



# ENGLISH ENTRANCE EXAM: JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup> 2012

Name and Surname(s): \_\_\_\_\_

***Time allowed for this exam: 2 Hours***

***Before starting, please read the following carefully:***

- ☞ *All mobile phones must be turned off.*
- ☞ *Make sure your name is correctly given above.*
- ☞ *There are three parts to this exam – each carries the same weight:*
  - *I. Reading Comprehension*
  - *II. Language Work*
  - *III. Written Essay.*
- ☞ *Write all your answers in English in this exam booklet. Use the spaces provided.*
- ☞ *All rough paper will be collected after the exam.*

## ***POLITE WARNING!***

***ANY TALKING, COPYING OR USE OF NON-AUTHORISED DEVICES  
DURING THE EXAM WILL MEAN AUTOMATIC AND IMMEDIATE  
DISQUALIFICATION***

**I. Reading Comprehension**

**II. Language Work**

**III. Essay**

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# Can we save the world's dying languages?

1 Many scientists believe that Facebook, YouTube and even  
texting will be the salvation of many of the world's  
endangered languages. But can digital tools save  
languages? A BBC reporter explains one case:

5 I travelled four hours west from the city of  
Arusha, in Tanzania, to meet the Hadza, an ancient tribe  
of hunter-gatherers. They are poor in material  
possessions, but rich in the skills and creativity they need  
to live in their environment. But, that's not all that sets  
10 them apart from most societies.

The Hadza are believed to be the most ancient  
ethnic group in the modern world. Their language is  
equally unique: they speak a clicking tongue (also called  
Hadza), which is unrelated to other clicking languages indigenous to Africa. According to some linguists,  
15 Hadza may be close to humankind's first ancestral language.

## Dying out

However their language may not be around for long. The Hadza have lived in small groups of around 15  
people in a remote area in north-central Tanzania for at least 10,000 years. But now there are less than  
1,000 Hadza left, and their stone-age, hunter-gatherer lifestyle is under threat. Their land is being  
20 swallowed up by the interests of farmers, government-designated conservation areas and private hunting  
reserves. The invasion of the modern world means that, as the younger Hadza are starting to learn the  
widely spoken Swahili tongue, they are also losing some of the peculiar features of their own language  
(e.g. there are no words for counting past four).

The Hadza are not alone in facing the loss of their native tongue. Every 14 days a language dies  
25 and over half of the 7,000 languages spoken on the planet may disappear by the end of the century. We are  
living in the Anthropocene age, or the age in which humanity is having a significant impact on the  
environment – a time when language extinction is happening faster than species extinction. Many of these  
endangered languages have no written form. Once the last speaker dies, so does the language.

It is said that with every language you speak you gain a new soul. But 80% of the world's  
30 population now speak just 1.1% of its languages, and universal languages, like English, dominate the  
internet and the majority of published texts. So, will the Anthropocene age be the time when language  
diversity is reduced to Mandarin, English or Spanish? Are we in danger of losing our soul?

Not if some people can have their way. They are fighting back to preserve these rarer tongues - in  
some cases, with great success. Perhaps the most successful example is Hebrew, which was dead two  
35 centuries ago but living again by the 20th century. Other languages have also been brought back from the  
brink of extinction through the determination of their communities: Welsh, Cornish, Gaelic and New  
Zealand Maori.

## Unexpected saviour

In other places, technology is proving to be an unexpected saviour. The linguist K. David Harrison, has  
40 been creating “talking dictionaries” of endangered languages that help users to preserve the tongues  
digitally through audiovisual recordings of native speakers, and even has a YouTube channel for  
endangered languages. In some cases, people have created an orthography for languages that have never  
been written down, so they can send SMS messages to each other.

The Hadza have also had their language preserved in a digital dictionary by Kirk Miller, an  
45 American linguist who spent eight months living with them. It might be just in time. At the end of my visit  
some of the men tried to sell me a bow and arrow, while the women were peddling beads to tourists. It  
made me wonder. If they have survived for so long living from what they hunt and produce, then what will  
they buy with this money? Will it help them to preserve a way of life and language that was once practised  
by our ancestors? Or, will it be digital tools that will help to preserve what is probably one of the oldest  
50 cultures and languages we know?



## I. Reading Comprehension (10 points)

*Answer the following questions using your own words:*

1. What reasons are given to explain why Hazda is a dying language? **(3 points)**
2. What made the author choose to investigate Hazda? **(1 point)**
3. Why does the author mention the men trying to sell her a bow and arrow and the women peddling beads? **(2 points)**
4. What does the author mean by “It might be just in time” – l. 45 **(2 points)**
5. What are the author’s views about languages? **(2 points)**

## II. Language work (10 points)

A) Explain the meaning of the following words / phrases in the context in which they appear:

1. be around (*l. 17*):
2. left (*l. 19*):
3. swallowed up (*l.20*):
4. Not if some people can have their way (*l. 33*):
5. brought back (*l. 35*)

B) Find a synonym in the text for the following:

1. distinguishes
2. sell
3. acquire

C) Explain what the following word refers to:

1. it (*l. 46*)

### **III. Essay (10 points)**

*Write a short essay (approximately 150-175 words) in response to the following question:*

What other ways might people use to try and save their own unique languages in an ever more global world?