



Marijke Rivers-Andries

© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

We will:

- clarify the purpose and value of International Mother Language Day
- explore inclusive, practical ways to celebrate home languages
- reflect on what is realistic and meaningful in your own context
- identify next steps and ongoing support for language-inclusive practice



© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

What is it really about?



© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.



- Home languages are linked to wellbeing, confidence, and learning
- Valuing languages sends a message: you belong here as you are
- This day is about visibility and respect, not performance

© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.



- An assembly framed around “languages in our community”, not “other languages”
- Student voice: What languages matter to you?
- Linking to values like respect, inclusion, global citizenship
- It doesn't need to be loud or perfect to be meaningful

© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

UNESCO



Every two weeks a language disappears taking with it an entire cultural and intellectual heritage. UNESCO estimates that there are 8,324 languages, spoken or signed. Out of these, around 7,000 languages are still in use. Only a few hundred languages have genuinely been given a place in education systems and the public domain, and less than a hundred are used in the digital world.

© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

UNESCO



International Mother Language Day is observed every year to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

What can this look like in real schools?



- Corridor display with pupils' names written in their home languages
- Language map of the school community
- “Hello” board in the languages spoken by pupils and staff
- Multilingual word of the week
- Students teaching a word or phrase they choose
- Comparing how stories, games, or routines exist across languages

© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

What can this look like in real schools?



- Short assembly with pupil contributions
- Tutor-time activities
- School newsletter spotlight on languages

- If there is a Middle School Language Ambassador in your Advisory, they might want to **teach you some words in their home language.**
- [International football \(soccer\) players](#): Do you recognize these players? Do you know their home country? (you will need to print this document) [Answer key](#)
- [Hello and Language Memory game](#): this game will need some preparation time (printing cards)
- [Hello and Language Runners game](#): this game will need some preparation time (printing cards)
- [50+ Fascinating Language Facts](#): Have a look through this infographic and find out some weird and wonderful facts about languages.
- Listen to **songs in different languages.**
- Create **posters with "Hello" in different languages** and hang them around the Middle School
- [Learn facts about the different continents and how people speak across the world](#)
- [Borrowing Words Game](#): It's common for languages to adopt words from other languages. Many English words come from other languages. For example, the word safari is borrowed from Swahili – a language spoken in parts of Africa. Match English words with the language that it was borrowed from.
- Watch ["To The Girl in English Class"](#) and discuss the spoken-word poem. There is a great link between this poem and the bystander training we had last year.
- [Landscape](#): An interactive map that allows you to zoom to any spot on the globe and see what languages are natively spoken there. Clicking on a language name will display an



© Every Language Learner 2026. These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

What is it? Why is it important?

To raise awareness of language, cultural diversity, and multilingualism around the world.

It is held on the **21st of February** because on this day in **1952**, four young students were killed in Bangladesh, during a dispute about the Urdu and Bengali languages.

The first International Home Languages Day took place in **2000**.

Why is it important?

There are about **7000 languages** spoken around the world but as some languages become more widely spoken, others disappear.

In Europe alone there are hundreds of languages facing extinction.

It is thought that **every two weeks another language disappears**. When a language disappears, its culture and heritage are also lost.

It is thought that **60% of people in the world do not have access to education in a language that they speak or understand**.

International Home Languages Day is really important because it helps to ensure that we don't forget about endangered languages.

It is an opportunity to celebrate the diversity in languages spoken across the world and the cultural heritage of those who speak them.



How do we involve families without pressure or tokenism?



Families should be invited, not expected and definitely never put on the spot.

- Optional sharing: stories, rhymes, songs (audio or written)
- Home language contributions sent in advance
- Family quotes or messages included in displays

It's okay if family involvement is small or indirect the first year.

Why is it important to create awareness for multilingualism?

Many **multilingualism?** As an expat kid and then bringing up my own children as expat kids, I think having the ability to communicate in multiple languages opens the door to many things – including many friendships. I also love the quote by Nelson Mandela: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart."

As language is how we communicate, being about to communicate across cultures requires everyone to be multilingual to some extent in order to break down barriers and understand our own biases.

because I want to be open minded and learn about different cultures around the world because then everyone will discover what that person's culture is and that is really fascinating and can build friendships.

I think multilingualism is important for cultural understanding and acceptance, for inclusivity, and it opens up opportunities to learn and be curious for all involved.

because it shows culture.

Because then you can have more people learning new languages which is really important.

So that everyone feels that they belong

because so everyone feels equal and respected for their culture

Because by doing so, it helps someone not to feel anxious.

to celebrate our differences

Challenge!

We challenge you to try something new this week. Try something that is from a different country. This could be:

- Saying "hello" in a new language
- Cooking a new dish from a different culture
- Watch a movie in a different language with English subtitles
- Have a lip sync battle with your friends using songs in a different language
- ...

© Every Language Learner 2026.

