

"Get off that table!
Don't you understand
plain English?"

In this unit, you will:

- read an article about language development.
- read an article about the English-speaking world.
- discuss the pros and cons of English as a world language.

1 Critical cartoons

A Warm up

Work with a partner or in a small group. Look at the information on this page and the cartoon. Discuss the questions below.

- 1 How many countries can you name where English is spoken as a first or second language?
- 2 Have you ever met an English speaker who expects others to be able to speak English? Why do you think they might have that attitude?
- 3 Think about the use of English among your grandparent's generation, your parent's generation, and your own. How has it changed?
- 4 What is the message of the cartoon? What is the connection to the unit topic?

English is spoken as a first language in ...

I guess some English speakers think ...

One way the use of English has changed is ...

Maybe the message of the cartoon is ...

MEDIA link



Fry's Planet Word (2011) is a five-part documentary series written by actor and writer Stephen Fry. It explores language and its role in human history. Episode 4, "Spreading the Word," examines the influence of English as a world language. It looks at how technology influences language evolution and spread.

For additional media links, go to infocus-eltservices.com

2 Core vocabulary

A Skimming and scanning

- 1 Find and underline the keywords in the passage. Try to guess their meanings.

Keywords

acquire equivalent estimate exposure multiple
per regional researcher retain struggle



The Wonder of Language



We all speak one. Every day, people communicate with one another using language. From the thousands of words we know, we easily find the words we need and arrange them into sentences to give our opinions or make requests. Some researchers who study how we acquire language, like the well-known writer on language Steven Pinker, estimate that

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people know about 50,000 to 60,000 words by the age of 20. That is roughly equivalent to learning eight or nine words per day from birth.

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This amazing process begins from the day we are born. Children who have not yet learned to speak listen to their mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters talk to them. This early exposure introduces the child to the sounds of their language. This is when they begin to acquire their regional accent. We are all amazed at how little American babies sound American, while little English babies speak with a British accent.

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By the time children become three, they have usually learned many thousands of words. Children have heard some words multiple times, so it is not surprising that they know them. Other words children may hear only once, but they retain the meaning. Some words are difficult, and the child has to struggle to say the word but still has no problem remembering its meaning.

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Learning a foreign language may be difficult, but it is important to remember that people are born to communicate through speech. It is a gift we all have.

- 2 Read the statements below. Which best describes what this text is about? Circle A, B, or C. Then explain your answer to a partner.

- A How we learn foreign languages
- B How children acquire their accents
- C How we learn our own language

B Words in context: collocations

1 Look at the text on page 2. Find the keywords that form collocations with the words below.

- 1 researchers _____ 3 _____ day
2 roughly _____ 4 _____ accent

2 Match the four keywords with the words below to make new collocations.

- 1 _____ costs 5 average _____
2 _____ amount 6 cash _____
3 _____ government 7 _____ director
4 _____ month 8 _____ year

collocations

Collocations are common word combinations. For example, the verb *express* is often found with the noun *opinion*, as in *express your opinion*.

C Word parts: *equa/equi* Example: *equivalent*

Words with *equa/equi*

adequate equation equator equidistant equinox equivalent inequality

1 Use the words in the box to complete the sentences below. Try to guess the meaning of any words you don't know.

- 1 A kilogram is roughly _____ to two pounds.
2 When something is _____, it is enough for a situation.
3 A mathematical statement in which both sides are the same is an _____.
4 We can see _____ in a society when groups of people are treated differently.
5 When a place is the same distance from two other places, we can say they are _____.
6 The invisible line that divides the earth into northern and southern halves is called the _____.
7 The time when the sun is directly over the equator and night and day are the same length is called an _____.

2 Work with a partner. What do you think *equa/equi* means? Write your guess below. Then check your answer with another partner.

I think *equa/equi* means _____



D Discussion dictation

1 Listen and write down the questions. Then discuss them in small groups.

- 1 How _____?
2 How _____?
3 What _____?

2 Form new groups and compare your answers.

3 Reading skills

A Pre-reading

- 1 Quickly scan the text and circle the 10 keywords.
- 2 How many people around the world do you think are learning English?
- 3 Why do you think English has become an international language?

B Reading

Read the text and check your answers to the pre-reading questions above. Then highlight an interesting idea in each paragraph.



An English-Speaking World

English is widely spoken in many countries around the world and is an official language in more than 50. Many of these countries are former colonies of Britain and retained English after independence. But

5 even Rwanda, the former French-speaking colony of Belgium, has adopted English as an official language. English has truly become an international language. Researchers at the British Council estimate that it is spoken as a first language by 375 million people

10 and as a second language by another 375 million. Meanwhile, over 750 million people speak it as a foreign language, and this number is growing rapidly. In China, there are an estimated 400 million English language learners. According to the British Council,

15 two billion people around the world are attempting to acquire English, and one in four can speak some English.

