

## TEACHER'S NOTES

## 1B. Linguistic landscape

**In this activity, students will...**

- Identify the presence and use of various languages in their daily lives.
- Become aware of the linguistic and cultural diversity of their society and community.
- Understand the value of their own linguistic and cultural knowledge.

ESTIMATED  
TIME35-40 MIN  
2 SESSIONS**How to use this resource**

- STAGE 1** · Explain to your students that we often fail to notice that we live in a multilingual and multicultural society, even if the evidence is right in front of our eyes. Tell them that you are going to do a linguistic landscape project. Explain to them that a linguistic landscape is formed by all the languages present around us in public places, e.g. in street names, graffiti, notes and advertisements; on signs, boards and flyers; etc. **10'**
- Show your students a couple of pictures of linguistic landscapes (you can take them from <https://lingscape.uni.lu>, for example) to make sure they have understood the concept properly. You can ask them: What languages are being used? What do you think the signs say? Where was this picture probably taken?
  - Ask your students to form groups of three or four. For the next session, each group should bring three pictures of signs in their neighbourhood or town. If your school is in a rural location, an alternative is to allow your students to search for signs on the internet. Each sign must be written in a language other than the majority language, although the majority language can be present on it too. Ask the students to print out pictures of three signs they find especially interesting and bring them to class, even if they are not sure what languages the signs are written in or exactly what they mean.
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- STAGE 2** · Allow each group to discuss their pictures with another group; encourage them to try to make sense of the signs. It might be useful to remind them of the original questions about each picture: **10'**
- Where was the picture taken?
  - In what language(s) do you think the sign is written?
  - Why do you think the sign has been written in the language(s) in question?
  - Who might have written it? Who is it aimed at?
  - What do you think the sign says?
- This task can be gamified. For example, as the group who took each picture will know where it was taken and might well know what it means, the other groups could try to guess what it means. The group with most right answers could "win" something.
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- STAGE 3** · Ask your students to share the signs they find most interesting with the whole class. Is there a sign whose meaning is not clear? Are there any signs written in an unidentified language? Let the group discuss what languages the signs might be written in and what they might mean. Maybe there is someone in the class who can speak one of the languages used. **10'**

- STAGE 4** · Discuss the similarities and differences between the pictures taken. On the board, write up a summary of the main results of the project: **5-10'**
- What types of signs were shown in the pictures? What types of institutions, businesses or individuals put them up?
  - What languages were present in the pictures? Apart from the majority language, which were the most common languages?

### Prep time suggestions

- For stage 1 (first session)
  - Bring some some pictures of local linguistic landscapes (you can take them yourself or look for them on the internet). You can either print them out or use an overhead projector to display them.
  - Print out the instruction sheet.
- For stages 2-4 (second session): if the students are not going to be printing out their pictures themselves, ask them to send or give them to you in advance and print them out for them (or, if working with electronic devices, place the pictures in a shared folder from where the students can access them).
- Read chapter 1 of the Teacher's Book *Inclusion, Diversity and Communication Across Cultures*, available online (<https://pagines.uab.cat/eylbid/en/content/teachers-book>), especially section 1.3.1, for extra background information on the topic of multilingualism in our societies.

### Are you ready to discover the multilingual and multicultural diversity of your neighbourhood or town?

Divide into groups of three or four students and take to the streets to photograph the linguistic landscape of your neighbourhood or town. Look out for all kinds of signs, boards, graffiti, notes, flyers, advertisements, shopfronts and shop windows, etc.; their texts must be written in a language other than English – although English can be present too! Take pictures of the three most interesting signs you find.

Once you have your pictures, print them out and bring them to class. As a group, prepare answers to the following questions in advance:

- Where was the picture taken?
- In what language(s) do you think the sign is written?
- Why do you think the sign has been written in the language(s) in question?
- Who might have written it? Who is it aimed at?
- What do you think the sign says?



## TEACHER'S NOTES

## 1C. Language portrait

**In this activity, students will...**

- Identify the presence and use of various languages in their daily lives.
- Reflect on the role languages and multilingualism play in everyone's daily life.
- Become aware of their own multilingualism and that of others.

ESTIMATED  
TIME

30 MIN

**How to use this resource**

- |                |  |            |
|----------------|--|------------|
| <b>STAGE 1</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that everybody uses different languages, dialects, registers and ways of speaking on a daily basis, even if we are sometimes unaware of it.</li> <li>• Ask your students to reflect on the different languages or ways of speaking they use with different people (parents, brothers and/or sisters, grandparents, cousins, friends, classmates) and in different settings (at home, at school, on holiday, at the supermarket, in the park, etc.). Which languages do they prefer? Which languages are important to them and why?</li> <li>• Distribute the sheets with the body outline. Ask your students to colour them in to reflect the languages, dialects or registers that they use and are part of them. What colours and parts of the body (head, heart, hands, legs, etc.) do they associate with them? There is no right or wrong way to do this exercise, students can also draw an alternative body outline or add new details to the existing one; the only limit is each student's imagination!</li> <li>• As some students might feel embarrassed or reluctant to reveal their own linguistic diversity, you can offer them the options of producing their own language portrait or that of a famous person or fictional character known to be multilingual.</li> </ul> | <b>5'</b>  |
| <b>STAGE 2</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let the students work on their language portraits on their own.</li> </ul>  | <b>15'</b> |
| <b>STAGE 3</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option A: have volunteers show their language portraits to the rest of the class and explain what the different languages mean to them.</li> <li>• Option B: have the students work in pairs and explain their language portraits to each other.</li> <li>• Option C: display all the language portraits in the classroom and give your students the opportunity to look at each of them.</li> </ul>  | <b>10'</b> |

**Prep time suggestions**

- Print out one sheet per student. Remember not to provide examples of completed language portraits, since doing so would influence the students and limit their creativity.
- Provide the students with coloured pencils or felt tip pens, or make sure they bring their own.
- Read chapter 1 of the Teacher's Book *Inclusion, Diversity and Communication Across Cultures*, available online (<https://pagines.uab.cat/eylbid/en/content/teachers-book>), especially section 1.3.2, for extra background information on the topic of individual multilingualism.
- For a similar activity with a different approach (using emojis), which might be more appealing to older students, see activity 1G in the [Resource Bank](#).