

Foreign Language Milestones and Statistics

Linguistics · Answer Key · 18 Questions

1. In what year did the United Nations officially establish International Mother Language Day?

- A) 1995
- B) 1999**
- C) 2001
- D) 2005

2. According to Ethnologue, approximately how many distinct living languages are spoken across the world today?

- A) Under 1,000
- B) About 3,500
- C) Over 7,000**
- D) Nearly 15,000

3. Which language served as the primary lingua franca of the Achaemenid Empire beginning in the 6th century BCE?

- A) Aramaic**
- B) Sumerian
- C) Latin
- D) Phoenician

4. How many official working languages does the United Nations currently recognize?

- A) 3
- B) 5
- C) 6**
- D) 8

5. The Rosetta Stone, which was instrumental in deciphering hieroglyphs, was discovered by French soldiers in what year?

- A) 1789
- B) 1799**
- C) 1812
- D) 1822

6. Who is the linguist credited with formulating the theory of Universal Grammar in the mid-20th century?

A) Ferdinand de Saussure

B) Noam Chomsky

C) Roman Jakobson

D) Edward Sapir

7. How many unique symbols or characters are contained in the standard Japanese Hiragana syllabary?

A) 26

B) 46

C) 64

D) 102

8. Which country has the highest number of living indigenous languages, totaling over 800?

A) Brazil

B) Indonesia

C) Papua New Guinea

D) India

9. The Esperanto language was created by L. L. Zamenhof and first published in a book in what year?

A) 1887

B) 1901

C) 1915

D) 1923

10. In the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), how many primary symbols are used to represent consonant sounds?

A) 24

B) 54

C) 84

D) 114

11. What is the estimated number of native speakers of Mandarin Chinese, the world's most spoken first language?

A) 400 million

B) 600 million

C) 900 million

D) 1.2 billion

12. The first dictionary of the English language, compiled by Samuel Johnson, was published in which century?

- A) 16th
- B) 17th
- C) 18th**
- D) 19th

13. How many grammatical cases exist in the Finnish language?

- A) 5
- B) 15**
- C) 25
- D) 35

14. The Cyrillic alphabet, used by several Slavic languages, was developed in the 9th century and is traditionally attributed to whom?

- A) Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius**
- B) Charlemagne
- C) Vladimir the Great
- D) Peter the Great

15. Approximately what percentage of the world's languages are considered endangered, according to UNESCO?

- A) 10%
- B) 40%**
- C) 65%
- D) 80%

16. Which ancient language, serving as the liturgical language of Hinduism, has a history dating back to the 2nd millennium BCE?

- A) Pali
- B) Sanskrit**
- C) Tamil
- D) Avestan

17. The 'Voynich Manuscript', an undeciphered text, has been carbon-dated to approximately which time period?

- A) 800-900 CE
- B) 1404-1438 CE**
- C) 1650-1700 CE
- D) 1820-1840 CE

18. How many official languages does the European Union recognize as of 2024?

A) 12

B) 24

C) 28

D) 32