as a basic skill, like computer competence, which children learn at an early age so they can study other subjects in English. The predominance of English in science will result in new

E



◀ About one-fifth of the world's population, or over one billion people, speaks Mandarin or another variety of Chinese as their native language.



▲ This graphic shows the world's most spoken languages relative to their total number of speakers. When non-native speakers are included, English is the world's top language.

generations of speakers of other languages who acquire English to exchange ideas and discoveries with scientists in other countries. In addition, international businesses are increasingly looking for multilingual employees. Businesses whose employees speak only one language will find themselves at a disadvantage, Graddol says. As China plays an increasingly prominent global role, employers in parts of Asia are already looking beyond English to Mandarin as the most important language to facilitate the global exchange of goods and services.

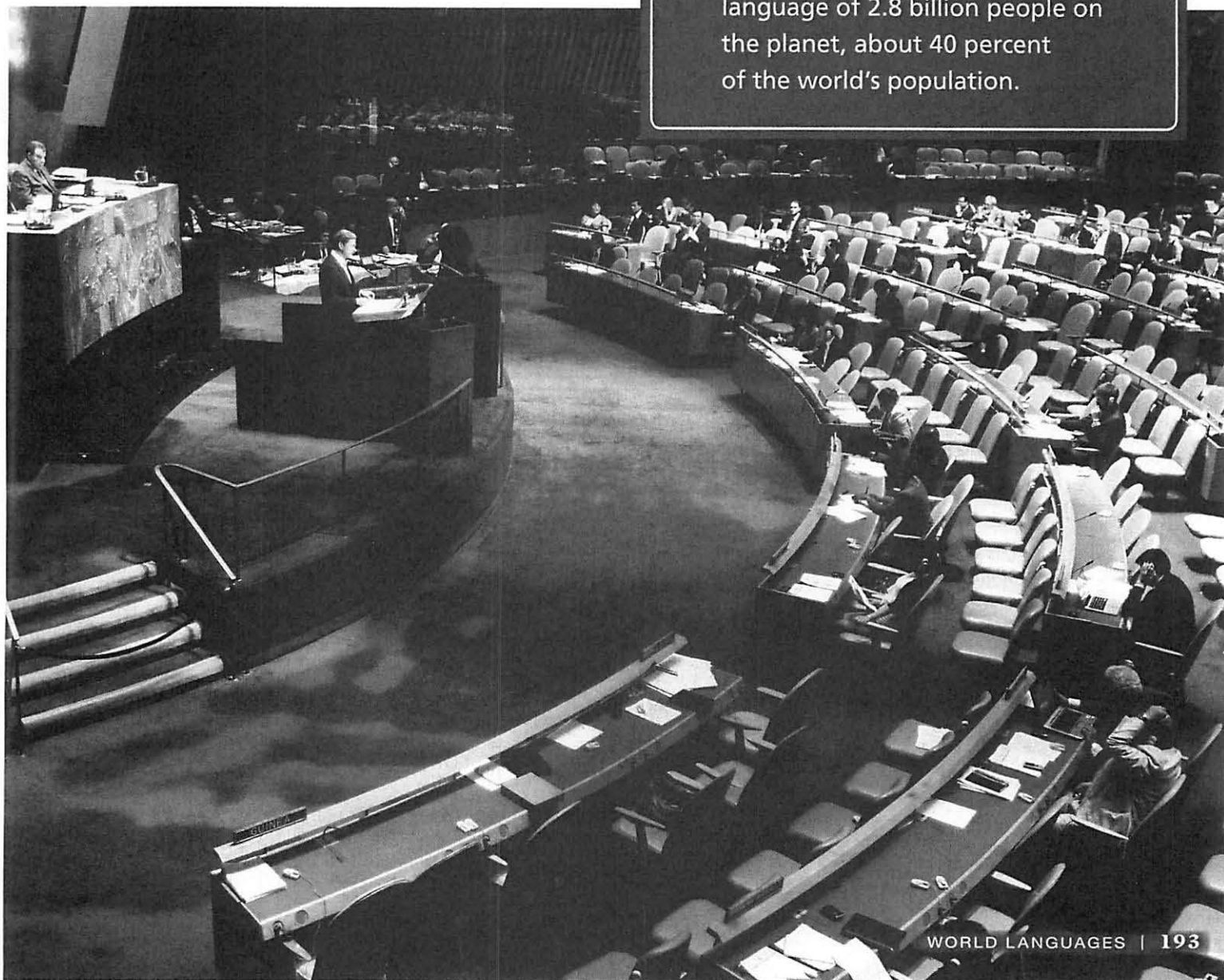
⁴ A *lingua franca* is a language used between people who do not speak one another's native language.

