



European Day of Languages
26 September
Journée européenne des langues

Raising Language Awareness: *Celebrating the EU Day of Languages*



Revised Edition - September 2021
International Languages Educators' Association
www.ilea.ca

What is the European Union Day of Languages?

Quick Facts:

- 2001 was the European Year of Languages which was promoted by the European Union and the Council of Europe to encourage language learning and plurilingualism across and within European countries. Europe as a continent celebrates a rich multilingual diversity.
- The Council of Europe designated September 26th as the Day of Languages.

Objectives of the Day of Languages:

- Raise awareness of the importance of benefits of language learning
- Broaden our understanding and knowledge of various languages worldwide
- Increase plurilingualism
- Deepen intercultural understanding
- Represent linguistic and cultural diversity
- Encourage a lifelong commitment to language development

Canadian Context and the International Languages Program:

Recognizing that the Day of Languages was created in Europe but is celebrated around the world with the objectives mentioned above, Canadian educators can take this opportunity to reflect on linguistic diversity and the benefits of language learning within our local contexts. By participating in events and experiences recognizing the EU Day of Languages, language educators can encourage students to think about their own knowledge and use of languages and reflect on their strategies as language learners. As the official date of the EU Day of Languages is September 26th and considering that most language learning programs start in September, it is an ideal time to lay the foundations for language learning and to address any assumptions on the language learning process (language awareness).

For the Canadian context, it is useful to consider the following elements or talking points when initiating discussions on the benefits of language learning in classrooms:

- Indigenous languages, cultures and rights and deepening Canadian awareness of indigenous languages (most school districts now inclusively house an Indigenous and International Languages Department)
- Maintenance and development of first or heritage languages as an important element for well-being and academic success
- Canadian official bilingualism and multicultural policy
- Language learning for intercultural awareness
- Cognitive, social and communicative skill development through language learning

Why should we recognize this day in the International Languages Program?

- Opportunity for discussion on our experiences as language learners
- Reflection on how learners approach a new language or continue their development of a language they know
- Discussion on what is common across languages
- Awareness of linguistic diversity and tools for communication

What are things that I can do to recognize this event? What does ILEA have to offer?

ILEA (International Languages Educators' Association) Ontario is an advisory and professional subject association that promotes the effective learning of language and culture learning and the preservation and ongoing development of first/heritage/native languages. It has established “four pillars” regarding the *benefits of language learning*:

- Academic Success for Second Language Students
- Heritage and Identity Recognition
- Personal and Interpersonal Growth
- Career and Future Enhancement

In its partnership with the European Union Delegation to Canada, ILEA members from various school districts across Ontario have recognized the EU Day of Languages as a useful opportunity for program promotion and the awareness-raising of strategies and processes for language learning. In 2020, this partnership was carried to the virtual world with the intention of developing ideas and building upon resources into the future. ILEA offers two key items in cooperation with the EU Delegation to Canada (and its partners):

- Availability of sample lessons/resources for various languages to serve as an introduction of the language
- Availability of representatives of European languages to be welcomed virtually into a teacher’s class for a quick lesson and discussion about the language (via school boards that are members of ILEA)

Here is what you can do as a teacher:

- Assign students to do at least one lesson from the clips available on the ILEA website
- Invite a speaker to your class for a basic lesson and brief introduction to their language
- Ask students to do a reflection activity on their experiences such as the exit card that appears within this document
- Discuss language learning in general with learners using the sample survey within this document prior to the language lesson (and revisit after)
- Consider promoting self-guided strategies and commitment activities to learners such as those suggested in this document in order for them to invest their time and energy into working with the language and not only relying solely on interactions with teachers
- Use progress charts with learners for their ongoing development (sample included in this document)
- Consult the ILEA Intercultural Understanding tasks from the website for further ideas

How can I message this event for my learners?

All languages are important. This event will promote this idea by bringing you an opportunity to experience another language other than the one we are working with in this class. When experiencing the sample lesson/the visitor's presentation, think about how you approached this language for the limited time you had. Some questions you can consider are:

- What did you do yourself to learn the basics?
- What kind of learner are you?
- What are the topics that you yourself would consider important when working with a language? What comparisons have you noted among the languages you already know/are getting to know? What does it take to be an effective language learner?
- How can your teacher help you the most on your language journey?