When the captain of a Mexican passenger plane flies into an airport in France or Germany, he or

20 she communicates with the air traffic controller in English. It is easy to understand why: the pilot may not speak French or German, the air traffic controller may not speak Spanish, and it is necessary to confirm details about the flight. However, in the equivalent

25 situation, when the same plane lands in Argentina or Colombia, the pilot again communicates with the ground in English, even though both the pilot and the ground controller have Spanish as their mother tongue. This is just one example of how English is

30 used as the standard international language around the world. Today, three-quarters of the world's mail, most books, and many of the world's newspapers and magazines are written in English. More than half of the world's websites are in English, and over 100 new



English websites are created per minute. Eighty percent of international organizations use English as an official language, including the United Nations, the European Union, and the International Olympic Committee. English is the most important language in science: half the world's scientific papers are written in it. Finally, in the

40 world of entertainment, it is impossible to avoid exposure to English. Hollywood movies sell the most tickets in cinemas, and popular songs in countries from Sweden to Japan are sung in English.

English is an international language because of two main regional influences. The first is the rule of the British Empire, which at its peak in 1922 governed a fourth of the world's area and a fifth of its population. The second is the power of American companies that spread around the world after World War II.

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English is not just an international language because it is spoken all over the world. English now belongs to the world. People all over the world don't just struggle to learn it to get better jobs. They add words and expressions of their own, and they are changing the language in multiple

55 ways. This helps to make English a true world language. English as a world language allows all countries to be part of the world community, and this benefits us all.

C Checking details

Read the questions below and circle the correct answers according to the text.

- Which of the following statements is true?
 - There are more speakers of English as a first language than as a second language.
 - The majority of English speakers speak it as a first language.
 - Approximately 25 percent of people in the world can speak some English.
 - Nearly 50 percent of international organizations use English as an official language.
- Which of the following statements is NOT true?
 - Many former British colonies kept English as an official language after independence.
 - A former French colony has English as an official language.
 - Mexican pilots speak English when communicating with air traffic controllers in Colombia.
 - Most of the world's books are written in English.

D Making inferences

Read the sentences below and circle the correct answers according to the text. (There may be more than one correct answer.)

- People around the world want to acquire English because ...
 - they want to understand Hollywood movies.
 - air traffic controllers need English.
 - they want better jobs.
 - they want to learn about American companies.
- Which of these changes are likely to take place in the future?
 - English vocabulary will grow.
 - English won't be spoken at meetings of the Olympic Games Committee.
 - Pilots will choose which language to speak when they are in the air.
 - English will become a world language.

E Identifying opinions

Work with a partner and answer the question below. Check (✓) the boxes.

In this article, how can the author's point of view best be described?

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|----------|
| Paragraphs 1–4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | positive | <input type="checkbox"/> | neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> | negative |
| Paragraphs 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | positive | <input type="checkbox"/> | neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> | negative |

Discuss it



Work with a partner or in a small group. Ask and answer the questions below.

- Look back at the ideas you highlighted in the text. Are they the same?
- Give at least two examples of the spread of English in your country.
- Are there any languages that could one day compete with English? Explain which language and why or why not.



4 Researching a topic

A Information gathering

- 1 Work in small groups. Use the pictures below to identify words English has borrowed from other languages. Can you guess which language they came from?



A _____



B _____



C _____



D _____



E _____



F _____



G _____



H _____

- 2 Think of six words from your language that came from English. Then look up the meaning of the words in English in a dictionary or online. Complete the table below.

Borrowed word	Meaning in your language	Meaning in English
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

B Interpreting and reporting results

Form new groups and compare your findings. Discuss the questions below.

- Which meanings are the same in both English and your language? Can you think of any that are different?
- Why do you think the meaning of some borrowed words is different in your language?
- Do you think borrowed words help you acquire English more easily? Why or why not?

One word with different meanings is ...

Perhaps the first users of the word didn't ...

We think that borrowed words don't always help because ...

5 Critical thinking

A Fact or opinion?

There are many different points of view on the topic of English. Work with a partner and decide if the following statements are fact (F) or opinion (O).

- 1 Spanish sounds more beautiful than English. _____
- 2 Chinese is the most difficult language to learn. _____
- 3 English has more words than most other languages. _____
- 4 English has borrowed words from many other languages. _____
- 5 British English is easier to understand than American English. _____