History has shown that it is possible for dominant languages to die. Latin, for example, dominated in Europe until the end of the 1600s, when English emerged. Linguists anticipate that in the future, most people will speak more than one language. Furthermore, it's likely that speakers will switch between languages for routine tasks. Monolingual speakers may have a difficult time participating fully in a multilingual society. Some monolingual speakers, especially native English speakers, according to Graddol, "have been too complacent⁵ about [. . .] the lack of need to learn other languages."

⁵ A **complacent** person feels that he or she does not need to do anything about a situation, even though it may be uncertain or dangerous.

Official Languages:

Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), English, French, Russian, and Spanish are the six official languages of the United Nations. They are used in meetings, and all official UN documents are written and translated into each language. The six languages are official languages in more than half (100) of the countries in the world. They constitute the first or second language of 2.8 billion people on the planet, about 40 percent of the world's population.



A | Identifying Main Ideas. Skim the reading again. Write the correct paragraph letter (A–G) next to each main idea.

1. ____ More people will be multilingual in the future.
2. ____ The use of English is growing in the world of science.
3. ____ Population changes are having an important effect on the world's language system.
4. ____ English will remain an important language for science, but several languages will be important for international business.
5. ____ It's unlikely that one language will dominate in the future.
6. ____ The number of English speakers is declining while the number of speakers of other languages is growing.
7. ____ English for science will expand because science is constantly creating new words and expressions in English.

B | Scanning for Key Details. Answer the questions about "The Future of English."

1. Where did the world's population increase the most in the second half of the twentieth century?

2. What are three of the most rapidly growing language groups?

3. Why is the dominance of one language useful in science?

4. How much scientific literature is already published in English?


5. What is an example of a dominant language that died? When and where was it dominant?

6. Why were Arabic, Mandarin, English, French, Russian, and Spanish chosen as the official languages of the United Nations? Give two reasons.



C | Identifying Meaning From Context. Find and underline the following words and expressions in the reading passage on pages 191–193. Use context to help you choose the best meaning of each word or expression. Check your answers in a dictionary.


1. Paragraph A: **Demographics** relates to the characteristics of _____
 - a. human populations
 - b. language change
2. Paragraph A: If something or someone is **at a crossroads**, it means that _____
 - a. an important change is about to happen
 - b. they have reached the end of a long journey
3. Paragraph B: If a person or thing **catches up**, they _____
 - a. take something away from someone or something else
 - b. reach the same point as someone or something else
4. Paragraph E: **Settings** means the same as _____
 - a. situations or contexts
 - b. directions or instructions

 **D | Interpreting Visual Information.** Look again at the two graphics on page 192. Discuss answers to these questions with a partner.

1. What does the size of the words in the word cloud represent?

2. According to the bar graph, which language has the greatest number of first-language (or native) speakers? The second greatest number of native speakers?

3. Compare the bar graph and the word cloud. How is the relationship of English and Chinese speakers different? Why?

 **E | Critical Thinking: Personalizing.** Think about the ideas in “The Future of English” and discuss these questions with a partner.

1. Why are you studying English? Are your reasons similar to or different from the reasons described in the reading passage?
2. Do you agree that people should learn more than one second language? Why, or why not?
3. If you could learn another language, which language would it be? Why?

Reading Skill: Understanding Degrees of Certainty

When you read a prediction in a reading passage, look for words and expressions that express the writer's degree of certainty. Ask yourself: Which predictions does the writer feel certain about? Which ones does he or she feel less certain about?

Writers use the modal *will* to make predictions that they are most certain about.

*In the near future, students **will** study Mandarin as a second language.*

Writers use verbs such as *expect (that)* and *anticipate (that)* to make predictions that they are reasonably certain about.


*Educators **expect that** the number of students learning English will decline.*

*We **anticipate** that there will be fewer students next semester.*


When writers are less certain about a prediction, they use words such as *is/seems likely (that)*, and *probably*. The modals *may*, *might*, and *could* indicate even less certainty.

*It's **likely that** Mandarin will continue to be useful in business.*

*Mandarin **might** replace English as the most popular second language in my school.*

 **A | Critical Thinking: Inferring Degrees of Certainty.** Find sentences with predictions in the following paragraphs of "The Future of English": B, C, E, F, and G. Underline the words and phrases in the sentences that the writer uses to make predictions. Discuss these questions with a partner.

