



# Dead Languages

This is a list of the world languages that were once widely spoken, but are no longer the official language of any people.

## Latin

Latin was the language of the ancient Roman Empire. After Rome fell, different dialects of Latin developed in different regions. Eventually, they became their own languages. These are called the Romance languages. French, Italian and Spanish are the most commonly spoken ones. Latin is still used today but usually only in some Christian churches and as witty phrases.

Carpe diem

*Seize the day*

Labor omnia vincit

*Hard work conquers all.*

aut viam inveniam aut faciam

*I will either find a way or make one.*

## Ge'ez

This is an early Ethiopian language related to Hebrew. It used what is called the Amharic alphabet. It has a similar relationship to languages in West Africa as Latin does to European languages. It was once the language spoken in ancient Ethiopia, but now it is only used in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

፤ ምድርም ሁሉ በአንድ ቋንቋና በአንድ ንግግር ነበረች።  
mädärämä hulu bä'änädä qwanəqwana bä'änädä nəgəgərə  
nābäräčä.

(Excerpt from the story of the Tower of Babel in the Bible)



Latin inscribed on an ancient Roman gravestone.

አኑሃ፡ለአሙ፡ወሰዳ፡ዓዕቆብ፡  
ለራሱ፡ወደር፡በቃሉ፡ወበ  
ክዩ፡ወደክ፡ለራሱ፡ከመ፡  
ወልደ፡እንቲ፡ለላባ፡ወእቲ፡ወ  
ከመ፡ወልደ፡ርብቃ፡ወእቲ፡  
ወሮጾት፡ራሱ፡ወአጸድዳቺ  
ለአቡሃ፡ዘንቲ፡ነገረ፡ወሰባ፡  
ሰመዳ፡ቃለ፡ከመ፡ዓዕቆብ፡ወ  
ልደ፡ርብቃ፡እንቲ፡ርጸ፡ወተቀ  
በሎ፡ወሐቀ፡ወሰዳ፡ወወሰ  
ደ፡ቤቶ፡ወነገር፡ለላባ፡ከሎ፡  
ዘንቲ፡ነገረ፡ወደቤሎ፡ለባ፡ለ  
ዓዕቆብ፡እመኑ፡ዐጽዎ፡ወእመ  
ኑ፡ሠጋዩ፡አንቲ፡ወነበር፡መስላ  
ሁ፡ሠላሳ፡መዓዕሉ፡  
ወደቤሎ፡ለባ፡ለዓዕቆብ፡እ  
ሰመ፡እንቲ፡አንቲ፡አተቀነደ፡  
ለተ፡በክ፡፤ግረ፡ዐስበክ፡መ  
፤ፋ፡ወእቲ፡ወቦቲ፡ለላባ፡ክል  
ሴ፡አዋልድ፡ከ፡ለእንቲ፡ተል

An excerpt from the Book of Genesis from the Bible, written in Ge'ez

# Mohegan

Mohegan was a Native American language spoken by several Algonquian tribes in present day New York and New England. After the conflict with the Europeans in the 17th and 18th centuries, the tribes were scattered and the language was no longer used. Some Mohegan tribe members are trying to bring the language back into use.

Nuwikôtam nákuskyôn.

*Nice to have met you.*

Sáp kunáwush!

*See you tomorrow!*

Kuski nahak mátapsh!

*Sit by me!*

# Yola

Yola was a language spoken in parts of Ireland until the middle 19th century. It developed from early English and eventually became a distinct language rather than a dialect. During the 19th century it was gradually replaced by a mixture of Gaelic and English.

Yerstey w'had a baree, gist ing oor hoane,

Aar gentrize ware bibbern, aamzil cou no stoane.

*Yesterday we had a goal, just in our hand.*

*Their gentry were quaking, themselves could not stand.* (Excerpt from a Yola song)

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**All of these dead languages are still understood and spoken by people. Why is it that they are considered “dead”? What do you think makes a language a “living” language?**

**There are many reasons a language can die or stop being used. Name some that you can think of.**