

AFRICA CENTER

African Language Offerings

Stimulate your brain with unique African sounds and cultures by learning any of the following languages

- **Amharic** (Ethiopia)
- **Chichewa** (Malawi)
- **Igbo** (Southeastern Nigeria)
- **Malagasy** (Madagascar)
- **Setswana** (Botswana and South Africa)
- **Sudanese Arabic** (Sudan)
- **Swahili** (Tanzania, Kenya, Comoro islands, Rwanda, and Somalia)
- **Tigrinya** (Eritrea and Ethiopia)
- **Twi** (Ghana and Ivory Coast)
- **Wolof** (Senegal, Gambia, and Mauritania)
- **Yoruba** (Southwestern Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Sierra Leone)
- **Zulu** (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland and Malawi)

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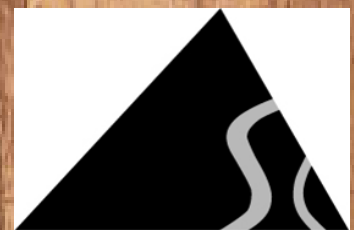
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Language Descriptions: Speakers and Places

Amharic—Is the national language of Ethiopia and is spoken by around 12 million people as their mother-tongue and by many more as a second language. Though only one of seventy or so languages spoken in Ethiopia, Amharic has been the language of the court and the dominant population group in Highland Ethiopia. Amharic belongs to the Semitic family of languages and as such is related to Arabic and Hebrew. Whilst many of the grammatical forms is reminiscent of the latter languages, the sentence structure (syntax) is very different and has more in common with the non-Semitic languages of Ethiopia.

Chichewa — Is the national language of Malawi, and it is one of the seven official languages of Zambia, where it is spoken mostly in the eastern province. It is also spoken in Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Igbo— The word “Igbo” is used to describe Igbo territory, its indigenous speakers, and their language. Igbo is one of the three major languages of Nigeria. Igbo is the second most populous indigenous language of southern Nigeria. It is spoken by about 20-25 million people.

Malagasy— The Malagasy language is the principal language spoken on the island of Madagascar. It is also spoken by Malagasy communities on neighboring Indian Ocean islands such as Reunion and Comoros. Large expatriate Malagasy communities speaking the language also exist in France, Quebec, and to a lesser extent Belgium. There are two principal dialects of Malagasy, namely, Merina (eastern) and Sakalav (western). Malagasy is one of two official languages alongside French. It is the language of instruction in all public schools through grade five for all subjects, and remains the language of instruction through high school for the subjects of history and Malagasy language.

Setswana — Is spoken in Southern Africa by about 6.1 million people. It is an official language and lingua franca of Botswana, spoken by over 2 million of it’s inhabitants. The majority of SeTswana speakers are found in South Africa, where a little over 4 million people speak it.

Sudanese Arabic — Is a variety of Arabic spoken in Sudan. Of approximately 114 languages that are native to Sudan, Sudanese Arabic is the most widely spoken in the country. It is a variety of Arabic that is unique to Sudan, reflecting the way in which the country has been influenced by both African and Arab cultures. Sudanese Arabic is spoken by 17 million people in Sudan and some parts of southern Egypt.

Swahili— Known by native speakers as Kiswahili, is one of the major languages spoken in Africa. Over 50 million people in eastern and central Africa speak Swahili. It is widely used in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Most others speak Swahili fluently as a second, third, or fourth language.

Tigrinya—Is a Semitic language spoken by Tigray-Tigrinya people in Central Eritrea where it is one of the two dominant languages of Eritrea, and in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia, where it has official status.

Twi— Is a cover term for some dialects of the Akan language. The Akan people are made up of a variety of ethnic groups found in southwestern and south central portions of Ghana. Over 40% of the Ghanaian population speak various dialects of the Akan language as their mother tongue, while a good proportion of the remainder speak these varieties as second or third languages.

Wolof— Is spoken by more than 90% of the Senegalese population, either as a first or second language. It is spoken by a large number of people in the Gambia and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Wolof is an important trade language, giving it great socio-economic influence. During elections, political leaders and candidates use Wolof during public speaking. In most mosques throughout Senegal, it is used during sermons.

Yoruba—Is the first language of approximately 30 million West Africans, and is spoken by populations in Southwestern Nigeria, Togo, Benin and Sierra Leone. It is also one of the prominent languages and cultures of the diaspora, and greatly impacts social, cultural and religious lives of millions of people in countries outside of Africa, such as Brazil, Venezuela, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago and Haiti.

Zulu—Is the most common language spoken at home by South Africans: 24% of the population in South Africa speak Zulu at home. In KwaZulu-Natal, the largest province in South Africa, Zulu is the dominant Language. It is one of the eleven official languages of South Africa, and populations in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Swaziland, and Mozambique speak Zulu. It is mutually intelligible to Ndebele (Zimbabwe), Swati (Swaziland) and Xhosa.