

Landesmuseum Zürich. SCHWEIZERI

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School materials
Secondary School
Levels I and II

Multilingual Switzerland

National Museum Zurich.

“Multilingual Switzerland”

15 September 2023 – 14 January 2024

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Imprint

Concept and content

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Cover:
Key visual of the exhibition “Multilingual
Switzerland”, Swiss National Museum.

The offers for school classes from Switzerland including the prior visit by the respective teacher are free of charge.

Visit to the exhibition

The exhibition is based on an immersive and interactive sound system. With the help of headphones, visitors delve into virtual sound worlds, allowing them to explore the respective spaces. The audio track is available in five languages: German, French, Italian, Romansh, and English.

Secondary levels I and II

Multilingual Switzerland – Overview tour

Switzerland is officially a quadrilingual country. What separates the different language regions, what unites them? How is Swiss culture defined by this kind of multilingualism? With the help of headphones and live tracking, each student is able to delve into a sound world for him or herself. Captivating stories, dialogues, and sketches bring the intangible cultural heritage of languages to life in a lively and humorous way.

Guided tour | 1 hour

Self-led visits

Upon notification, teachers have the opportunity to explore the exhibition with their school class independently. A fold-out guide for students is available at the Welcome Desk. The fold-out contains a map of the exhibition and a number of tasks for students to solve. An example of a solution is available on loan for the duration of the visit.

School materials

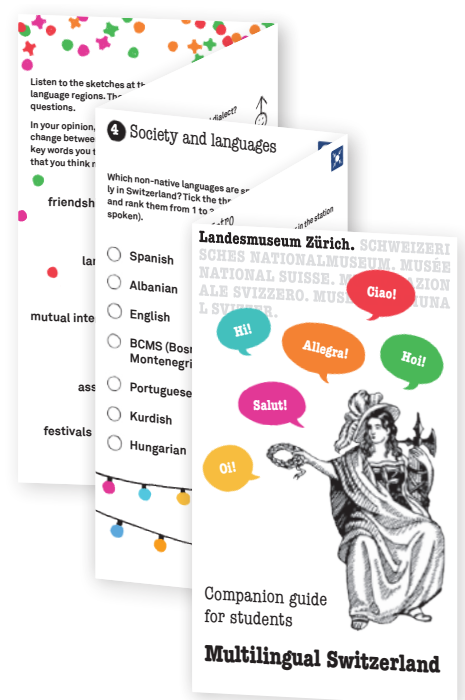
The school materials serve as preparation for and follow-up of the visit to the exhibition. Download: www.landmuseum.ch/en/your-visit/schools

Information & Registration

Mon – Fri 09.00 – 12.30 | +41 44 218 66 00

reservationen@nationalmuseum.ch

Fold-out for independent tour of the exhibition.



Introduction

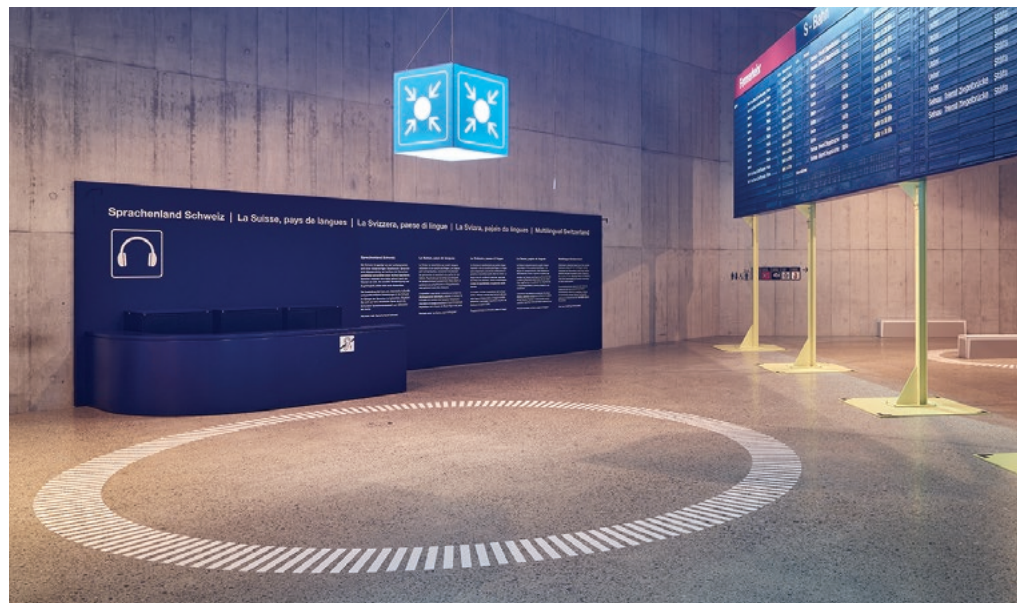
» Languages are more than merely a means of communication, they also shape our daily lives and are part of our culture. The National Museum Zurich takes visitors on a sensory and entertaining journey through Switzerland's linguistic landscape.

Anyone passing through one of Switzerland's major railway stations will immediately notice that, in addition to the four national languages, countless other languages, dialects, accents and types of slang can be heard. Language is subject to constant change and closely linked to the history of humankind and contemporary history. Historical events, such as the Reformation, have decisively shaped the evolution of language: the 'Zurich Bible' based on a translation by Zwingli and first printed in 1524 was composed in the 'Landspraak', a written variant of the branch of German spoken in the region. However, the Reformers at the other end of what is now Switzerland did not adopt the regional patois, but the French spoken by the haute bourgeoisie of northern France. Today, centuries later, local dialects are dying out fast in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, whereas Swiss German continues to dominate everyday life from Brig to St. Gallen. What happened in the language regions in the intervening period is a story of displacement, prohibition, romanticising, demarcation and mythologising. And language remains highly political to this day. Whether it's the 'Röstigraben' linguistic divide between French- and German-speakers, the Jura issue, teaching English in schools or teenage slang: how we speak is guaranteed to trigger a wealth of emotions. Welcome to Multilingual Switzerland!