B Categorizing

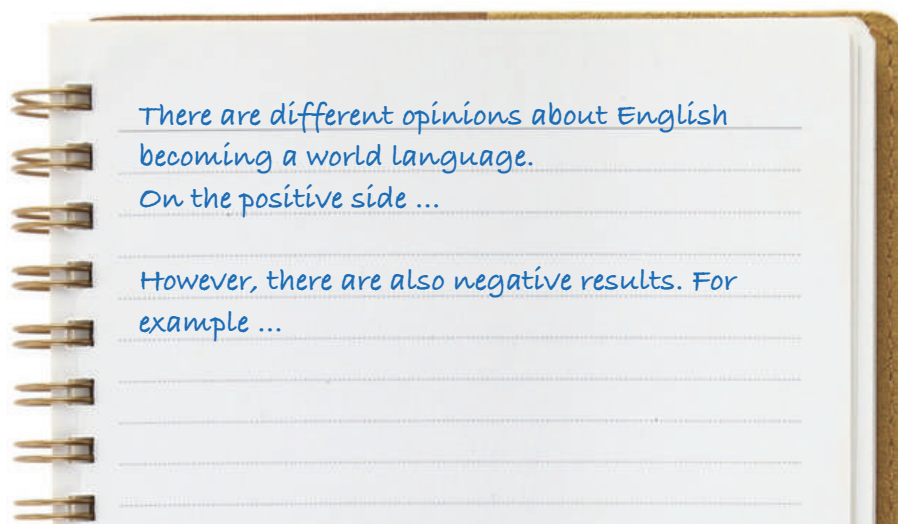
1 Decide if the statements below sound positive, neutral, or negative. Put checks (✓) in the boxes. Underline any words in the sentences that support your choice.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
1 English is spoken widely throughout the world.			
2 The spread of English is destroying many languages and cultures.			
3 English as an international language will lead to world peace.			
4 Pilots flying Mexican planes in France or Germany always use English.			
5 It is impossible to escape English in the world of entertainment.			

2 Compare your answers with a partner and explain your reasons.

C Writing

Look back at the statements in B above. Write a short paragraph about the positive and negative results of English becoming the world language. Use the model below.



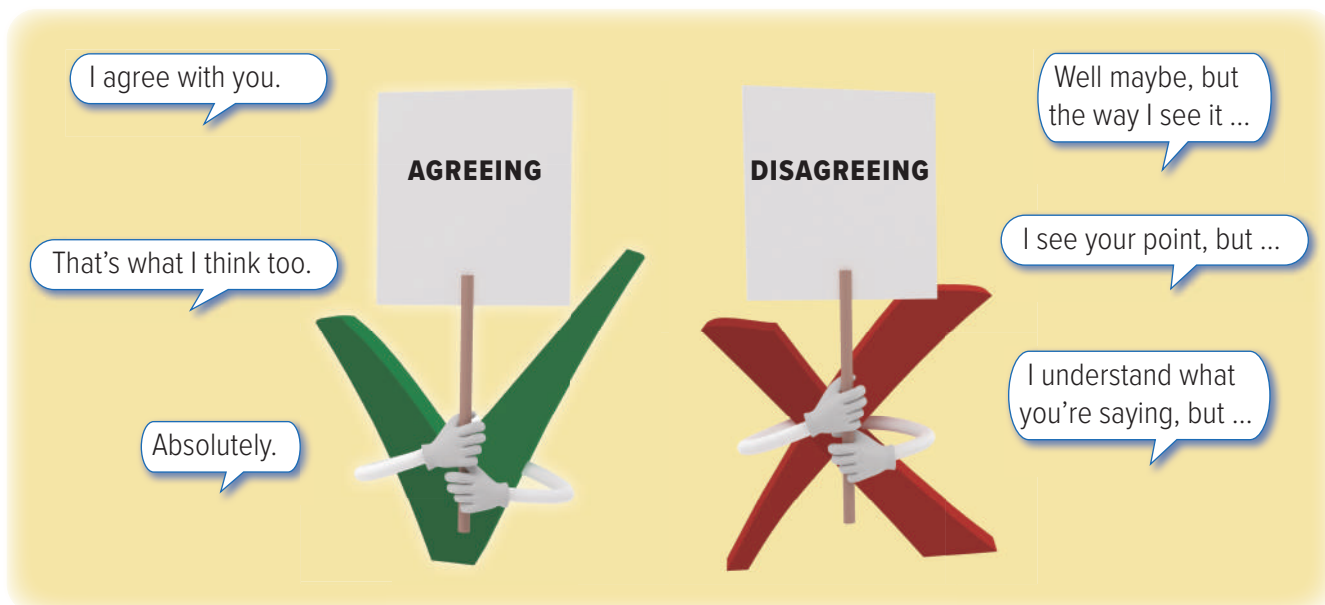
D Discussion

- 1 In C, you wrote about the positive and negative results of English being the world language. Now read the statements below about language from young people around the world. Discuss them in small groups. Do you agree or disagree? Share your opinions and ask follow-up questions.

“English helps speed globalization and economic development. That’s a good thing.”

“English as a global language gives English speakers an unfair advantage.”

“If English spreads everywhere, then so does Western culture. That makes the world a worse place.”



- 2 Now agree on a group opinion for each point. Share your results with the class. Each group should present one idea.

We felt that ... because ...

Overall, we believe that ...

We don't think that ...

Quotable quotes

Final thoughts . . .

Learn a new language and get a new soul.

Czech proverb*

- 1 How is this quote connected to the topic of the unit?
- 2 Do you feel or act differently when you speak English? In what way?
- 3 Is the growth of English in your country changing your culture? If so, how?

**proverb* (n): a well-known statement that often gives advice; a saying

