

2. Schulaufgabe Englisch – Jahrgangsstufe 8 Gymnasium

Languages in the US

(1) In the 17th Century many Europeans sailed by ship to America by ship with the intention of starting a new life for themselves in „The New World“. The journey was difficult as it led across the stormy ocean and many of the settlers traveling to America didn't survive. Those who did survive arrived in a country that was already populated by a native people (the Indians). What they also found was a country with plenty of land, forests, wildlife and hope for a new start in life in the „New World“.

(2) The settlers came from many parts of the European continent and they spoke different languages and had different religious beliefs, customs, skills and talents. The majority of these travelers were English. There were also Dutch, Swedes, Germans, French, Spaniards, Italians, Portuguese, Scottish, Irish and Swiss. The different travelers came to America for different reasons. The Germans came to escape war, the Scottish and Irish to escape poverty.

(3) When they settled in this new land, they sometimes mixed together, but usually they stayed with their own kind. Settlement names were either new versions of their homeland like New Amsterdam (Holland), New Orleans (France) or Florida (Greece), or simply the same as in their native land like Cambridge (England/Massachusetts), Guttenberg (Germany/New Jersey), Haarlem (Holland/New York), Hamburg (Germany/New Jersey), and Plymouth (England/Massachusetts).

(4) After some time, the population agreed on English as their new language. Most of the children and grandchildren of the Dutch, French, German and Swedish immigrants spoke such good English that it was just as good as the children and grandchildren of the English settlers. Many languages have been used in the past in the United States but in modern America, American English is most commonly spoken. American English is actually not the official language in America. There have been several suggestions to make English the national language but nothing has come out of this.

(5) Spanish is the second most common language in the country, and is spoken by around 35 million people. The United States holds the world's fifth largest Spanish-speaking population, outnumbered only by Mexico, Spain, Colombia, and Argentina. Although many new Latin American immigrants are less than fluent in English, nearly all second-generation Hispanic Americans speak English fluently, while only about half still speak Spanish. There are more Spanish speakers in the United States than there are speakers of Chinese, French, German, Italian, Hawaiian, and the Native American languages altogether.

(6) According to the 2000 US census (=Volkzählung), people with German ancestors make up the largest single ethnic group in the United States, and the German language ranks fifth. Italian, Polish, and French are still widely spoken among populations descending (=abstammen) from immigrants from those countries in the early 20th century, but the use of these languages is decreasing as the older generations die. Russian is also spoken by immigrant populations.

(7) Spanish speaking US citizens are the fastest growing language group in the United States. Despite the increase in spoken Spanish, no one questions the continuing dominance of English in the United States and internationally. English is the most dominant language in the world today. No language in human history has ever had the global standing English currently enjoys.

A) Reading Comprehension: Text „Languages in the US“

Answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. What were two major reasons for Europeans to sail to America?

2. How did the settlers find names for their new settlements?

3. Can you imagine why the settlers called America the „New World“?

(Write about 50 words.)

Are the sentences right or wrong? Tick „Right“ or „Wrong“. If the sentences is wrong, correct it in the lines below.

1. The settlers who arrived in America found a land that was completely unpopulated.

Right

Wrong

2. Most settlers that came to America were English people.

Right

Wrong

3. Settlers from different origins mixed together at once after they had arrived in America.

Right

Wrong

4. Some time after their arrival, the settlers agreed on English as their common language although most immigrants had difficulties learning English.

Right

Wrong

5. The United States still don't have an official legal language.

Right

Wrong

Decide whether the following sentences are „True“ (T), „False“ (F) or „Not in the text“ (N) . Tick (✓) the correct box.

		T	F	N
1.	Spanish is the most important language in the US after English.			
2.	In the US there are more people speaking Spanish than in Spain.			
3.	There are more Spanish speaking people in Colombia than in Argentina.			
4.	Not many German settlers came to the US.			
5.	Languages like Polish or Italian die out in the US, because the people who speak them die, too.			

Explain the sentence from the text in your own words:

„Although many new Latin American immigrants are less than fluent in English, nearly all second-generation Hispanic Americans speak English fluently, while only about half still speak Spanish.“

B) Listening Comprehension: Text „Conversation between Michael and Steven“

Decide whether the following sentences are „True“ (T), „False“ (F) or „Not in the text“ (N) . Tick (✓) the correct box.

		T	F	N
1	Many languages and cultures brought by the early settlers still exist in the USA today.			
2	The journey from Europe to the USA could easily take a year.			
3	The first settlers were mostly Germans.			
4	More than 50 million Americans today have German origins.			
5	Today more people in the USA have Mexican than English origins.			
6	Michael thinks that it is amazing that only English is spoken in the United States today.			
7	More and more people in modern USA speak Spanish.			
8	Spanish is taught as a second language in all schools in the USA.			
9	People who come to America today have to learn English all by themselves.			
10	There are already plans to make English the official language of the USA.			

C) Grammar: Passiv Voice / Adjectives and adverbs

Form correct passive sentences (Mind the tense of the verbs!):

1. the settlers / to help / the Indians / after / they / to arrive / in America / in the early days

2. many different languages / to speak / the people / in the USA / today

3. up to now / English / not to introduce / as official language / but / at the moment / it / to discuss / to change that

4. People / to help / the government / to learn / English

5. Everyone / to come / to America / to offer / translation services / and other assistance / the government

Adjective or Adverb? Fill in the gaps with the correct form of the words in brackets:

At the time when the first Irish settlers came to America, Ireland was a _____ (poor) country. Many families sold all they owned to pay for the _____ (long) journey across the Atlantic Ocean. _____ (unfortunate) many settlers died during the journey. Those who were to have _____ (final) reached the New World had _____ (high) hopes to find a better life and a _____ (bright) future. You can _____ (hard)

