

Read the text about the effects of English as a global language. First decide whether the statements (1-10) are true (T) or false (F) and put a cross (☒) in the correct box on the answer sheet. Then identify the sentence in the text which supports your decision. Write the first 4 words of this sentence in the space provided. There may be more than one correct answer; write down only one. The first one (0) has been done for you.



Global English

One of the odd stories to come out of the French-speaking province of Quebec last year was the announcement that intensive English courses would be offered to students in state schools. Odd, because in the past half-century, much of the Quebecois identity has been built on resisting English. Authorities throw the book at people for doing things that would be normal elsewhere in Canada. Last autumn, the Montreal newspaper *La Presse* revealed that two real estate executives had made presentations in English to a Montreal-based pension fund, violating the province's language laws, which give workers the right to a French-speaking environment.

Now, school authorities in Quebec City are questioning whether the time is ripe for introducing those English classes after all. Their hesitation has left French-speaking parents angry. On one hand, those parents want their children to cherish their own community and its language. On the other hand, English is the international language of business, and their children will have a hard time climbing the social ladder without it.

Self-contradiction besets all governments as they try to work out a role for English in their national culture. Long-time Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad was, as a young man, a promoter of Malay. He made it the language of school instruction two decades ago. But in 2003, he came up with a plan to teach mathematics and science in English, reasoning that most technical literature on those subjects

was in English. It was a flop. English-language ability, among both teachers and students, had dropped more precipitously since independence than Dr Mahathir cared to admit. But when the government suggested discontinuing the programme in 2009, parents flew into a rage.

Not all cultures have the same historical anguish over English that Malaysians and Quebecois do. But almost all are being dragged ineluctably towards giving English a bigger role in their societies. More than a dozen EU countries require that English be taught in schools. In Thailand and China, the government has fostered English-language learning circles. Francophone Rwanda switched over in 2009 to English school instruction. English spreads wherever there is democracy or markets or even the slightest inclination towards them.

So now we can all talk, we peoples of the world. The universalisation of English has happy consequences. But like the building of the Tower of Babel, it has negative ones, too. English as a *lingua franca* offers unfair advantages to the half-billion people who speak English as a native language. We sometimes assume that English is a world standard only for superficial interactions – hotel personnel saying “How was your stay?” or business consultants importing words like “benchmarking” into their own languages. But French and German professors, for instance, often grumble that it is hard to build a career when academic journals are all in English.

Meanwhile, there can be a diversity-stifling effect to “diversity”. When universities, whether in Quebec or Paris or Catalonia, teach classes in global English, they can adorn their student bodies with exotic people from around the world – the most talented ones, the flower of their respective cultures. But the net effect can be to turn these varied young people into extremely unvaried adults. Language shapes mentalities – how deeply is harder to say. But the spread of English may be limiting our ability to think in different ways.

In a fascinating piece written for the *New York Review of Books* last June, the novelist Tim Parks described his suspicion that world authors today write with an eye to the translatability of their work into English. They “had already performed a translation within their own languages”, he writes. Mr Parks was grateful for the directness this produced, but worried it came at a price in literary variety. Global English allows writers to go “not quite as far but in half the time”, as the old Cure song used to have it.

0	French Canadians encourage bilingualism.
1	Legally, English and French are regarded as equal in all parts of Canada.
2	Some French Canadians are annoyed because the government is so slow.
3	You can easily succeed in Canadian society without speaking English.
4	In Malaysia, the experiment to teach some classes in English failed.
5	Thai authorities oppose the study of English.
6	The use of English as a global language has hardly any positive aspects.
7	It can be difficult to succeed if you do not publish your research in English.
8	People’s attitudes are hardly ever influenced by the language they are taught in.
9	When writing, writers probably think about how well their text will work in English.
10	English as a universal language might make all literature seem very similar.

Global English

	T	F	First four words
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2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Von der
Lehrperson
auszufüllen

richtig falsch

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