Language Experience Exit Card

(consider using this sample in your own google form that students submit to you directly)

Date:

Language Lesson in _____

After viewing the language lesson clip on the ILEA website, I remember learning these specific items:

Viewing the sample language lesson, made me realize these three things about me as a language learner:

Strategies that are important in general when learning or continuing to develop a language:



What is Language Awareness?

Language Awareness refers to the context of reflecting on the use, development, varieties, applications and impact of language learning. It is considered as an important process for both language learners and language educators. All learners in any context use language for daily communication needs and for their interactions with people, texts and communications. Many educators consider implementing language awareness activities throughout the curriculum as this awareness helps readers and listeners to:

- Develop a sense of the choice of words that are used to express something
- Heighten critical thinking skills to understand the rationale and background of what is being discussed from the viewpoint of a speaker
- Become aware of how people use verbal and non-verbal communication and how this could vary based on cultural factors
- Deepen an understanding on how we learn language
- Dispel myths and assumptions about language learning and plurilingualism

Language learners employ their receptive skills (listening and reading) in order to comprehend language they receive. They aim to demonstrate their comprehension and use of language via knowledge of a topic via productive skills (speaking and writing). In language classrooms, a focus on language awareness also helps to build confidence and preparedness among learners by addressing any assumptions or hesitations that may exist at the start of the language learning voyage. One useful tool to use is the Language Learning Assumptions Survey that follows. Students need to be assured that unless there exists any specific learning issues or obstacles, that everyone is capable of learning another language but that this means a willingness to put forward effort on behalf of learner and teacher.

For *educators*, language awareness can also highlight the particular beliefs that exist within the classroom in regards to learning, the kind of learning styles that are represented by learners and the curiosity that can be accessed in regards to language(s). Teachers often employ language awareness strategies by comparing the target language and that/those of learners so that they are ready to facilitate the learning of concepts, structures, pronunciations, expressions that could be challenging. Sample activities for language awareness follow within this document.



Language Learning Assumptions Survey



	Statements	Yes	No	Maybe	Comment
1	<i>Not everyone can learn a new language.</i>				
2	<i>Repetition is important.</i>				
3	<i>Knowing more than one language helps you learn more languages.</i>				
4	<i>The teacher should always correct mistakes.</i>				
5	<i>The teacher should use the language as much as possible in class.</i>				
6	<i>The student should practise the language between classes.</i>				
7	<i>It is good to practise what one knows in a language in many different ways.</i>				
8	<i>Grammar is important when beginning to learn a language.</i>				
9	<i>Language learning should be fun.</i>				
10	<i>Speaking comes first when learning a new language.</i>				

Commitment Activity



My plans for using this language are:

.....

.....

.....

This month I will do these three things outside of class to practise this language:

1.
2.
3.

Use some of these categories for ideas:



Film
or TV
show



Magazine or
Newspaper



Music



Internet

Language and Cultural Awareness Progress



Skills	Teacher Example (or Student Choice)	I'm doing well...	I'm working on it...	I need to practise more...	Teacher Comment
Listening	<i>understand a conversation among my peers</i>				
Speaking	<i>describe myself and my likes and dislikes</i>				
Reading	<i>read and understand a friend's description of family</i>				
Writing	<i>write about my daily routine</i>				
Intercultural Understanding	<i>understand the use of non-verbal communication (body language) used by speakers</i>				

Useful Links



Delegation of the European Union to Canada (main website)
https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/canada_en

European Centre for Modern Languages
<https://edl.ecml.at/Home/tabid/1455/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

Council of Europe
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/european-day-of-languages#:~:text=Celebrated%20on%2026%20September%2C%20the,and%20protecting%20the%20linguistic%20heritage>

ILEA Ontario
www.ilea.ca (main page)
[https://ilea.ca/edl/](http://www.ilea.ca/edl/) (EU Day page)

For a sample of student perceptions on language learning at past #EDL events with ILEA Ontario check out these QR codes that lead you to sample student answers to exit cards at the events:

On Skill Development:



On Learning Rationale:



ILEA Institutional Members include: school district departments, faculties of languages/education, exchange and culture organizations, specialized language centres, embassies/consulates. To have your institution included in ILEA Membership and its Forums, please email info@ilea.ca and you can also follow ILEA on its social media.

Twitter <https://twitter.com/ileaontario>

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