Welcome to the Guardian Weekly’s special news-based materials to support learners and teachers of English. Each month, the Guardian Weekly newspaper selects topical news articles that can be used to practise English language skills. The materials are graded for two levels: advanced and lower intermediate. These worksheets can be downloaded free from guardian.co.uk/weekly. You can also find more advice for teachers and learners from the Guardian Weekly’s Learning English section on the site.

**Zulu dictionary offers education boost**
Materials prepared by Janet Hardy-Gould

**Instructions**

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<th>reading, dictionary skills</th>
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<td>Materials:</td>
<td>dictionaries (monolingual/bilingual)</td>
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1. Put students in pairs with dictionaries. Ask: What can you learn about a word from a dictionary? Answers: spelling, meaning(s), pronunciation, part of speech. Ask students to find *decade*. Elicit the meaning (period of 10 years), part of speech (noun) and word stress (first syllable). Discuss as a class how you identify these things in a dictionary. **7 mins**

2. Write up the following words one by one: bilingual, lexicographer, publish, substantial. As a race, students in pairs look up each word, identify the meaning, part of speech and word stress. Conduct feedback after each word. **10 mins**

   **Answers:**
   bilingual (adj) in/speaking two languages, lexicographer (n) a person who writes dictionaries, publish (v) to prepare and print a book for selling, substantial (adj) large in amount; important.

3. Tell students they are going to read an article. Ask them to look back at the words above. What is the article about? Dictionaries. Give out copies of the article. Focus students on the headline, photo and caption. Which country and language is the article about? South Africa/Zulu. **4 mins**

4. Write up these statements. Explain unknown vocabulary. Students read the article, decide if the statements are true (T) or false (F) and correct the false sentences. Feedback. **12 mins**

   a [ ] The last big English-Zulu dictionary appeared over 40 years ago.
   b [ ] A very small team worked on the dictionary.
   c [ ] Zulu is the most spoken African language in South Africa.
   d [ ] One out of every five people in South Africa is Zulu.
   e [ ] Jacob Zuma is the second Zulu person to become president.
   f [ ] There are more than 10 official languages in South Africa.
   g [ ] Some Zulu pupils are at a disadvantage because they study in English.
   h [ ] Vukile McKenzie is unhappy about the new dictionary.

   **Answers:**
   a T b F - large team c T d F - four e F - first f T g T h F - happy

5. Students read the article again and choose four unknown words to look up with a partner. They note the meaning, part of speech and word stress. **10 mins**

6. Write up the following points. Students make notes in pairs, then discuss in groups. **12 mins**

   a Compare the language situation in your country to South Africa.
   b Are there similar problems for some pupils in your country?
1. Ngisanda ukuqala ukufunda isiZulu. Or to say it another way, I’ve just started learning Zulu.

2. English speaking visitors to South Africa can now do this more easily after the publication of an English-Zulu dictionary by Oxford University Press (OUP). The book is the first of its kind for more than 40 years.

3. Megan Hall, from OUP said: “The last substantial bilingual Zulu dictionary was published more than four decades ago and a great deal has changed since then.”

4. Hall said the book had been an “enormous project” that took more than three and a half years. It involved an international team of academics, teachers, language experts and specialist lexicographers. “It’s taken so long because it’s an exceptionally difficult job,” she said.

5. OUP hope that the book will also help the 2.8 million school pupils who study Zulu, South Africa’s most common African language.

6. There are 10.5 million Zulus in South Africa. They are the country’s biggest ethnic group and make up nearly one in four of the population.

7. Although Zulus are the largest ethnic group, English is generally used in business and politics. Jacob Zuma, the country’s first Zulu president, appears more comfortable speaking Zulu than when reading speeches in English.

8. South Africa has 11 official languages and this can cause problems in education. Many children use Zulu at home with their families, especially in rural areas. But they often study in English at school and this can put them at a possible disadvantage.

9. Vukile McKenzie, a radio personality who works to improve education in rural schools, welcomed the new dictionary. He said: “The learner in South Africa not only faces the challenge of learning to read, think and write, but quite possibly to communicate and influence in a different language to the one his or her parents use.”

Original article by David Smith, rewritten by Janet Hardy-Gould