KS2 Unit 6 Lesson 1 Forming a Language

Crib Sheet

This is the first in a six-week unit where we ask pupils to work in small groups to create their own language. These lessons are based on the Queen Mary Invented Languages Scheme materials, protected under CC-BY-NC. Our sincere thanks go to Professor David Adger and Dr Coppe van Urksor at https://creatinglanguages.org/ for the generous sharing of their material with us.

We will challenge your pupils to create a single consistent language as the motivation for learning and understanding linguistic concepts. We will teach examples of a variety of human languages to give students ideas for using in their own languages. Students will learn new, interesting facts about actual languages. Along the way, we will give them restricted `Design Choices' which they choose, and then have to implement consistently. In the final lesson, with their language choices complete, they get to use it creatively. This unit is a lot of fun.

Slide 1: Introduce the aims of the lesson to look at constructed languages; to think about why people make up languages (religious, social, artistic, personal); to think about different sounds in different languages; to look at made-up languages in literature and film and to think about how we write our languages down.

Slide 2: Acknowledgements. Please do have a look at creatinglanguages.org website for further inspiration.

Slide 3: The first of our invented languages is from Hildegard von Bingen's and is called the *Lingua Ignota*. Read the information on the slide. What do pupils notice about the writing example? What do pupils notice about the example words (the endings? Similarities between the English and the *Lingua Ignota*?) Can pupils think about why the language shared sounds with German? (It's very hard to create sounds when you are used to your mother tongue's sounds). Finally, why do they think she would have wanted to create her own language? (Think about her religion and calling. Did the language bring her closer to God? Did she want a universal language? The reasons remain unknown)).

Slide 4: This slide looks at Esperanto (my personal favourite as my grandma learnt it!) You can find YouTube clips to hear what Esperanto sounds like when spoken. It was created as a universal language. What do your pupils think of this idea? Could it help achieve peace? He chose the languages shown in the diagram as these were the languages he was familiar with. It

has a strong European core making it less accessible to those who speak Asian, African languages for example.

Slide 5: The poem they are asked to examine is "Baa Baa Black Sheep" in Esperanto. What words can your pupils pick out from knowledge of English, other mother tongues or languages learnt in school? Jes = yes, tri = three, unu = one, mastro/mastrin = master/dame, strata = street. Pupils begin to think about their made-up language. Will they want to have influence from other languages?

Slide 6: Here we hear the sounds of Klingon. Click on the video link. Pupils realise how harsh they sound. What particular sounds can they hear? Does the sound of the language reflect the character of the group? The words in red are in Klingon. Notice the capitals at the beginning and end of the statement. Pupils can read it out in a Klingon way.

Slide 7: As a comparison, we hear Elvish on this slide. The soft sounds can be heard from Tolkien in the embedded clip. Why are the sounds soft? Do they like the sounds? What images, thoughts or feelings does hearing the language evoke? Pupils read the words in red in Elvish. What sounds do they hear?

Slide 8: We continue to look at Elvish and its script. Ask pupils what they notice about the writing. Why did Tolkien create these languages in his books?

Slide 9: Some older pupils may have read or watched Artemis Fowl and come across Gnommish. Other languages have a different number of letters in their alphabet. Some have characters rather than letters. How much do your pupils know? Ask pupils about the writing of the languages they speak at home.

Slide 10: Pupils will be familiar with Parseltongue from Harry Potter. How is the language made snakey? Look at the letters representing sounds in the red example. What sounds are used? What letters are used to represent those sounds?

Slide 11: Pupils now get into small groups to begin their created language project. They have to draw an island or a planet including rivers, harbours and bays, a volcano, mountains, forests, towns and directions (North, South etc.). This map will form the base on which we will build a language.