



Facts and Figures

- Ninety-two percent of the world's countries have at least one official language. (Source: 2002 World Almanac, 2001 U.S. Bureau of the Census Estimates)
- English is the sole official language in 31 nations. An additional 20 nations recognize English as one of two or more official languages. (Source: 2002 World Almanac, 2001 U.S. Bureau of the Census Estimates)
- In 2010, 25.2 million U.S. residents (8.7 percent of the U.S. population) met the definition of limited English proficient set by the U.S. Census, meaning they spoke English "less than very well." (Source: Census 2010)
- The number of Americans who speak English "not at all" jumped from 3.37 million in 2000 to 4.49 million in 2007. As of 2007, 8.1 percent of the U.S. population who speak a language other than English at home can speak English "not at all." (Source: Census 2000 and Census American Community Survey 2007)
- California leads the nation in the number of limited English proficient people, with 19.8 percent of its population (about 6.9 million people) struggling to read, write, speak or understand English. Texas is second with 14.4 percent of its population (3.4 million people) classified as LEP, followed by New York at 13.5 percent, New Jersey at 12.5 percent and Nevada at 12.3 percent. (Source: Census 2010)
- In 2009, 4.7 percent of U.S. residents lived in linguistically isolated households, meaning that no one in the household spoke English at home or spoke English "very well." Source: Census American Community Survey 2009)
- There are 325 languages spoken at home in the United States. (Source: Census 2010)
- California has the most languages spoken at home of any state with 213. New York is second with 173, followed by Texas, Washington and Florida (Source: Census 2010)
- 79 percent of Americans, and 81 percent of first and second generation Americans favor making English the official language of the United States. Majority support for official English was recorded among every subgroup, including age, gender, race, and political affiliation. (Source: Zogby International, June 2005)
- In 1999, the average employed immigrant who spoke English very well earned \$40,741, more than double the \$16,345 earned by immigrants who did not speak English at all.

The increasing scale of English proficiency and earnings was recorded at every education level from less than high school through master's degree and beyond. (Source: Educational Testing Services, A Human Capital Concern: The Literary Proficiency of U.S. Immigrants, March 2004)

- Data from the National Adult Literacy Survey found that immigrants with a low degree of English proficiency earned one-half of what those with a medium degree of proficiency earned and less than one-third of highly English proficient immigrants. (Source: Educational Testing Services, A Human Capital Concern: The Literary Proficiency of U.S. Immigrants, March 2004)
- Effective English language instruction is an essential antipoverty tool for working immigrant families. Poverty and the need for public benefits, such as food stamps, are more closely related to limited English proficiency than with citizenship or legal status. (Source: Urban Institute, Immigrant Well-Being in New York and Los Angeles, August 2002)
- Nearly two-in-three foreign born adults say that the United States should expect all immigrants to learn English. (Source: Public Agenda survey of 1,002 foreign born adults, 2002)
- 68 percent of Hispanics say that the goal of bilingual education programs should be to make sure that students learn English well. (Source: The Latino Coalition survey of 1,000 Hispanic adults, 2002)
- Three-in-four foreign born adults believe that schools should teach English to immigrant students as quickly as possible, even if it means that they need to catch up in other subjects. (Source: The Latino Coalition survey of 1,000 Hispanic adults, 2002)
- Nearly 90 percent of Latinos believe that adult Latino immigrants need to learn English in order to succeed in the United States. (Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation survey of 2,929 Hispanic adults, 2002)
- The total annual cost for the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to provide language services is \$2.2 million. (Source: U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Report to Congress: Assessment of the Total Benefits and Costs of Implementing Executive Order No. 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, March 14, 2002)
- Of the 3,600 Chinese ballots prepared for the Sept. 2002 primary election in King County, Wash., only 24 (or 0.67 percent) were used. (Source: Warren Cornwall, Bilingual vote turnout low: Only 24 Chinese ballots returned in primary, Seattle Times, October 9, 2002)
- The total cost of providing multilingual services for the Immigration and Naturalization Service would be between \$114 million and \$150 million annually. (Source: U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Report to Congress: Assessment of the Total Benefits and

Costs on Implementing Executive Order No. 13166: Improving Access to Services for Person with Limited English Proficiency, March 14, 2002)

- It costs \$1.86 million annually to prepare written translations for food stamp recipients nationwide. The cost for oral translations skyrocketed to \$21 million nationally per year. (Source: U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Report to Congress: Assessment of the Total Benefits and Costs of Implementing Executive Order No. 13166: Improving Access to Services for Person with Limited English Proficiency, March 14, 2002)
- A 2001 Gallup poll found that 96 percent of Americans believe that it is essential/important that immigrants living in the United States learn to speak English. (Source: Gallup Poll, 2001)
- The U.S. Department of Education found that those with limited English proficiency are less likely to be employed, less likely to be employed continuously, tend to work in the least desirable sectors and earn less than those who speak English. Annual earnings by non-English proficient adults were approximately half of the total population surveyed. (Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics; English Literacy and Language Minorities in the United States, August 2001)
- The City of San Francisco must spend \$350,000 for each language that a document is translated into under the city's bilingual government ordinance. (Source: Janet Ng, Asian Week.com, June 2001)
- 85 percent of Americans believe it is very hard or somewhat hard for immigrants to get a good job or do well in this country without learning English. (Source: Gallup Poll, 2001)
- The Canadian Government spends \$260 million annually to do government business in both of the nation's official languages. This figure was 0.16% of the Canadian federal budget. If the U.S. was to spend 0.16% of the federal budget to do government business in two languages, the cost would be \$3.8 billion. (Source: Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Canada)
- The Canadian Government spends \$24 per Canadian resident per year to do government business in both of the nation's official languages. If the U.S. was to spend \$24 per person per year on government multilingualism, the cost would be \$5.7 billion. (Source: Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Canada)