These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

© Every Language Learner 2026.

These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

How do we bring staff and SLT with us?



This isn't an "extra". It supports inclusion, wellbeing, and learning.

- school values and ethos
- pupil wellbeing and belonging
- parental engagement
- inclusion and equity

© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

How do we bring staff and SLT with us?



Staff buy-in

- Ready-made ideas reduce workload
- Staff don't need to be language experts
- Small actions are enough

You're allowed to start small and build year on year.

© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

Addressing EAL = SEND confusion



- EAL is about language development, not ability
- Multilingualism is an asset, not a deficit
- Support benefits all pupils

How do we move beyond one day?



© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

Everyday visibility ideas



- Multilingual signage
- Language of the week
- Valuing home languages in displays year-round
- Encouraging translanguaging in learning

© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

Cultural shift idea



- Normalising hearing and seeing different languages daily (translanguaging in the classroom)
- Talking openly about language identity
- Valuing bilingualism publicly

If this day leads to one small shift in mindset, it's already had impact.

Language Ambassadors Programme



- Leadership opportunity
- Belonging and pride
- Peer support
- Role models
- Cultural awareness
- Community building
- Practical support for EAL/multilingualism teacher



© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

Language Ambassadors Programme



Nationalities

B I U ☰ ☹

Please fill in this form so we can celebrate all nationalities in the Middle School this year. - The MS Language Ambassadors

This form is automatically collecting emails from all respondents. [Change settings](#)

Halloween / Diwali / All Saints' Day

B I U ☰ ☹

Form description

This form is automatically collecting emails from all respondents. [Change settings](#)

Do you celebrate Halloween, Diwali, All Saints' Day, or something similar? *

Yes

No

If you do, please tell us WHAT you celebrate and HOW you celebrate it.

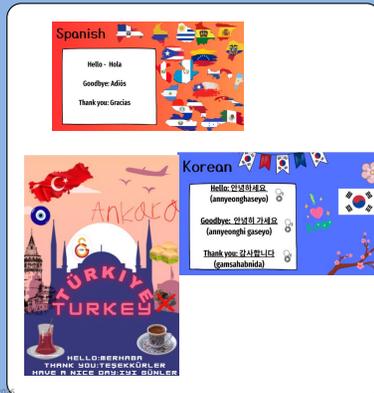
Long answer text

© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

Language of the Month

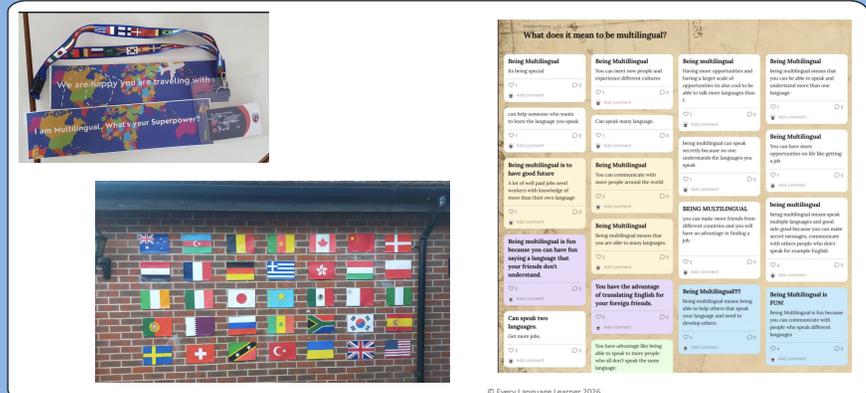


- Identity and pride
- Confidence boost
- Opportunity to share expertise
- Cultural awareness
- Language learning exposure
- Community building
- Visible inclusion



© Every Language Learner 2026. These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

Visibility of multilingualism



© Every Language Learner 2026. These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

A closing thought:



You don't need to do everything. You just need to do something thoughtful, intentional, and respectful

© Every Language Learner 2026. These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

Getting Someone's Name Right



- Tied to their identity and culture
- Mispronouncing it can make a student feel invisible
- Signals care and respect
- Builds trust between teachers and students

Practical strategies:

- Ask a student to pronounce their name.
- Don't be scared to ask them to repeat it.
- Have students record their name for you.
- Use phonetic spelling if helpful

© Every Language Learner 2026. These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

AI video using Google Vids



© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.

Any questions?



Marjke Rivers-Andries
Multilingualism Specialist
Advocate for Inclusive Language Learning
Founder of Every Language Learner

✉ info@everylanguagelearner.co.uk
☎ +44 7707315096
📱 @EveryLanguageLearner
📘 Every Language Learner
🌐 www.everylanguagelearner.co.uk

Every Language Learner
Every Learner. Every Language. Every Classroom.

Any feedback?

© Every Language Learner 2026.
These slides are shared for personal and educational use only. Please do not copy, reproduce, or distribute without permission.