

Grade 7 Life Orientation Worksheet

Eleven official languages

Read the following:

South Africa is culturally diverse – we are known as ‘The Rainbow Nation’. The population of South Africa is one of the most varied in the world. Of the 45 million South Africans, nearly 31 million are Black, 5 million White, 3 million Coloured and one million Indian.

The Black population is divided into four major ethnic groups, namely Nguni, Sotho, Shangaan-Tsonga and Venda. There are many sub-groups. Zulu and Xhosa are the largest sub-groups and form part of the Nguni ethnic group.

The majority of the White population is of Afrikaans descent (60%), with many of the remaining 40% being of British descent. The Afrikaner population is found mostly in the Gauteng and Free State provinces and the English population in the Western and Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal.

Most of the Coloured population live in the Northern and Western Cape provinces. Most of the Indian population lives in KwaZulu Natal.

There are **eleven official languages in South Africa**, namely English, Afrikaans, Ndebele, Sepedi, Xhosa, Venda, Tswana, Southern Sotho, Zulu, Swazi and Tsonga.

Let’s look at the official languages:

Xhosa

Approximately 18 per cent of South Africa’s population speaks the language. Xhosa is marked by a number of tongue-clicking sounds.

Zulu

24% of South Africans consider Zulu to be their home language. A further 50% of South Africans understand Zulu. Xhosa and Zulu are the only two languages that are mutually understandable.

Afrikaans

The Afrikaans language is one of South Africa’s official languages and the majority of South Africa’s population use this as their first or second language. The language is also widely spoken in Namibia.

Venda

This language, also known as Luvenda or just Venda, and Tshivenda, originated from the Bantu language. Around 666 000 of Tshivenda speakers live in the Northern parts of South Africa’s Limpopo Province.

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Ndebele

Many South African people can speak Ndebele. Ndebele is a Bantu language that is spoken by Ndebele South Africans (the Ndebele people are also sometimes referred to as amaNdebele).

Sepedi

Sepedi is also sometimes referred to as Sesotho sa Laboa or Northern Sotho. The language of Sepedi is spoken by approximately 4,208,980 people. The language is usually spoken in Mpumalanga, Gauteng and the Limpopo Province.

Setswana

Setswana is commonly known as Tswana, and is actually Botswana's national language. However, the majority of Tswana or Setswana speakers are found in South Africa, mostly in the Northern Cape.

Southern Sesotho

This Bantu language originates from the Bantu-Nguni era and is also known as Suto, Souto, Sisutho and Suthu. The dialect originates from Suto, Pedi as well as Tswana.

Swati

Swati might not sound familiar to you, but rather Sewati, Swazi or siSwati, as these are all the same language. Swati is a part of the Nguni Group and it is one of the many Bantu languages. It is mainly spoken by people in South Africa and Swaziland.

Tsonga

The language of Tsonga is mainly spoken throughout southern Africa by the Shangaan-Tsonga culture. Tsonga is a part of the Bantu branch that relates to the Niger-Congo languages. The speakers of this language are often referred to as Shangaans, but the Tsongas say this is incorrect.

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Answer the following questions: [20 marks]

1. Southern Sesotho is also known as _____.
[1]
2. The 11 official languages of South Africa are _____.
_____.
[11]
3. _____ is also known as Northern Sotho. [1]
4. Approximately half of the South African population understands the _____ language. [1]
5. _____ is marked by a number of tongue-clicking sounds. [1]
6. _____% of South Africans consider Zulu to be their home language. [1]
7. The majority of South Africa's population use _____ as their first or second language. It is also widely spoken in Namibia. [1]
8. Tshivenda speakers live in the Northern parts of South Africa's Limpopo Province and speak _____. [1]
9. The official business language in South Africa is widely considered to be _____. [1]
10. Which two African languages are mutually understandable?
_____. [1]

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Suggested Solutions

1. Southern Sesotho is also known as Suto, Souto, Sisutho and Suthu. [1]
2. The 11 official languages of South Africa are English, Afrikaans, Ndebele, Sepedi, Xhosa, Venda, Tswana, Southern Sotho, Zulu, Swazi and Tsonga. [11]
3. Sepedi is also known as Northern Sotho. [1]
4. Approximately half of the South African population understand the Zulu language. [1]
5. Xhosa is marked by a number of tongue-clicking sounds. [1]
6. 24% of South Africans consider Zulu to be their home language. [1]
7. The majority of South Africa's population use Afrikaans as their first or second language. It is also widely spoken in Namibia. [1]
8. Tshivenda speakers live in the Northern parts of South Africa's Limpopo Province and speak Venda. [1]
9. The official business language in South Africa is widely considered to be English. [1]
10. Zulu and Xhosa. [1]

Total marks – [20]