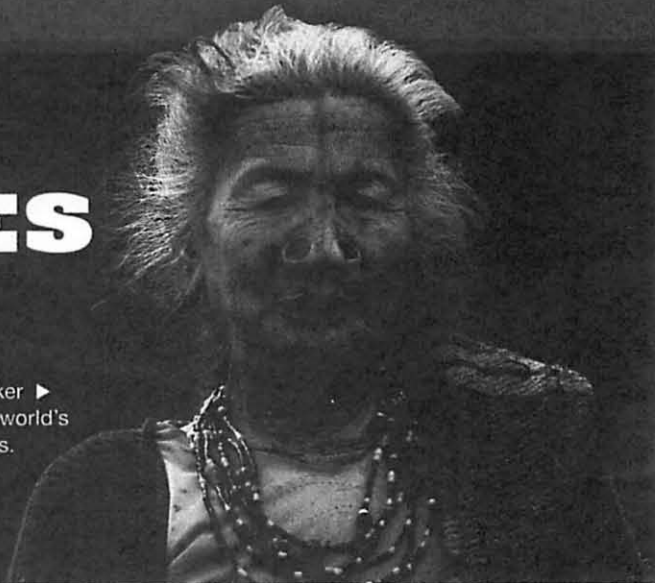
1. Which predictions does the writer feel certain about? Which predictions does the writer feel are reasonably certain? Which predictions does the writer feel less certain about?
2. Do you disagree with any of the predictions in "The Future of English"? Explain your answer.

 **B | Applying.** Answer these questions about the predictions in "The Future of English." Share your ideas with a partner.

1. What percent of the world's population might speak English in 2050?
2. What could soon happen to the status of English as a global language?
3. Where will English probably continue to expand its role?
4. What will happen to businesses if their employees only speak one language?
5. What language will employees increasingly need to learn for doing business in Asia?
6. What might happen in the future if you only speak one language?

ENDURING VOICES

This woman is a speaker ▶
of Apatani, one of the world's
endangered languages.



Before Viewing

A | Using a Dictionary. The words and expressions in **bold** are used in the video. Match each word or expression with the correct definition. Use your dictionary to help you.

Half of the world's 7,000 languages may **die out** in the next few decades, but linguists from the Living Tongues Institute are working hard to preserve them and the **vital** historical and cultural information they contain. The researchers observed in one town in India that the younger generation was **neglecting** the traditional language of their parents. Young people tend to **shift over to** global languages such as English or Hindi but, as a result, risk losing important information about their **heritage**.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. _____: (adjective) very important | 3. _____: (verb) stop existing |
| 2. _____: (noun) the aspects of life in a country that are passed on from generation to generation | 4. _____: (verb) move or change to |
| | 5. _____: (verb) not giving attention to |

B | Thinking Ahead. What are some ways that people can preserve a dying language? Discuss with a partner.

While Viewing

Read questions 1–4. Think about the answers as you view the video.

1. What problem does the Enduring Voices Project try to solve?
2. Why is it a problem that mostly the older generation speaks Apatani?
3. How is the Enduring Voices Project helping to save Apatani?
4. According to the video, what might inspire young people to learn Apatani?

After Viewing

A | Discuss your answers to questions 1–4 above with a partner.

B | Synthesizing. Think about the role of English as described in “The Future of English.” What is one reason that the children of Apatani speakers might prefer to speak English?

- A | Building Vocabulary.** Find the words in **blue** in the reading passage on pages 199–202. Use the context to guess their meanings. Then write each word next to its definition (1–10).

accurately	assign	attitude	category	conform
critically	deprive	institution	maintain	portion

1. _____: (noun) a part of something
2. _____: (verb) give a value or a function to something
3. _____: (adverb) seriously
4. _____: (noun) a group of things with similar characteristics
5. _____: (verb) continue or keep; not lose or weaken
6. _____: (noun) a custom or a system that is considered an important feature of a society or a group
7. _____: (verb) take away or remove; prevent from having (something)
8. _____: (adverb) correctly
9. _____: (noun) the way you think and feel about something
10. _____: (verb) behave in the way that you are expected or supposed to behave

Word Partners

Use **attitude** with:
(prep.) attitude
about/toward
(something); (adj.)
bad attitude,
new attitude,
negative/
positive attitude,
progressive
 attitude; *(v.)*
change your
 attitude



- B | Using Vocabulary.** Discuss these questions with a partner.

