

Language Matters

with Bob Holman
2 X 55, 1 X 109 HD



PBS

INTERNATIONAL

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There are over 6,000 languages in the world. We lose one every two weeks. Hundreds will be lost within the next generation. By the end of this century, half of the world's languages will have vanished. *Language Matters with Bob Holman* asks: What do we lose when a language dies, and what does it take to save a language?

Filmed around the world, *Language Matters* includes interviews with songmen, linguists, and poets, and features original music and songs in Welsh, Hawaiian, and Aboriginal languages. In the Australian Outback, host Bob Holman meets Charlie Mangulda, an Aboriginal songman, who is the only person in the world who speaks Amurdak. When Charlie is gone, Amurdak will disappear with him, except in the notebooks and recordings of the linguists. With linguist Nick Evans, Bob flies to Goulburn Island off the coast of Northern Australia where he meets a community of 400 people who speak ten languages, all vulnerable and many endangered.

In Wales, although the Welsh population of three million lives directly alongside England's 50 million English speakers, children can attend school in the Welsh language from pre-kindergarten to post-grad. The road signs, government forms, and menus are bilingual, and Welsh television is on 24-hours a day. How did it happen? Bob explores the humor, rage, and lyricism of the Welsh people, who brought their language back from the edge of extinction.

Hawaiian was once spoken by hundreds of thousands of people, but after Hawaii became the 50th state of the United States, it nearly disappeared. Hawaiian was banned from schools, and English was made the official language of government. In 1983, fewer than 50 children spoke Hawaiian. But today, Hawaiian has begun to make a comeback. The hula and Hawaiian chant are growing strong, and in immersion schools from pre-kindergarten to post-grad, children are speaking Hawaiian throughout the school day.

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CREDITS

A film by David Grubin

Writer, Producer, Director: David Grubin

Executive Producers: David Grubin and Bob Holman

Executive Producer For PIC: Leanne K. Ferrer

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