

LANGUAGE STATISTICS

Number of living languages: **6912**

Number of those languages that are nearly extinct: **516**

Language with the greatest number of native speakers: **Mandarin Chinese**

Language spoken by the greatest number of non-native speakers: **English** (250 million to 350 million non-native speakers)

Country with the most languages spoken: **Papua New Guinea** has 820 living languages.

How long have languages existed: **Since about 100,000 BC**

First language ever written: **Sumerian or Egyptian** (about 3200 BC)

Oldest written language still in existence: **Chinese or Greek** (about 1500 BC)

Language with the most words: **English**, approx. 250,000 distinct words

Language with the fewest words: **Taki Taki** (also called **Sranan**), 340 words. Taki Taki is an English-based Creole spoken by 120,000 in the South American country of Suriname.

Language with the largest alphabet: **Khmer** (74 letters). This Austro-Asiatic language is the official language of Cambodia, where approx. 12 million people speak it. Minority speakers live in a handful of other

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countries.

Language with the shortest alphabet: **Rotokas** (12 letters). Approx. 4300 people speak this East Papuan language. They live primarily in the Bougainville Province of Papua New Guinea.

The language with the fewest sounds (phonemes): **Rotokas** (11 phonemes)

The language with the most sounds (phonemes): **!Xóõ** (112 phonemes). Approx. 4200 speak !Xóõ, the vast majority of whom live in the African country of Botswana.

Language with the fewest consonant sounds: **Rotokas** (6 consonants)

Language with the most consonant sounds: **Ubyx** (81 consonants). This language of the North Caucasian Language family, once spoken in the Haci Osman village near Istanbul, has been extinct since 1992. Among living languages, **!Xóõ** has the most consonants (77).

Language with the fewest vowel sounds: **Ubyx** (2 vowels). The related language **Abkhaz** also has 2 vowels in some dialects. There are approximately 106,000 Abkhaz speakers living primarily in Georgia.

Language with the most vowel sounds: **!Xóõ** (31 vowels)

The most widely published language: **English**

Language with the fewest irregular verbs: **Esperanto** (none)

Language which has won the most Oscars: **Italian** (12 Academy Awards for Best Foreign Film)

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The most translated document: **Universal Declaration Of Human Rights**, written by the United Nations in 1948, has been translated into 321 languages and dialects.

The most common consonant sounds in the world's languages: **/p/, /t/, /k/, /m/, /n/**

Longest word in the English language: **pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis** (45 letters)

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