

European Day of Languages



It has never been easier to communicate with people across the globe. From instant messaging to video calls and from important business documents to tourism leaflets, the only limit to your connection with others is your ability to speak the same language.

With over 6,000 languages spoken worldwide (over 200 of these coming from Europe alone), the Council of Europe and the European Union created a day dedicated to celebrating this: the European Day of Languages.

Creation

The event was initially intended to be a one-off occurrence when the first European Day of Languages was celebrated in 2001. However, since then, the event has been celebrated annually across Europe on 26th September.

Inspiration

The Council of Europe believes that language skills are necessary for everyone and that solely speaking one language can prevent people from taking advantage of amazing opportunities throughout their lives.

The Council of Europe and the European Union created the European Day of Languages to raise awareness of three key points:

- Europe is **diverse** in its languages. This is something that should be preserved and enhanced.
- People in Europe need to increase the range of languages that they learn so that they become **plurilingual**. This should include less widely used languages.
- If people are to play their full part in being a citizen of Europe (not just a citizen of one country within Europe), they must develop some degree of **proficiency** in two or more European languages.



The Council of Europe hopes that learning new languages will also teach people about different cultures and traditions. In turn, this will promote tolerance and respect among citizens of the world.

Learning a New Language

There are many amazing benefits to learning a new language:

- Being able to speak a few words of a new language when you are abroad can help you to find the things that you need. It can help you to thank others for their kindness or to ask for help when you need it.
- By learning a new language as a child, you will open up lots of employment opportunities that you can explore as an adult.
- Studying another language can help you to gain a deeper understanding of how your own language works.
- Speaking another language opens the door to a wide range of art, music and film that you may never have got to experience.

No one is too old to learn a new language and to enjoy the experiences that doing this may bring. While it is often thought to be easier to learn a new language as a child, it is never too late to start.

Hints and Tips

Learning a new language can seem daunting at first but, with these hints and tips, you'll become fluent in no time:



- Try to have as much conversation as possible in your new language.
- Start by learning common words that you will use often.
- Label the items that you use frequently with their name in the language that you are trying to learn. For example, if you are trying to learn Spanish, you could stick a label saying 'agua' on your bottle of water.
- Practise speaking to yourself in your new language. Whether it's aloud or in your head, challenge yourself to say something in the language that you're trying to learn. If you find that you don't know how to, use this as a starting point for your next language lesson.

Glossary

diverse:	Including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds.
plurilingual:	The ability to speak a number of different languages.
proficiency:	A high level of skill.