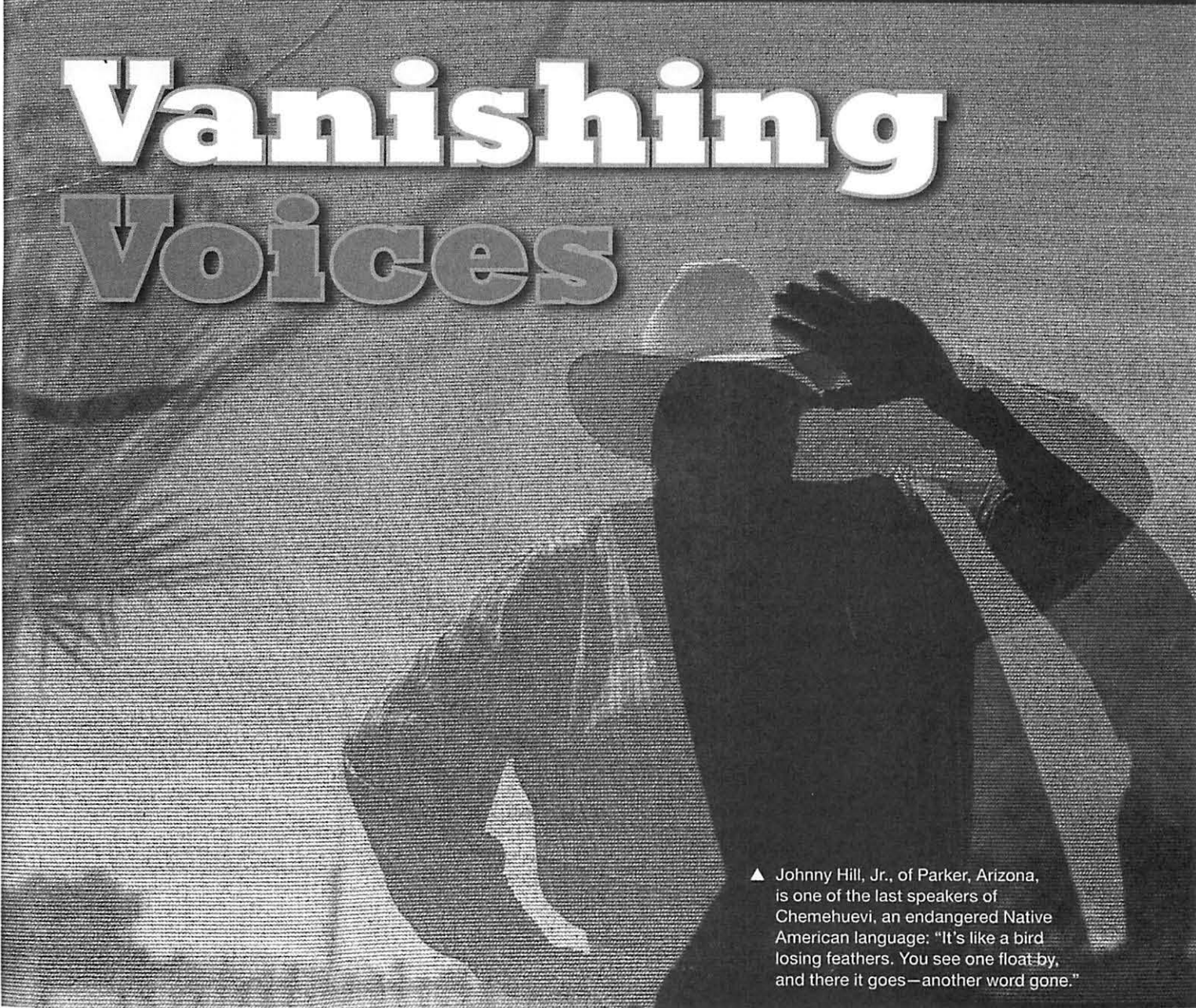
1. Why is it important to think **critically** when you are getting information from a website?
2. Who do you know who has a very positive **attitude**?
3. Give an example of a cultural **institution** that you think is important.

- C | Predicting.** Read the title and the headings in the reading passage on pages 199–202.

Look at the pictures and map and read the captions. What do you think the reading passage is about? As you read, check your prediction.

- a. facts about and differences among the world's languages
- b. the languages spoken in North America and Australia
- c. how languages disappear and ways to keep them alive

Vanishing Voices



▲ Johnny Hill, Jr., of Parker, Arizona, is one of the last speakers of Chemehuevi, an endangered Native American language: "It's like a bird losing feathers. You see one float by, and there it goes—another word gone."



