

Fictional Languages

Langlois and Vibulphol (see page 12) describe an activity in which people try (and often fail) to communicate in fictional languages with special rules. Below are expressions in five fictional languages. Can you figure out the rule for each language and what the meanings are in English?

For example, if you see “Eet’s reeneeng” and “Ee’m tweenty yeers eeld,” you might figure out that they mean “It’s raining” and “I’m twenty years old.” You can then see that the rule for that language is “All vowel sounds become ee.” (Note: In Languages 1 and 2, the spelling is scrambled—but how, exactly, are the letters in the words rearranged?)

Language 1. Rule: _____.

1. Doog gninrom! → _____
2. Ohw si taht? → _____
3. S’tel tae! → _____

Language 2. Rule: _____.

4. Ejnu cemos beefor Jluy. → _____
5. Ew aer ggino ot a abdirthy aprty. → _____
6. How now eht acer? → _____

Language 3. Rule: _____.

7. To is Sat. Yes was Fri. → _____
8. My fam has sev peo. → _____
9. Con! → _____

Language 4. Rule: _____.

10. Are thefe your fcifforf? → _____
11. Fwimming claff if on Tuefday. → _____
12. Thif if filly! → _____

***Language 5. Rule:** _____.

13. Here come the zorg and the zorg! → _____
14. The zorg is different from the zorg. → _____
15. My zorg has two zorgs and one zorg. → _____

(*Many English interpretations are possible for the Language 5 expressions!)

Answers to *THE LIGHTER SIDE*

FICTIONAL LANGUAGES

- Language 1. Rule: Words are spelled backwards.
1. Good morning!
2. Who is that?
3. Let's eat!
- Language 2. Rule: Letters in each word are in alphabetical order.
4. June comes before July.
5. We are going to a birthday party.
6. Who won the race?
- Language 3. Rule: Only the first syllable of each word is used.
7. Today is Saturday. Yesterday was Friday.
8. My family has seven people.
9. Congratulations!
- Language 4. Rule: The letter *s* is replaced with the letter *f*.
10. Are these your scissors?
11. Swimming class is on Tuesday.
12. This is silly!
- Language 5. Rule: Every noun is the word *zorg*.
13. [Many answers, such as *Here come the bride and the groom*.]
14. [Many answers, such as *The movie is different from the book*.]
15. [Many answers, such as *My friend has two sisters and one brother*.]