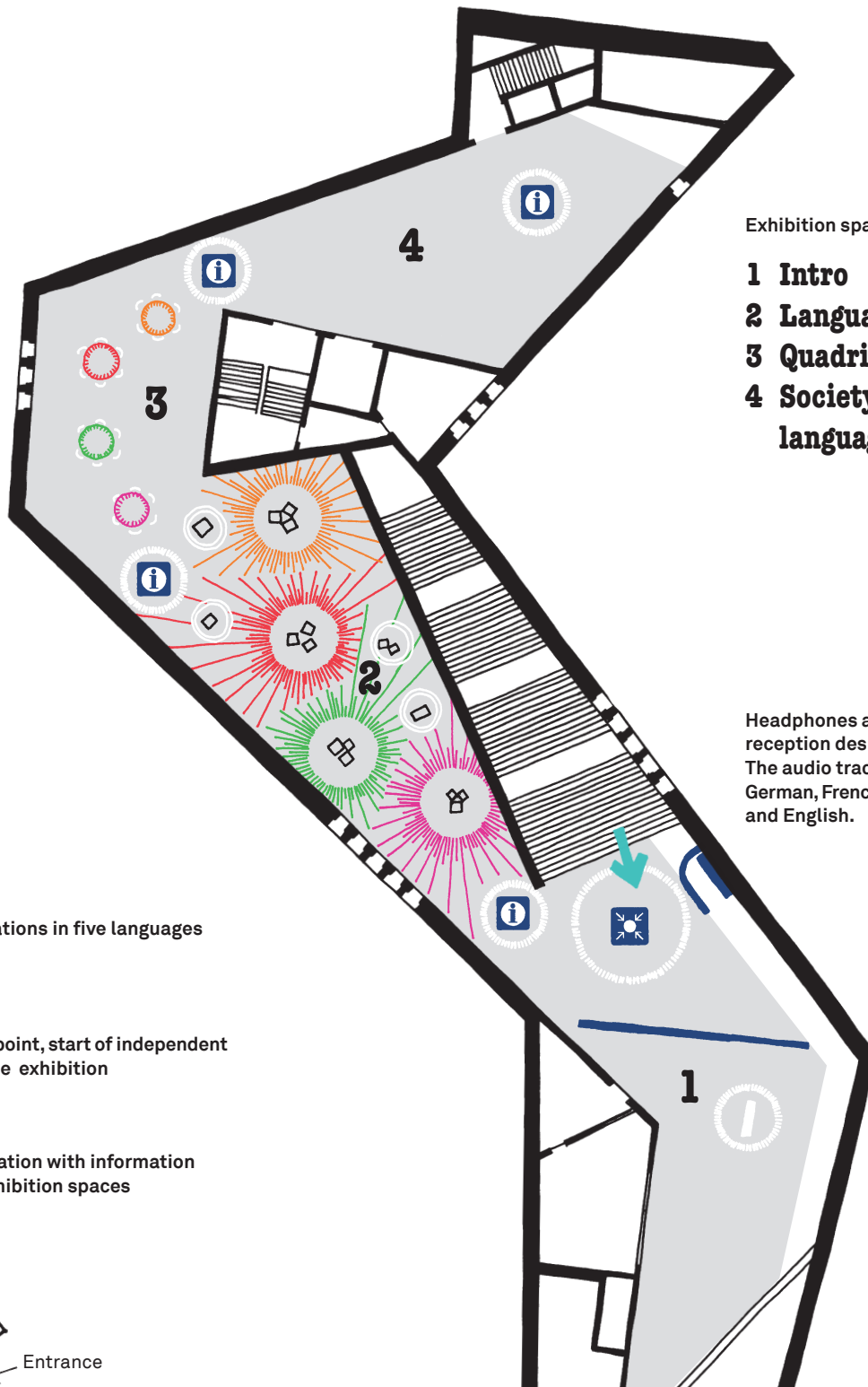
The exhibition at the National Museum Zurich presents these topics in an innovative way. Visitors don headphones and move freely through an immersive soundscape. Depending on where they stand, they will hear various acoustic items, including explanations of objects, sound documents and audio tracks from videos, as they follow two fictitious characters through the exhibition: a tour guide (voiced by Cyril Jost in the English version) accompanied by Beat (played by actor and comedian Vincent Kucholl). The two discuss the contents of the exhibition in entertaining dialogues. Guest appearances by Patti Basler, Flavio Sala and Claudio Spescha add to the experience. And people who live in Switzerland but count Albanian, Arabic, Portuguese or sign language as their mother tongue, rather than one of the country's official languages, are also given a chance to speak. The insights they provide demonstrate that language can be a resource as well as a hindrance, or show that it sometimes simply goes unheard.

The exhibition was realised in collaboration with the Basel-based company *idee und klang audio design*, which designed the sound scenography using game technology developed by *iart*. The script for the audio guide was written by Vincent Kucholl. The audio guide is available in German, French, Italian, English and Romansh.

View of the exhibition



Map of exhibition



Exhibition spaces:

- 1 Intro**
- 2 Language areas**
- 3 Quadrilingualism**
- 4 Society and languages**

Headphones are available at the reception desk in the exhibition. The audio track is available in German, French, Italian, Romansh, and English.



Audio stations in five languages



Meeting point, start of independent tour of the exhibition



Sound station with information to the exhibition spaces



The exhibition is on the 2nd floor of the New Wing.