track 2-08

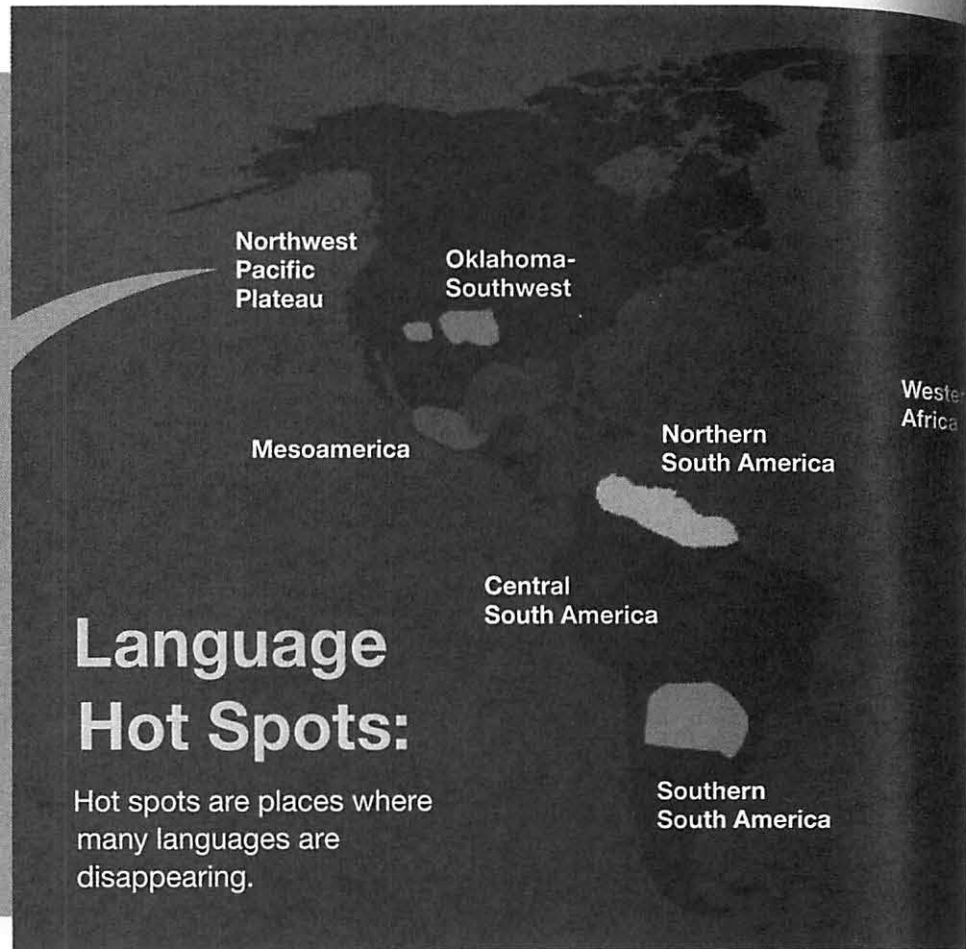
THE EARTH'S POPULATION of seven billion people speaks roughly 7,000 languages today. However, there is a very unequal distribution in the number of people who speak these languages. In fact, just 85 of them are spoken by 78 percent of the world's population, while the least common 3,500 languages are spoken by just 8.25 million people, combined. So while there are roughly 330 million native speakers of English and 845 million speakers of Mandarin, there are only 235,000 speakers of Tuvan, the native language of the Republic of Tuva in the Russian Federation. And there are fewer than 2,000 known

speakers of Aka, a language from Arunachal Pradesh in northeastern India.

Many of these smaller languages are at risk of disappearing. More than 1,000 are listed as critically or severely endangered. In fact, it is estimated that a language dies every 14 days. Linguists think that, within the next century, nearly half of the world's current languages may disappear as communities abandon native tongues in favor of English, Mandarin, or Spanish. But should we be concerned about language extinction? And what can we do to prevent it?

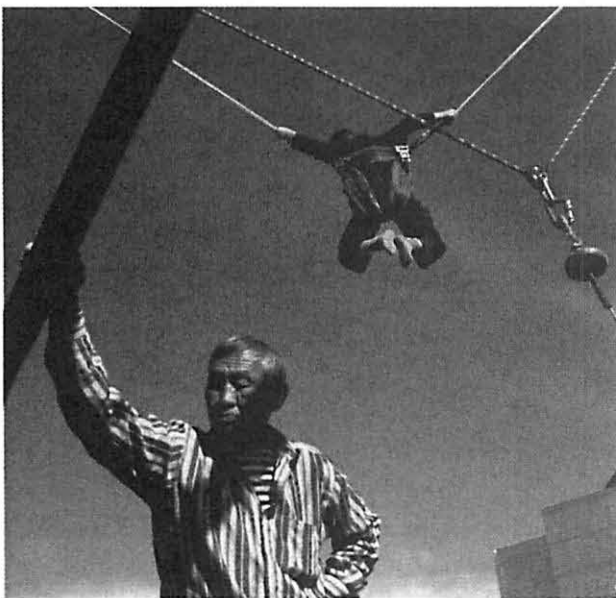
Northwest Pacific Plateau

The Northwest Pacific Plateau—comprising British Columbia (Canada), Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana (USA)—is one of the most endangered language hot spots on the planet. Too few children and young adults speak the indigenous⁶ languages in the U.S. portion of this region. Many speakers are abandoning their native languages for English. The Canadian organization First Voices is one of many efforts to save the indigenous languages of the Pacific Northwest region. One of First Voices' services is providing online materials and games to help people learn and practice the disappearing languages in this region.



