

What languages are spoken in Ireland?

Speaking

Work with two students and answer the following questions.

1. How many people in Ireland speak Irish?

2. Where in Ireland do people speak Irish all the time?

3. Do you know any words in Irish?

4. Where do you see Irish words every day?

Reading

According to the State, the first official language in Ireland is *Gaelic*, also known as Irish. Despite this, English is language spoken by everyone in the country and although there are still some *Gaeltacht* regions (areas where *Gaelic* is widely spoken) remaining, particularly along the west coast, most people in these areas also speak English. Nowadays about 43% of adults say they have a knowledge of Irish.

Irish was the main spoken language in most of the country until the early 19th century, and is one of the Celtic family of languages - a close cousin of Scots Gaelic, Welsh and Breton.

But Irish was spoken by less people as English became more important. English has been used here since the arrival of the Normans in the 12th century. By 1891 over 85% spoke English only. The Irish language continues to be the State's first official language, and has become more popular in recent years.

It is compulsory to learn Irish in primary and secondary schools. Some students go to *Gaelscoileanna* where they learn all their subjects through Irish. There is a national radio service, an Irish-language television service and several Irish-language newspapers and magazines.

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In addition to Irish and English, rising immigration in recent years means that many more languages are now widely used in Ireland. Visitors, students and new Irish people can hear languages from all over the world in use.

Source: adapted from www.eu2004.ie

Some Common Irish Phrases

Dia dhuit - Hello	Slán leat - Goodbye
Go raibh maith agat - Thank you	Le do thoil - Please
Conas á tá tu? - How are you?	Tá me go maith - I am well
Tá fáilte romhat - You're welcome	Sláinte - Cheers

Reading and writing

Read the article about languages spoken in Ireland and answer the questions below.

1. What is Ireland's first official language?

2. What area in Ireland is Irish spoken by many people?

3. What percentage of people has a knowledge of Irish?

4. What other languages is Irish similar to?

5. When did people in Ireland begin to speak English?

6. What percentage of people spoke Irish in 1891?

7. Do children have to learn Irish in school?

8. Why are many languages used in Ireland nowadays in addition to Irish and English?

Speaking

In groups, tell other students about the languages in your country.

What is your first language?

How many languages are spoken in your country?

Are all languages used in your country officially recognised?

When do you start learning a second language in your country?

Is language learning important in your country?

What do you think is the best way to learn a second language?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Writing: Write about the languages spoken in your country

Languages in my country

Name: _____

Date: _____

Writing: Write about the languages spoken in your classmates' countries

Languages in our countries