Ideas for preparation

Multilingualism in class

In class, languages spoken by the students are gathered and assessed, for example by translating common proverbs into all the languages spoken in class. With the help of the info graphics (included in the fold-out map of the exhibition), students position their own language. Information on languages not mentioned can be obtained and explored by using the links listed in the media directory in this booklet.

Comparing of phrases and idiomatic expressions

Phrases students are familiar with from foreign language classes are compared with the corresponding German phrases and explained (for French, Italian, Romansh, and German, see media directory, publication “4 Fliegen mit einer Klappe”). In this way, language is experienced as an expression of a culturally rooted worldview.

Dialect as the language of the heart

The issue of dialects in Switzerland can also be addressed in advance. With regard to diglossia in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, Peter von Matt’s essay “Der Dialekt als Sprache des Herzens? Pardon, das ist Kitsch!” (see media directory, teaching material “Kleiner Sprachatlas der deutschen Schweiz”) offers interesting references for further work in class. Do teens enjoy speaking their dialect? If no, why not? Under what circumstances do speakers switch from dialect to standard language in the different Swiss language regions? Regarding the relationship between dialect and standard language, the situation in Switzerland can also be compared to that of neighbouring countries.

Ideas for follow-up sessions

Interviews with a focus on language biographies

Many students probably know quite a few polyglots. As part of a project (see worksheet 3 in this manual), learners interview a multilingual person.

Listening in daily life

Students are given the task of observing for one day what languages they encounter in their social environment. In the same way as in the “Linguistic Landscape” project (see link in the media directory), students take photographs of typical language situations, or talk to people about how they go about with language; with the people’s consent, they create an audio recording. Students will probably soon realize that they understand more than they think they do.

Teenage slang

The topic of teenage slang offers the students a personal approach to the subject, for example, by writing about a typical slang term they are familiar in the style of a poetry slam. What do teenagers associate with a specific term?

General literature

Nicole Bandion, Lucie Bourban, Marine Borel (Hrsg.)
4 Fliegen mit einer Klappe / D'une pierre 4 coups / 4 piccioni con una fava / Ün viadi e 4 servezzans. Redewendungen in den 4 Landessprachen im Vergleich
Verlag Salvioni
Bellinzona 2020

Dorothee Aquino-Weber, Julie Rothenbühler
Pourquoi parle-t-on le français en Suisse romande ?
Verlag Alphil
Neuchâtel 2022

Emanuel Ruoss, Juliane Schröter (eds.)
Schweizerdeutsch. Sprache und Identität von 1800 bis heute
Schwabe Verlag
Basel 2020

Robert Schläpfer, Hans Bickel (eds.)
Die viersprachige Schweiz
Reihe Sprachlandschaft. Band 25
2., neu bearbeitete Auflage
Verlag Sauerländer
Aarau 2000

Phonogrammarchiv der Universität Zürich
Stimmen der Schweiz. In historischen Aufnahmen
Verlag Huber
Frauenfeld 2012

Helen Christen et al.
Kleiner Sprachatlas der deutschen Schweiz
7. Auflage
Verlag Huber
Frauenfeld 2013

Sergio J. Lievano, Nicole Egger
Hoi: Your New Swiss German Survival Guide
Verlag Bergli Books, ein Imprint von Helvetiq
Basel 2014

Platforms and links

Austauschplattform der Stiftung Movetia
www.matchnmove.ch/en/

Sprachenlandschaft in der Schweiz
www.bfs.admin.ch/asset/de/23164427

Linguistic Landscape
<https://swiss-scape.ch/en>

Material on Swiss dialects

> German-speaking region

Kleiner Sprachatlas der deutschen Schweiz

www.kleinersprachatlas.ch

Die Karten aus dem Atlas zum Download:

www.kleinersprachatlas.ch/download/karten

Arbeitsblätter mit Lösungen zum kleinen Sprachatlas

www.kleinersprachatlas.ch/schulmaterial

Syntaktischer Atlas der deutschen Schweiz (SADS)

<https://dialektsyntax.linguistik.uzh.ch>

Schwerpunkt SRF Kultur zur Mehrsprachigkeit in der Schweiz

www.srf.ch/kultur/gesellschaft-religion/sprachland-schweiz-wo-ein-wille-ist-ist-auch-eine-vielfalt

> French-speaking region

Fondation du Patois

Glossaire avec termes courants, enregistrements audiovisuels

www.patois.ch

Annie Butler, Odette Mudry

Le Patois mort ou vif

www.rts.ch/archives/tv/culture/viva/3466017-que-vive-le-patois.html

Reportage, 42 minutes
1997

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Le Piti Prinhyo

« Le Petit Prince », traduit en patois fribourgeois

www.editionsfavre.com/livres/petit-prince-en-patois-fribourgeois-le-le-piti-prinhyo

OFROM – le corpus Oral de Français de Suisse Romande

<http://ofrom.unine.ch>

> Italian-speaking region

Vocabolario dei dialetti della Svizzera italiana

www4.ti.ch/decs/dcsu/cde/publicazioni/vocabolario-dei-dialetti-della-svizzera-italiana

Italiano a scuola

<https://italianoascuola.ch>

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Ul Principe Pinin

«Le Petit Prince», traduit en dialecte ticinèse
www.istitutoeditorialeticinese.ch/prodotto/ul-principe-pinin-traduzione-di-marisa-e-gianni-ballabio

> Romansh-speaking region



Grisun

Lehrmittel, App, Literaturlisten und Wörterbücher

www.grisun.ch/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI4bTfns2N_wIVAoVoCR1hzACbEAMYASAAEgJdWPD_BwE

Additional
school materials at:
[www.landesmuseum.ch/
en/your-visit/schools](http://www.landesmuseum.ch/en/your-visit/schools)

Overview of worksheets

WS	Title		
		Sec I	Sec II
1	Quadrilingual?	X	X
2	Multilingual!	X	X
3	Interview project Language Biographies	X	X

The worksheets are intended for use in class, before and after visiting the exhibition.