Language Hot Spots:

Hot spots are places where many languages are disappearing.



▲ The 235,000 speakers of Tuvan, such as this man and boy at the National Museum of Tuva, believe the past is ahead of them while the future lies behind. Their word for the future (*songgaar*) means to “go back”; the past (*burungaar*) means to “go forward.”

How Do Languages Die?

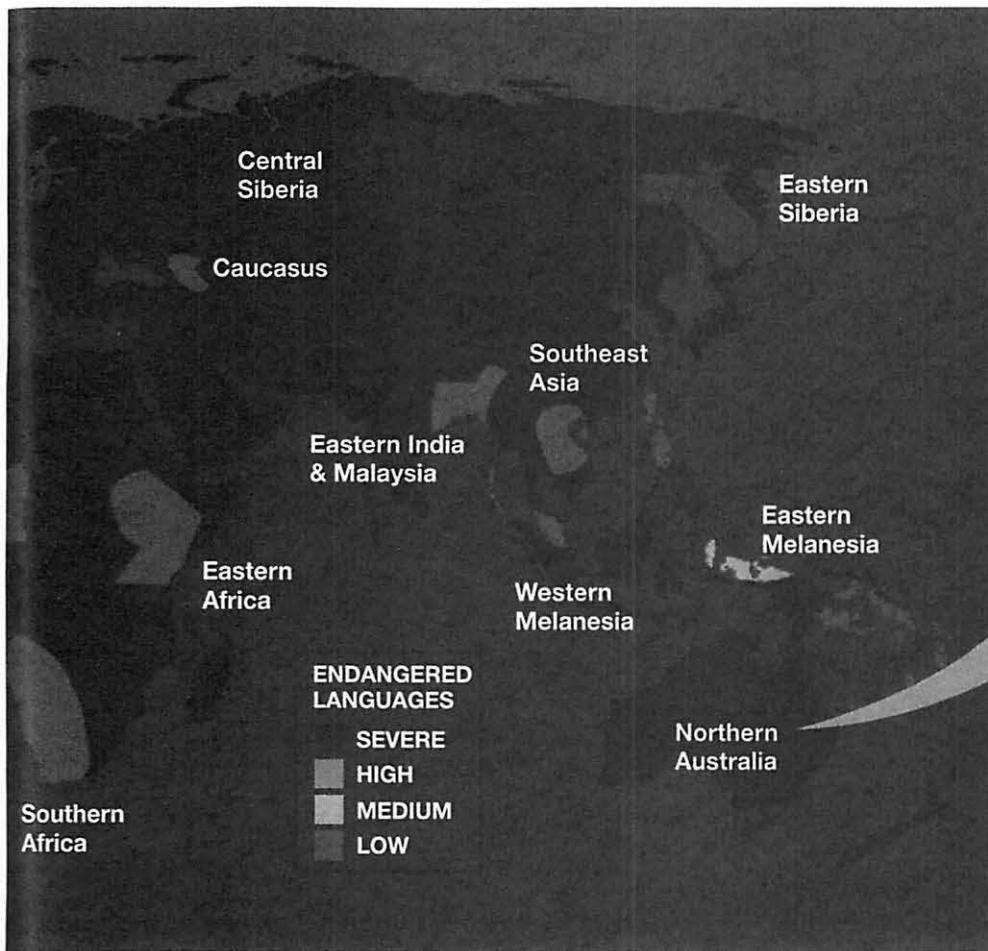
From the beginning of human communication systems, languages have appeared and disappeared. The languages of powerful groups have spread while the languages of smaller cultures have disappeared.

- © One linguist, attempting to define what a language is, famously (and humorously) said that a language is a dialect¹ with an army. Today, power may take less obvious forms—television, the Internet, and international business—but the effects are similar.

In an increasingly globalized age, languages spoken in remote places are no longer protected from the languages that dominate world communication and commerce. Languages such as Mandarin, English, Russian, Hindi, Spanish, and Arabic reach into tiny communities and compete with smaller languages.

- D When one language dominates, children from non-

¹ A **dialect** is a form of a language that is spoken in a particular area or by a particular group.



Australia

Many Aboriginal languages in Australia have been lost already; more will soon follow. Aboriginal groups are small and scattered⁷ because of a history of conflict with white settlers.⁸ European English speakers dominated the land, and as a result, Aboriginal groups have struggled to maintain their own languages and cultures. Researchers for the Enduring Voices Project are making possibly the last ever recordings of some of these Aboriginal languages. For example, Enduring Voices researchers have recorded a woman who may be the very last speaker of an Aboriginal language called Djawi.

dominant language groups tend to lose their native languages as they grow up, attend school, and enter the workforce. Sometimes there is disapproval of the smaller languages, partly because of a perception that speaking these languages presents a barrier to success. These attitudes, along with the strong desire to conform, undermine² the survival of native languages. Political pressure can further affect the survival of smaller languages, such as when governments pass laws that promote dominant languages, and ban the use of smaller languages in education or the media.

