

Reading and speaking

Language lovers

1 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

1 Which percentage of people in each of these countries say they can speak a foreign language?

- a 25% b 91% c 38% d 62%

| | | | |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| the US | _____ | Sweden | _____ |
| Italy | _____ | the UK | _____ |

2 In which of these countries can schoolchildren stop learning a foreign language when they are 14?

- a China b Turkey c Brazil d the UK

3 Is it important for native speakers of English to learn a foreign language? Why/Why not?

Answers: 1 the US: 25%, the UK: 25%, Italy: 62%, Sweden: 91%, Brazil: 38%

2 Read the introduction to the text on p25 and the fact files about the two people.

- Why do you think this article appeared in a British newspaper?
- Why do you think each person wanted to learn a foreign language?

3 Work in two groups.

Group A: Read about **Eddie Izzard** and complete your part of the chart.

Group B: Read about **Chris Packham** and complete your part of the chart.

| | Eddie Izzard | Chris Packham |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| Languages spoken | | |
| Motivation for learning them | | |
| Level reached | | |
| Benefits they see in learning languages | | |

4 Find a partner from the other group. Work together to swap information and complete the chart.



THE COMEDIAN: EDDIE IZZARD

FACT FILE

- Born 1962, Yemen.
- Popular British stand-up comedian.
- Often tours abroad, and has been performing in other languages since 2011.

I describe my language ability in percentages of fluency. I'm about 65% fluent in French, 30% fluent in German, and about half a percent fluent in Spanish. I'm already touring my show in French in

THE WILDLIFE EXPERT: CHRIS PACKHAM

FACT FILE

- Born 1961, England.
- Nature photographer and author, well known in the UK as a presenter on popular TV wildlife shows.
- Has a house in France.

In France, where I have a house, it's quite remote and none of my neighbours spoke any English. I rocked up ten years ago and had no more ability in French than being able to go to Paris and survive a weekend. I bought some CDs, but learning it that way didn't work for me, so I had to think of a plan B.

I bought some wildlife books at a local bookshop and because I understood the context, I was able to read them cover to cover and grasp some of what they were saying. Then I said to my neighbours: 'Look, I'll speak to you in French and I want you to constantly correct me. I won't be offended.' And they were great, they did.

I do find it quite difficult. If I was living in the language all the time, I'd get on top of it and it would stick. The longest stint I've had there has been three months, and by the end of that I was thinking in French