1 Quadrilingual?

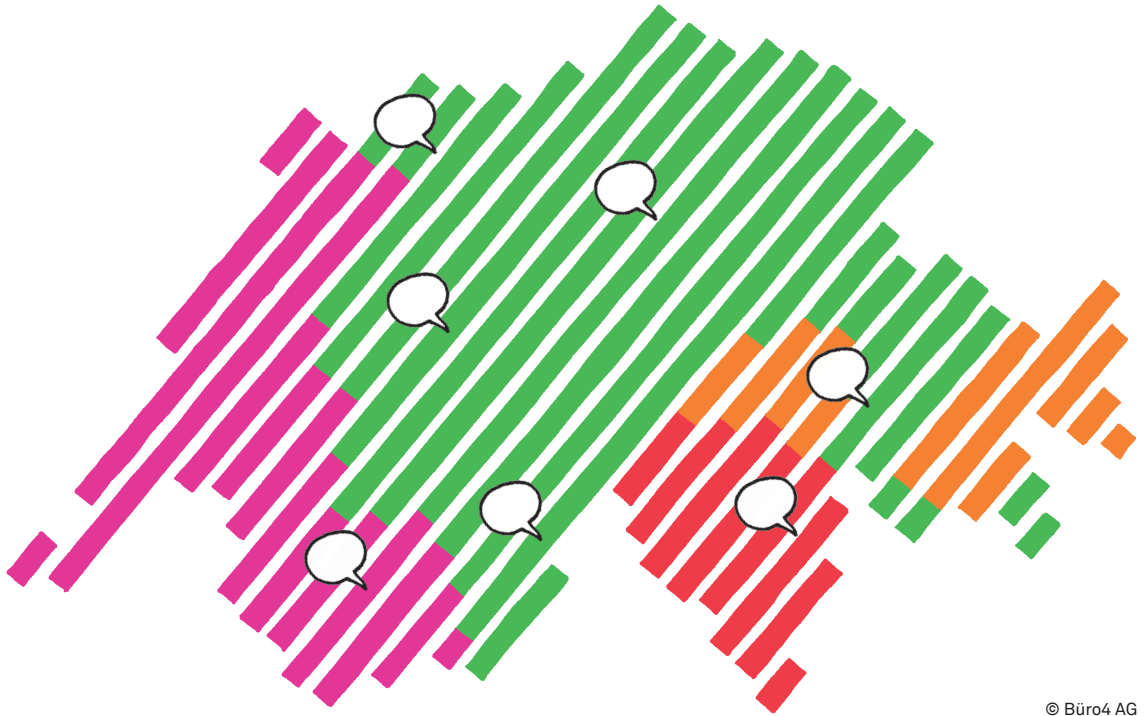


>> Switzerland has four national languages: German, French, Italian, and Romansh. Swiss children learn at least one additional national language at school. What languages do you speak? What dialects do you know well - and which hardly at all? Listen in on the Swiss languagescape to get a first impression of it.

- ① Apart from the four official national languages, each language region has an array of different dialects. Do you recognize some of the dialects and can you assign them to a specific region in Switzerland?



German, French, and Italian are the official languages in Switzerland. Romansh is a semi-official language – meaning, it is recognized as an official language in the Canton Grisons and is used when dealing with this language region at the federal level.



© Büro4 AG

- a) The following songs give you an idea of some of the dialects encountered in the four national languages. Listen to some of the examples, and make a guess which dialects they involve. Try to pinpoint those you recognize on the map.

- 1 www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEvcnfVGv-g
- 2 www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wd77COgU6U4
Listen to the first four minutes.
- 3 <https://volksmusik.mx3.ch/t/oY>
- 4 www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAk_TNWmWQU
- 5 www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1QM_41ErwY
- 6 www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGvxIQuccV4
- 7 www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlkgrS-ANVY



b) Ask your teacher for the solutions and check your results: Which dialects did you recognize immediately? Which did you get wrong or didn't exactly know where to place them?

- ② In the exhibition at the National Museum Zurich you get to hear sketches about the four language regions. A sketch is a short humorous play or a funny dialogue. In the sketches you will encounter three people. Cyril and Beat talk to people from the four Swiss language regions.

*By the way:
Cyril and Beat guide you
through the exhibition on your
headphone. Listen to the sketches
there in full length!*

- a) Get together in a group of four and choose one of the sketches in the appendix. Each person takes on a specific role. Read out the text like the script of a play.
- b) Discuss what the sketch is all about. Mark a passage that you liked particularly. Use a different colour to mark any passages you did not understand. Discuss these passages together in class.
- c) How does the sketch portray the language and the people of that specific language region? Write down four keywords that summarize the characteristic features.
- d) Sit down in newly arranged groups. Everyone in the group has read a different sketch before. Tell each other what your specific sketch had to say about the language region in question.

- ③ The sketches reveal that Switzerland is a highly diverse country – not only in terms of language, but also culturally. What is your opinion: are the language differences divisive to Swiss society or does quadrilingualism have a unifying effect?

a) First read the two statements below for yourself. Write down three pro and three con arguments for each statement.

Statement 1: “Switzerland has several different language regions whose inhabitants barely understand each other. The only thing that holds Switzerland together are political and economic ties.”

Statement 2: “Our relationship to language is constantly changing and subject to constant debate. This ongoing, constructive dialogue between the language regions helps to hold Swiss society together.”

