7,000 different languages are estimated to be spoken around the world. But the ten most spoken languages are used natively by close to 40% of the earth’s population. Hundreds of millions of people have learned them as a second or third language. And they are also the dominant languages of global commerce, diplomacy and scholarship.

- **Javanese** is the most widely spoken language without any official status.
- Modern written Japanese combines three systems: kanji (characters of Chinese origin), hiragana, and katakana.
- Russian is the most widely spoken native language in Europe, with 162 million native speakers primarily in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.
- The first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature was Bengali poet and author Rabindranath Tagore, in 1913.
- Portuguese is the official language of 8 countries.
- Thirty regional dialects of Arabic are spoken across 5 million square miles—from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east.
- Hindi is one of 461 languages currently spoken in India.
- Of the 450 million people worldwide who speak English, 36% are not native speakers.
- Spanish is the primary language spoken at home by almost 37 million people in the U.S.
- About 12% of the world’s population speaks Mandarin, one of hundreds of different Chinese dialects.

Mandarin

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