Why Should We Be Concerned?

Why is the extinction of a language with a small number of speakers a concern? Different languages express different ways of seeing the world. They carry information such as the values, history, traditions, and institutions of a culture, and they can show us how a particular culture experiences basic concepts such as time, numbers, and colors. The Pirahã, an Amazonian

tribe, appear to have no words for numbers, but instead, they get by with relative words such as *few* and *many*. This suggests that assigning numbers may be an invention of culture rather than an innate³ part of human cognition.⁴ The interpretation of color is similarly varied from language to language. What we think of as the natural spectrum of the rainbow is actually divided up differently in different tongues, with many languages having more or fewer color categories than their neighbors.

The disappearance of a language also deprives us of knowledge no less valuable than some future miracle drug⁵ that may be lost when a species goes extinct.

² If you **undermine** something, you make it less strong or less secure than it was before.

³ An **innate** quality or ability is one that a person is born with.

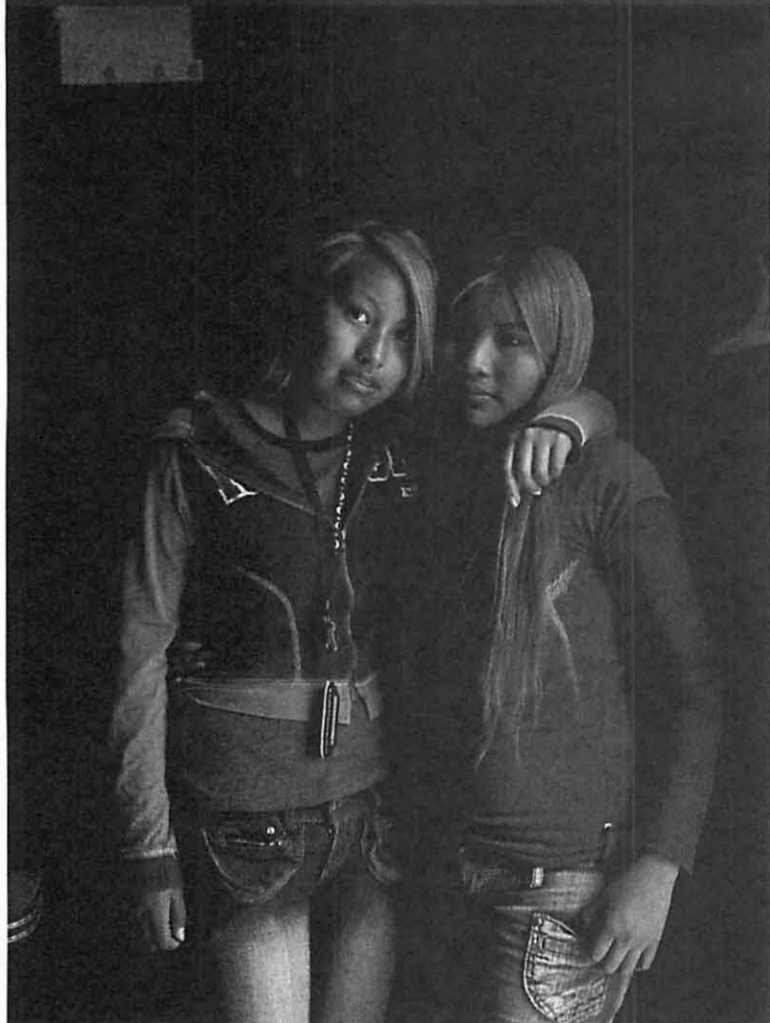
⁴ **Cognition** is the mental process involved in knowing, learning, and understanding things.

⁵ A **miracle drug** is a treatment for a disease that is surprisingly effective and safe.

⁶ **Indigenous** people or things belong to the country in which they are found.

⁷ **Scattered** people or things are spread over an area in an irregular way.

⁸ **Settlers** are people who go to live in a new country.



▲ The Seri have more than 50 terms for family relationships, such as between these two cousins. The word *atcz* means “daughter of a parent’s younger sibling”; *azaac* means “daughter of a parent’s older sibling.”

For example, the Seri, who live in the western Sonoran Desert of Mexico, have terms for more than 300 desert plants. By studying the Seri language, scientists learned about an unknown yet highly nutritional food source similar to wheat, called *velgrass*. Seri words related to local animals have also helped scientists acquire new information about these animals’ habitats and behaviors. However, there are only 650 to 1,000 Seri speakers, and the disappearance of the language might therefore deprive us of important scientific knowledge.