1 Quadrilingual?



- b) Hold a discussion in class on the question mentioned at the beginning: Are the language differences divisive to Swiss society or does quadrilingualism have a unifying effect? Remember to always underpin your statements with arguments. Together, identify key points.
- c) Take a second look at the points noted in the discussion after visiting the exhibition: Have you changed your mind? If yes, why (if no, why not)?
- d) To conclude, state your opinion on the following hypothesis: “Switzerland’s official quadrilingual set-up is unique compared to other European countries and has a distinctly unifying effect.” Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer and put them in writing.



>> Many people in Switzerland speak more than one language. In the exhibition, you will encounter nine such multilingual individuals. What do their languages mean to them? How have they shaped their life? Explore the diversity of languages spoken by people living in Switzerland.

① In the appendix, there is a map containing info graphics on Switzerland's multilingual situation.

a) Look at the map in pairs. Discuss what surprises you or what you find particularly interesting.

b) Who in your class speaks a language that is not one of the Swiss national languages? Gather all the languages spoken in class and write down what "hello" means in each language.

② Get to know a person in Switzerland with a multilingual background. Learn from them what role language has played in their life.

a) Follow the link and select the video portrait of one of the people shown:



[www.landesmuseum.ch/
multilingual-switzerland
#videos](http://www.landesmuseum.ch/multilingual-switzerland#videos)

b) Watch the video. Pay special attention to the propositions below. Note down your observations on the various points.

- Language unites, language divides
- Language shapes our way of thinking
- Learning from languages
- Dealing with languages in different situations
- Significance of dialects
- Multilingualism as an opportunity

c) What is the core message of the interview? Note down the key statement made by the interviewee on the subject of multilingualism. Use indirect speech. Start as follows: "I listened to the interview with (name of the interviewee). He/she said..."

d) Sit down with someone who watched a different video. Tell each other who you met in your interview and what you found out about the points listed above.

e) Jointly decide on the key statement you liked best (task c) and present it in class. Explain the statement and tell your classmates what is so appealing about it.

f) Ask your multilingual classmates what they have to say about multilingualism. Compare their answers with the key statement you selected. Note down what they have in common.

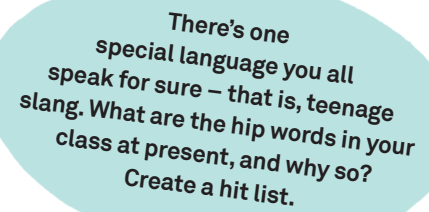
2 Multilingual!



- ③ Do you know people in your social environment with a multilingual background? What do these people have to say about language diversity in Switzerland? Note down assumptions or conduct your own interview with a multilingual person to find out more.

After the close of the exhibition, you will find here interviews that students conducted with people with a multilingual background.

www.landmuseum.ch/en/your-visit/schools/wechselausstellungen/2023/sprachenland/02-sprachenland



There's one special language you all speak for sure – that is, teenage slang. What are the hip words in your class at present, and why so? Create a hit list.



>> If you speak several languages, you hold the key to different cultures. You probably know someone in your immediate environment who speaks several languages fluently. How does this person experience Switzerland's multilingualism? How come that he or she speaks several languages? Ask a person with a multilingual background about their language biography. Find out what language has meant to them in their life so far.

Team up in pairs of threes. Follow the steps of the task below and conduct a ten-minute interview with someone you know on the subject of multilingualism. The interview can be conducted in German, French, Italian or English.

You get the opportunity to submit the core message of the interview to the National Museum Zurich until the end of November. A selection will then be published online.

Selecting an interview partner

Jointly select a multilingual person whom you could ask about their language biography.

Make sure that the selected person

- ... is not under the age of 16 and lives in Switzerland,
- ... speaks at least two languages fluently, among them German, French, Italian or English (that is, one of the possible interview languages),
- ... is willing to talk about their life history with you.

Making contact

Contact the person and explain what your plan is. When doing so, mention the following points:

- **Topic of the interview:** multilingualism in Switzerland and its significance for their life here
- **Interview language:** either German, French, Italian or English
- **Length of the interview:** 10 – 15 minutes
- **Recording:** in form of an audio file
- **Publication of an excerpt from the interview:** submission of the core message to the National Museum Zurich. The excerpt will be reviewed by the museum and possibly published on their website. For this, the person must sign a declaration of consent. If the person is under the age of 18, a parent must sign the declaration on his or her behalf.

You will find a copy of this document at the end of the manual.



If the person agrees to the conditions, you can arrange an appointment for a preliminary briefing.



Preparing for the interview

- ① Conduct a preliminary talk with the person in question before the actual interview. This will allow you to get to know the person and his or her background and to ask focused questions later in the interview. This preliminary talk can be conducted on the phone or in person. Take notes during the conversation; write down what you find particularly interesting and anything that has to do with the topic of multilingualism.
- ② Arrange a second meeting for the actual interview. For this, select a quiet location so that you're undisturbed. Reserve roughly half an hour for the interview.
- ③ Choose four to five open questions which you would like to ask the interviewee and put them in a sensible order. Begin with a general question and then start focusing more on the actual topic. You should avoid asking questions which the person can answer with a simple "yes" or "no". They should encourage the interviewee to tell their story. You'll find a selection of possible questions below in the section "Suggested interview questions" towards the end of this manual.
- ④ Run through the interview in your group on a trial basis. Record it with your smartphone. Make sure to hold the microphone close to the person speaking. Afterwards, listen to the interview and check whether one can hear the person clearly. If not, repeat the trial run.

Actual interview

- ① Make sure your smartphone is fully charged before arriving at the meeting point in time. Don't forget to bring the following things to the interview: your smartphone, the interview questions, the declaration of consent for signing, and pen and paper to take notes.
- ② Explain the procedure to the person before commencing the interview. When doing so, mention the following points:
 - The interview will be recorded with a smartphone or some other recording device.
 - The interview will last roughly ten minutes.
 - You will ask four to five questions. The answers should be limited to something between one and two minutes (no longer). Since the questions will be deleted during post-processing, the question should somehow be referred to in the answer. Example: "For me, multilingualism has more advantages than disadvantages because...", or "In my everyday life, I have noticed that..."



