

WORLD HISTORY READERS

Level 1 • 1

The Tower of Babel

Rob Waring

Series Editor Rob Waring

Seed
Learning



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Our Languages

The world is full of languages. There are more than 5,000 languages in use today.

There are thousands of ways to say a simple word like “Hello.”



Listening to a language

Ways to say, “Hello!”



Many of the world’s languages are related. French, Italian, and Spanish are Latin languages. They share many words and some grammar. German, Swedish, and English are related, too.

Where did all these languages come from?



An old pen and
some papers

There are many stories about where our languages came from. Many of these stories are similar to the story of the Tower of Babel.

To understand this story, we must begin with the flood.

Egyptian writing on a wall



The Great Flood

Long ago, there was a great flood. The world was covered with water. Noah and his family were safe on his ark.



Noah's ark during the flood

After the water had gone away, the only people left on earth were Noah and his family. They spoke one language.



A flood



The historic city of Babylon

Some of Noah's children's children went east to a land called Shinar, sometimes said to be Babylon, in modern-day Iraq.

Some years later, these people decided to build a tower "tall enough to reach heaven."

They wanted to be one people, close to God.



Tower of Babel (Babylon), a famous painting by Pieter Brueghel the Elder created in 1563

The Building Begins

They spent a long time building the tall tower. Thousands of people worked long and hard every day.

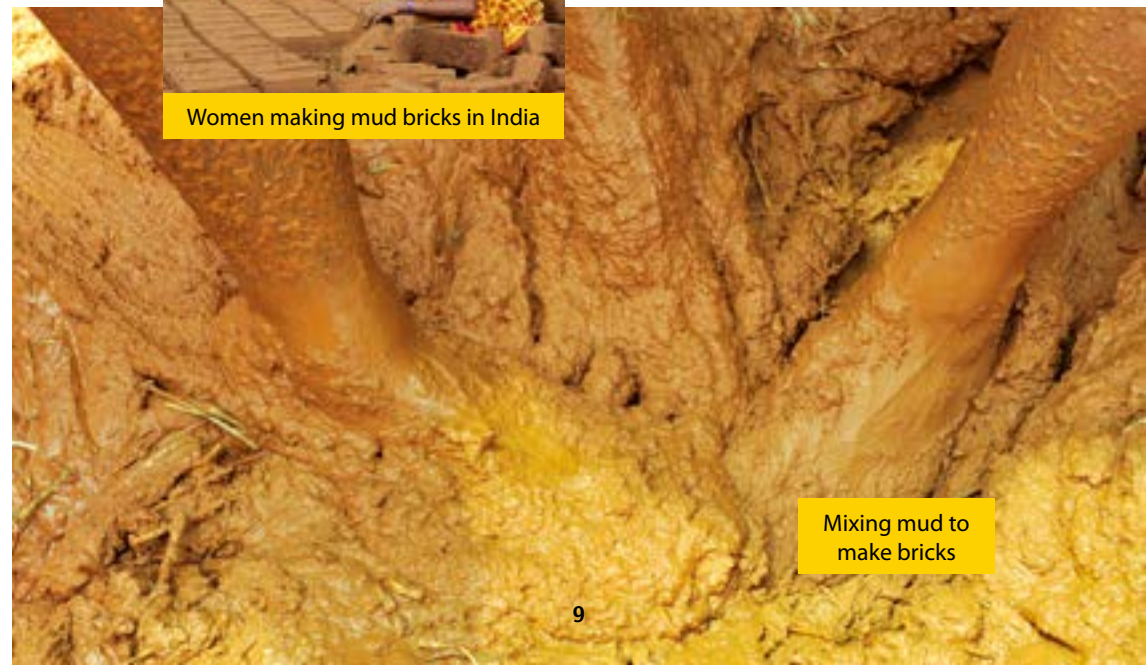
They made the bricks with mud from the earth and dried them in the hot sun.



Clay bricks drying in the sun



Women making mud bricks in India



Mixing mud to make bricks

Comprehension Questions

1. There are ... languages in the world.
 - (a) only a few
 - (b) hundreds of
 - (c) thousands of
 - (d) millions of
2. French and Italian are both... languages.
 - (a) English
 - (b) Latin
 - (c) German
 - (d) Babel's
3. We say German and English are...
 - (a) relations.
 - (b) relative.
 - (c) relatively.
 - (d) related.
4. In the Great Flood, what covered the earth?
 - (a) People
 - (b) Noah
 - (c) Language
 - (d) Water
5. The people on Noah's Ark...
 - (a) were wet.
 - (b) were hungry.
 - (c) spoke one language.
 - (d) made mud.
6. In one version, Nimrod told the people to...
 - (a) build a tower.
 - (b) take Noah's Ark.
 - (c) stop the flood.
 - (d) go to heaven.
7. They made the tower...
 - (a) with bricks.
 - (b) together.
 - (c) taller and taller.
 - (d) All of the above
8. God...
 - (a) told the people to build faster.
 - (b) gave them all different languages.
 - (c) sent a second flood.
 - (d) All of the above
9. Many people say this story is...
 - (a) not true.
 - (b) funny.
 - (c) full of evidence.
 - (d) sad.
10. Many scientists believe that our languages...
 - (a) have always been mixed.
 - (b) are dying.
 - (c) are modern.
 - (d) are creative.

Glossary

- **ancient** very old
- **brick** a hard block of mud used for building
- **confused** not knowing why, or how, something happened
- **enable** to allow us to do something
- **evidence** facts that are true about something
- **flood** a large amount of water covering an area of land
- **historian** a person who studies history
- **modern** concerning this time period; nowadays
- **mud** wet earth or soil
- **related** to be connected in some way
- **researcher** a scientist who studies things carefully
- **technique** a method or way to do something
- **tower** a very tall, thin building
- **version** a story or description that is different in some way from another person's story or description