

Lesson Plan: Language in Wakanda

In the movie Black Panther, most people speak English most of the time. However, Wakanda has its own special language and alphabet that feature throughout the film. Why is it important to see and hear Wakanda's "mother tongue" throughout the movie? Let's look at the importance of a mother tongue and the languages that made Wakanda's own native language and alphabet possible.

Discussion questions:

- What is your mother tongue? What language do you speak at home? What language do you feel most comfortable expressing yourself in?
- Why is your mother tongue important to you?
- Is there anything that you can express in your mother tongue that is difficult to express in English (or a second language)?

Have a look at this article and video: <https://www.elitedaily.com/p/what-languages-are-in-black-panther-this-clip-perfectly-explains-them-all-exclusive-9003603>

First, let's check out the video.

- What languages were chosen as the mother tongues of Wakanda?
- Why did they choose different languages to represent different tribes of Wakanda?
- Why were these specific languages chosen?

Now, let's read the article.

- Why did the filmmakers choose Xhosa as the native language for Wakanda?
- How did this language relate to the filmmakers' experience in preparing and writing the movie?

Finally, let's consider the role of the Wakandan native language in the story.

- When do characters use Xhosa instead of English? Find three examples from the movie and describe them.
 - o Why did the characters switch to Xhosa in those moments?
 - o How does their speaking Xhosa contribute to their character development?
 - o How does their communicating in Xhosa contribute to the plot as a whole?
- What other languages are featured in the film? (Igbo, Korean, English)
 - o Which character can speak all four of the languages featured in the film? How does that contribute to her character development? What does that show us about her character?

Why is it important for Wakanda to have a native language that isn't English?

Why is it important for the people of Wakanda to also speak English?

Nowadays, English is considered "the global language." How does English as a global language impact art, culture, and development around the world today?