- ③ Commence recording before opening the actual interview. Make sure you hold the microphone close to the interviewee's mouth. When the interview is finished, listen to the first passages of the recording. Check for quality and length.
- ④ Thank the person for the interview. Make sure that he or she signs the declaration of consent regarding the publication of selected parts of the interview on the website of the National Museum Zurich.

Post-processing the interview

- ① Open the file with an editing programme on your laptop or tablet. Suitable free programmes include Audacity (PC) or Garage Band (Mac). Choose a suitable title and save it to a fitting storage place.



[www.audacityteam.org/
download](http://www.audacityteam.org/download)
(PC)



[www.apple.com/mac/
garageband](http://www.apple.com/mac/garageband)
(Mac)

- ② Listen to the interview and note down the times of the most interesting passages.
- ③ Cut the interview down to two to three minutes. Select one significant answer. Edit the audio track so that your question is no longer audible. You will find instructions on how to use the editing programmes here:



[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=fSmmaAD8XD8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSmmaAD8XD8)
(Audacity)



[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=8sTGbWGrlds](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sTGbWGrlds)
(GarageBand)



Submitting the interview passage

- ① Save the edited audio file in MP3 format on your tablet or computer. Label the file with your name, your school class, and the date you conducted the interview on.
Example: “Nina_Moritz_Elsa_K20b_07_11_2023.mp3”
- ② Scan or take a photograph of the signed declaration of consent and, again, save the file including your name, your school class, and date.
“Nina_Moritz_Elsa_K20b_07_11_2023.pdf”
- ③ Upload the two files to the SWITCHdrive folder under the following link:



<https://drive.switch.ch/index.php/s/6anNEoNpaV-wxAqr>

Suggestions for interview questions

Create own questions which you think would suit the interviewed person. What these questions are depends on how well you know the person and the preliminary conversation. The following list is merely meant to boost your inspiration.

- What role do the different languages play in your everyday life: which language(s) do you use in which settings (e.g., in private, professionally)?
- In which language do you feel really secure – and why?
- In which language do you dream – what is your explanation for this?
- What have been the advantages and disadvantages of your multilingualism so far?
- What is your favourite word in your native language? Translate it for us. Does it have exactly the same meaning in the other languages? If not, how would you paraphrase the term in the other languages?

National Museum Zurich.

Declaration of consent Publication of interview recordings

I herewith grant permission that a passage of the recorded interview may be published on the website of the National Museum Zurich in the context of the exhibition “Multilingual Switzerland”. I have been informed about the project by the interviewer.

First and family name of the person interviewed:

Age:

Email address:

Phone number (optional):

I wish that my name and age not be specified and that the publication shall remain anonymous.

Place, date

Signature

Individuals under the name of 18 require the signature of a parent or legal guardian.



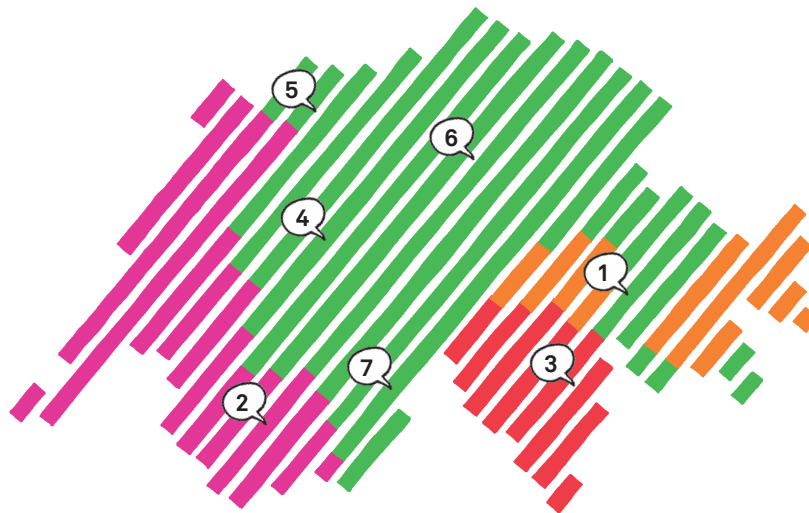
This form is to be submitted together with the audio file on SWITCHdrive:
<https://drive.switch.ch/index.php/s/6anNEoNpaVwxAqr>
Please label both files with same information: name, school class, and date
(Example: “Declaration_Nina_Moritz_Elsa_K2B_07_11_2023.pdf”,
“Interview_Nina_Moritz_Elsa_K2B_07_11_2023.mp3”).