If languages continue to vanish at today’s rapid rate, we may lose knowledge about plants that could someday lead to an invaluable medicine, not to

mention information about the history and survival skills of many of the world’s cultures. In Micronesia, for example, there are sailors who can navigate thousands of miles in uncharted ocean without any modern equipment. Their skills and knowledge, however, is encoded in small, vulnerable languages.

Bringing Languages Back to Life

Fortunately, organizations around the world are working to revitalize⁹ threatened languages. These efforts involve increasing opportunities for people to use the endangered languages and reversing the attitudes that caused people to abandon them. One effort to preserve disappearing languages is the Enduring Voices Project. This project works to identify language hot spots, places on the planet with languages that are unique and quickly disappearing. Enduring Voices selects hot spots based on the language diversity of a region and on the level of endangerment of the language. The goal of the Enduring Voices Project is to accurately document the languages of these places, and to record the cultural information they contain.

Projects such as Enduring Voices are extremely important to the survival of disappearing languages. Their efforts and the work of other language preservationists¹⁰ will allow us to pass on a wealth of historical, cultural, and scientific knowledge to future generations. As Enduring Voices team member K. David Harrison says, “It would be incredibly shortsighted for us [. . .] to think that because we have put men on the moon and split the atom¹¹ [that] we have nothing to learn from people who just a generation ago were hunter-gatherers¹² in a remote wilderness. What they know—which we’ve forgotten or never knew—may someday save us.”

⁹ To **revitalize** something means to make it active or healthy again.

¹⁰ **Preservationists** are people who make sure a situation or a condition remains as it is.

¹¹ To **split the atom** is to reduce an atom into even smaller parts.

¹² **Hunter-gatherers** are people who live by hunting and collecting food rather than by farming.

UNDERSTANDING THE READING

A | Identifying Main Ideas. Complete the main ideas of the paragraphs listed below.

1. Paragraph A: The _____ of the world's languages is very unequal.
2. Paragraph B: Thousands of _____ languages are at risk of _____.
3. Paragraph E: When we lose a language, we lose information such as _____
_____.
4. Paragraph F: When we lose a language, we also lose valuable _____
_____.
5. Paragraph H : Organizations such as the Enduring Voices Project are working _____
_____.

B | Identifying Meaning from Context. Find and underline the following words and expressions in the reading passage on pages 199–202. Use context to help you choose the best meaning. Check your answers in a dictionary.

1. Paragraph B: **In favor of** means you like _____.
a. two things the same way b. one thing better than another
2. Paragraph D: **A barrier to success** is something that _____.
a. makes it easy to achieve success b. makes it difficult to achieve success
3. Paragraph E: If you **get by with** something, it means you _____.
a. manage to do something using it b. achieve something without using it
4. Paragraph H: If something is **enduring**, it _____.
a. continues to exist b. is disappearing

C | Interpreting Visual Information. Look at the map on pages 200–201 and answer the questions.

1. What does the map show? What do the colors in the key show?

2. In which areas is the problem of disappearing languages the most severe?

3. How does this map relate to the main ideas of “Vanishing Voices”?

D | Identifying Supporting Details. Scan the reading passage to answer the following questions

1. What are two examples of languages that have few speakers?


2. How many languages are critically or severely endangered?

3. What are some ways that languages die?

4. How do the Pirahã tribe refer to quantities? What does this tell us?

5. What kind of information can the Seri language tell scientists? What other types of information can we learn from vanishing languages?


6. What is the goal of the Enduring Voices project? What is one example of their work?

 **E | Critical Thinking: Understanding Predictions.** Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. What predictions does the writer of “Vanishing Voices” make?

2. Look at the sentences that include predictions and underline the words and expressions the writer uses to make these predictions.

3. Which predictions does the writer feel more certain about? Which predictions does the writer feel less certain about?

 **F | Critical Thinking: Considering Counterarguments.** “Vanishing Voices” makes a strong argument in favor of saving disappearing languages. Are there any counterarguments in favor of letting endangered languages die? For example, consider the issues below. Discuss the pros and cons of this issue in a small group.

- Will children be at a disadvantage if they do not learn the dominant language of their region?
- Groups of people in a region who speak different languages might have difficulty cooperating politically and economically. Could this lead to misunderstanding or conflict?
- Traveling around the world to record speakers of disappearing languages is expensive. Should the money be used for other purposes?

CT Focus

When you read a persuasive essay, it can be important to **consider counterarguments**—the opposing sides of an issue. Understanding both sides of an argument helps you make an informed decision.