

## Did You Know

The Sahara, the world's largest hot desert, almost as large as the United States at over 3,500,000 mi<sup>2</sup> is located in northern part of African continent. It serves as a border between the continent's black African south and Arab-influenced north. On the west, the Sahara is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and on the east by the Red Sea. The average temperature in this region is about 31.5° F, in the higher elevations it has been recorded at 5° F. The average annual rainfall is around five inches and includes snow in the higher elevations. Sahara is the home to many animals,



among them the gerbil, the desert hedgehog, gazelle, spotted hyena, to name a few. Reptiles - including frogs, toads, and crocodiles - can be found within the Sahara's lakes and pools of water, while lizards, chameleons, and cobras are to be found among the dunes and rocks. The

Sahara also contains over 300 species of birds, some of them being ostriches, desert eagle, barn owls, and ravens. The Sahara Desert has only 2.5 million inhabitants - roughly 1 person per square mile - which is one of the lowest population densities on earth. People who live in the desert are Tuareg, Tubu, and Moor. Tuaregs still run salt caravans and herd goat, sheep and camels. Moors farm date palms. But much has changed in the last few decades. Trucks are replacing camels in the salt trade, and Tuaregs are acting as guides to Western adventure tourists.

Sources:

[http://library.thinkquest.org/16645/the\\_land/saha\\_al.shtml](http://library.thinkquest.org/16645/the_land/saha_al.shtml)

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[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/africa/explore/sahara/sahara\\_overview\\_lo.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/africa/explore/sahara/sahara_overview_lo.html)

## Adventures in Language

There are four major language families native to Africa.

- The *Afro-Asiatic* languages are a language family of about 240 languages and 285 million people widespread throughout East Africa, North Africa, the Sahel, and Southwest Asia.
- The *Nilo-Saharan* language family consists of more than a hundred languages spoken by 30 million people. Nilo-Saharan languages are mainly spoken in Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda, and northern Tanzania.
- The *Niger-Congo* language family covers much of Sub-Saharan Africa and is probably the largest language family in the world in terms of different languages. A substantial number of them are the



Bantu languages spoken in much of sub-Saharan Africa.

- The *Khoisan* languages number about 50 and are spoken in Southern Africa by approximately 120 000 people. Many of the Khoisan languages are endangered. The Khoi and San peoples are considered the original inhabitants of this part of Africa.

With a few notable exceptions in East Africa, nearly all African countries have adopted official languages that originated outside the continent and spread through colonialism or human migration. For example, in numerous countries English and French are used for communication in the public sphere such as government, commerce, education and the media. Arabic, Portuguese, Afrikaans and Malagasy are other examples of originally non-African languages that are used by millions of Africans today, both in the public and private spheres.

## Adventures in Language (cont.)

In Nigeria, there are over 250 different languages and dialects. While English is the official national language, there are three main traditional languages that Nigerian people speak. The first is Hausa, an Afro-Asiatic language, which is spoken in northern Nigeria.

### English –Yoruba:

Welcome	<i>Ekaabo</i>
Hello	<i>Ago o</i>
How are you?	<i>Ba wo ni</i>
Fine, thank you	<i>Dadani esa</i>
Good night	<i>O daa ro</i>
Good morning	<i>Ekaaro</i>
Good-bye	<i>O da bo</i>

The Igbo language is spoken in south-east Nigeria by the Igbo people.

Yoruba, the third main traditional language in Nigeria, is spoken in the south-west. Like Igbo, it is part of the Niger-Congo language family. Yoruba has a dialect continuum of West Africa with over 22 million speakers.

The Yoruba alphabet looks like this:

A B D E E F G Gb H I J K L M N O O P R S S T U W Y.

The Latin letters c, q, v, x, z are not used. Yoruba has seven oral and five nasal vowels.

Since Yoruba is a tonal language, every syllable bears one of the three tones: high (´), mid (˘ -- generally left unmarked), and low (ˋ).

Changing the tone can change a word, even if it is spelled the same. The combination of the "do-re-mi" concept helps beginners when learning the Yoruba language.

Examples:

- High tone (do): ó b -- 'he jumped'
- Mid-tone (re): ó b -- 'he is forward'
- Low tone (mi): ó b -- 'he asks for pardon'

## Fun

- ◇ African dust can find its way to Florida. The dust is kicked up by high winds in North Africa and carried as high as 20,000 feet, where it's caught up in the trade winds and carried across the sea.
- ◇ Somalia is the only African country in which the entire population speaks the same language, Somali.
- ◇ Many languages in Africa include a "click" sound that is pronounced at the same time as other sounds. You must learn these languages in childhood to do it properly.
- ◇ The Nile is the longest river in the world, flowing through Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt.
- ◇ The word Sahara in Arabic means "desert".
- ◇ Four of the five fastest land animals live in Africa – the cheetah, which can run at an amazing 70 miles per hour, wildebeest, lion and gazelle.
- ◇ Lake Malawi in southern Africa is home to around 500 different types of fish. That's more than anywhere else in the world!
- ◇ African Grey Parrots are known to have vocabularies of over 200 words.



## Facts

- ◇ In South Africa the @ is called "aapstert" which means a "monkey's tail".
- ◇ The only dog in the world that does not bark is an African dog, Basenji.
- ◇ The shortest war in history was between Zanzibar and England in 1896. Zanzibar surrendered after 38 minutes.
- ◇ Even though their necks can be 6-7 feet in length, Giraffe have the same number of vertebrae in their necks as humans.
- ◇ The world's largest diamond was the Cullinan, found in South Africa in 1905. It weighed 3,106.75 carats uncut. It was cut into the Great Star of Africa, weighing 530.2 carats, the Lesser Star of Africa, which weighs 317.40 carats, and 104 other diamonds of nearly flawless color and clarity. They now form part of the British crown jewels.
- ◇ The Namib is the world's oldest desert, and the only desert in Africa inhabited by elephant, rhino, giraffe and lion.
- ◇ Madagascar is the home of the worlds largest as well as the smallest chameleons! Almost half of the world's chameleon species live on the island of Madagascar.
- ◇ Safari in Swahili means journey.