Solutions



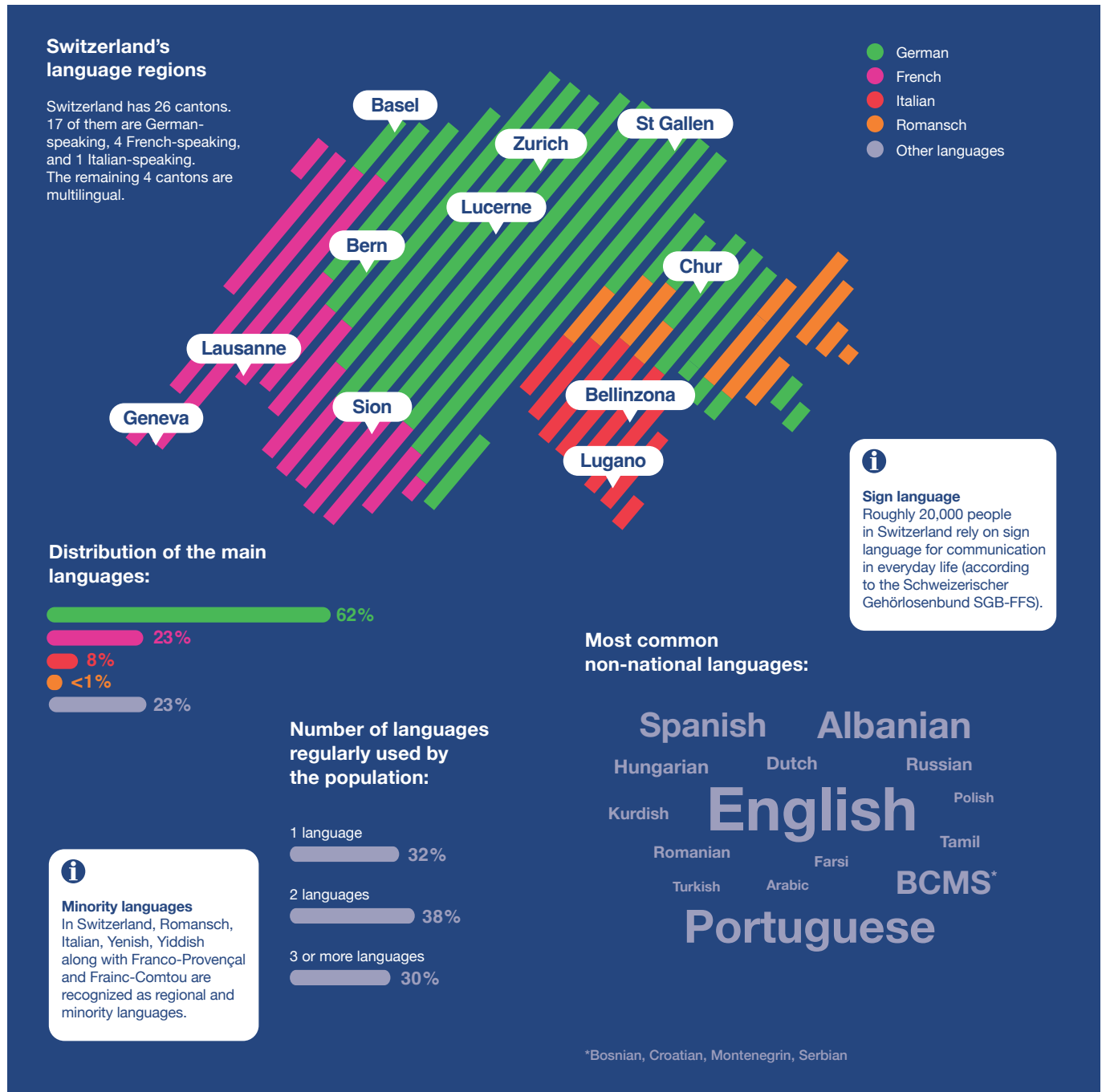
1 Quadrilingual?

- ① ① Gion Balzer Casanova, Flurin Camathias: “La sera sper il lag” > **Sursilvan from Laax, Grisons**
(Take note: Sursilvan is an idiom, not a dialect. Sursilvan has a range of different dialects.)
- ② ② Sylvie Bourban: “Les mots du cœur” > **Patois from Nendaz, Lower Valais**
- ③ ③ Vox Blenii: “Polenta gialda” > **Blenio, Ticino**
- ④ ④ Mani Matter: “Ir Ysebahn” > **City of Bern**
- ⑤ ⑤ Brandhärd: “Salz in dr Wunde” > **Canton Baselland**
- ⑥ ⑥ Stereo Luchs: “Dame” > **City of Zürich**
- ⑦ ⑦ Sina: “Emma” > **Visp, Upper Valais**



Appendix

Fold-out map of the exhibition (detail)



Sketches about the Swiss language regions

(Excerpts from the scripts)

Sketch 1: In German-speaking Switzerland

Beat: Here is a Swiss-German person, you can recognize her by her facial expression.

Cyril: Is this the typical Swiss German mannerism?

Rita: Ah no, no, it changes depending on the dialect.

B: ...Which varies from one canton to another.

R: One canton to another? You mean from one valley to another, from one village to another, from one family to another! Rita Schlienger from Untere Fricktal, “lower Freak Valley”, as we say here... We thrust the lower jaw forward, let the corners of the mouth hang down so we get the typische unterfricktalienne Lächel, “the typical scowl from lower Fricktal”, so we naturally speak like this, so we become automatically a little depressed. We also call this the twenty past eight face.

But in Eastern Switzerland, in St Gallen, they always laugh, they always have a big smile on their face, as if they’ve shoved an Olma-sausage sideways into their mouth! Without mustard!

C: Ah ok, and “Twenty past eight”, is that because of the position of the hands on a clock when it’s twenty past eight?

R: What? Clocks? Gelleretti? That’s for the French speaking part of the country, where they make watches. Although that doesn’t mean they’re always on time! No, it’s called 8:20, in the German speaking part of Switzerland, because by 8:20 we’ve already worked for 2 hours, whereas in Ticino, they are still fast asleep, and in the French-speaking part, they are probably making un peu l’amour. Because let’s face it, in french, even the announcement at a train station sounds like they’re telling you a love story.

C: And does that annoy you?

R: No, we love the people from Ticino, Graubunden, Romandie, they are not a threat to us, unlike the Germans, who are so terribly fast and eloquent, that we fear their language and culture will soon replace ours.

Do you know in the German speaking part of Switzerland, you can tell where someone comes from, just from their accent:

“Hello, I’m from St Gallen, we eat our sausage without mustard.” “Hello, I’m from Bern, we are a bit slow, when we leave Bern, we tend to burn out.” “Hello, I’m from Baasel, we have the best carnival, the Baasler Faasnacht, better than Lucerne, and we eat Mehlsuppe with Kepfli”. This also varies from one canton to another.

C: You mean the carnival?

R: Well yes, the carnival is different, but I mean the word for the end of a loaf of bread, Kepfli. There are other words for it too such as “Kepfli, Ahölig, Ahauet, Mupf, Stupf, Güpff”. The same goes for the apple core: “Gürbsi, Bütschgi, Bürzi, Beitsi”.

[...]



Gelleretti is a wrist-watch. The word is a twisted Germanized rendition of the question “Quelle heure est-il?” in French.

Sketches about the Swiss language regions

(Excerpts from the scripts)

Sketch 2: In French-speaking Switzerland

Cyril: Let's sit at this table, and perhaps we could chat with this man from the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Hello!

Patrick: Hello, I'm Patrick Bolomey, from Pully. How are you?

C: I'm fine, thank you. What are you drinking?

P: Well, it's white wine. From Lavaux. We know how to make good wine!

Beat: Hey! In the German-speaking part of Switzerland we make good wine too!

C: That's true!

P: Yeah, but you don't produce as much as we do, nor as much as the winegrowers in Ticino. That's why you drink less wine than we do, and that's also why you're often grumpy.

B: What's your opinion of people from the German-speaking part of Switzerland, apart from the fact that you find them a bit more restrained?

P: Well of course we feel a bit inferior. In terms of demography, and our economy too. But I have to admit that we feel superior when it comes to gastronomy and culture.

C: And how about when you compare yourselves to the French?

P: Oh, compared to the French, we definitely feel superior in terms of our economy. But in gastronomy and culture, they're just a tad above us.

C: Do you speak any German?

P: Well, I studied German for 8 years, right up to the end of high school. Nevertheless, when I go to Zurich or Lucerne, it's really hard for me to communicate with people from there, because they don't really speak High German either!

C: So how do you communicate?

P: Well either we don't, or they speak French, or we get by with a few words in English.

C: And do you feel like you're all part of the same country?

P: Oh sure! Because we all have the same currency, the same stores, the same milk cartons, and the same road signs.... You can easily see that we're all part of the same country, but you can't actually hear it. One thing that really unites us though, is the fact that we all have much bigger neighboring countries dominating us culturally, so we're all rather modest. We don't really like bragging.

[...]

Sketches about the Swiss language regions

(Excerpts from the scripts)

Sketch 3: In the Ticino

Cyril: Hello!

Loris: Hello, my name is Loris Bernasconi, and I'm from Ashcona.

Beat: From where did you say?

L: Ashcona. That's how we say Ascona in Ticino. With a "shhhhh". Ashcona... don't you know where that is?

B: Oh sure, Ascona, that's where I spend the night when I go to the Locarno Film Festival!

C: So, you speak in the local dialect, then?

L: Well, I don't really have the choice! I have a restaurant on the lakeside, so I need to be able to understand my customers...

C: Which local dialect do you speak?

L: I'm not sure... I guess it's the Zurich dialect

C: I wasn't talking about what you speak with the tourists who come to your restaurant! I meant which Ticino dialect?

L: Oh! Well, the locals from Ticino don't really come to my restaurant. Ashcona is full of Swiss Germans.

C: How about your staff? Don't they speak the local dialect?

L: Oh no, they all come from Italy: from Verbania, Cannero, Cannobbio... People coming to eat in my restaurant create traffic jams at the Gotthard tunnel, and my employees create traffic jams at the border in Brissago!

C: So you're the only person from Ticino here in Ascona...?

L: Oh, I don't live in Ashcona, I live in Bellinzona, the capital of our canton. And I also waste a lot of time in traffic, every day, just to get to work.

C: So I guess I'd need to go to Bellinzona, to actually see locals from Ticino?

L: Yes, or you'd have to go to the valleys. But not the Verzasca Valley, as that's full of Swiss Germans too. You'll also find many people from Ticino at the University of Lausanne, or the University of Zurich. Like my daughter, who didn't fancy studying architecture or communications, and therefore decided to expatriate herself for her studies.

[...]

C: Hmm! So why do so many Swiss Germans come and visit your region?

L: Well first of all, it's not too far away. They just have to go through the Gotthard mountain, either by train – thanks to the longest railway tunnel in the world – or by car, if they have time on their hands. But above all, they love our way of life. Even though I must admit they come here expecting Ticino to be like it used to be in their grandparents' times: mandolino, vino, grotti, sole, relax. Nowadays, they pay us to make them believe it's still that way.

[...]

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Sketches about the Swiss language regions

(Excerpts from the scripts)

Sketch 4: In the Romansh-speaking region

Cyril: Hello there!

Flurin: Allegra, my name is Flurin.

Beat: I'm Beat.

C: And I'm Cyril. [...] I know there are a few thousand Romansh speakers in Switzerland, so you must be one of them?

F: No.

C: Oh really? I guess I've mixed things up then...

F: I speak Vallader. It's very different.

[...]

C: Do you know how many people actually speak it?

F: About 5000. It's a luxury language.

C: A luxury language?

F: It's rare, and therefore a luxury. And precious. Just like Engadine.

B: It's also a luxury language because Swiss taxpayers pay a lot to protect it!

C: You're right: the Swiss government pays between 4 and 5 million francs each year to help preserve its 4th national language. That's about 120 francs per person who actually speaks the language.

F: 120 francs is nothing: it's the price of one kilo of puolpa.

B: Mmmh, I've got to admit puolpa's worth it!

F: And Vallader's worth it too.

[...]



The famous Bündnerfleisch is called **puolpa** in the Vallader idiom.