

## Activity 4.2 Exploring Multiple Language Use

**Performance Objectives** Students will explore the reasons that government documents were written in both Manchu and Chinese during the Qing dynasty (1644–1919). They will also examine reasons that multiple languages are used in their own environments. Further, they will consider the consequences of understanding and controlling a culture’s language.

**Grade Level** K–12 (easily adaptable to all)

**Essential Questions** How did the Manchus use bilingualism to control China?  
How and why is bilingualism practiced today by different cultures?  
How and why are symbols sometimes used to replace an alphabet-based writing system?

**Standards** **Social Studies**

*World History*

- Defining culture and civilization, explaining how they developed and changed over time
- Investigating the various components of cultures and civilizations, including social customs, norms, values, and traditions; political systems; economic systems; religions and spiritual beliefs; and socialization or education practices
- Knowing the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, roots, and religious and spiritual beliefs, that distinguish different cultures and civilizations
- Knowing important historic events and developments of past civilizations
- Interpreting and analyzing documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history
- Investigating the roles and contributions of individuals and groups in relation to key social, political, cultural, and religious practices spanning world history
- Viewing history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents
- Investigating important events and developments in world history by posing analytical questions, selecting relevant data, distinguishing fact from

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opinion, hypothesizing cause-and-effect relationships, testing hypotheses, and forming conclusions

### Language Arts

#### *Language for Information and Understanding*

- Following directions that involve a series of actions
- Obtaining essential information from printed and nonprinted materials on academic and applied topics and drawing connections among strands of information, making distinctions concerning the relative significance of specific data, facts, and ideas
- Preparing oral and written presentations, supporting decisions about interpretations and the relative significance of information with explicit statement, evidence, and appropriate argument

#### *Language for Social Interaction*

- Engaging in conversations and discussions relating to academic, technical, and community subjects, anticipating what listeners will need to know to understand an idea and structuring conversations and discussions to provide that information
- Listening attentively to others and building on their ideas in conversations of general interest to peers and adults
- Expressing their thoughts and views clearly with attention to the perspectives and voiced concerns of the listener or audience

Time Required One class period

Materials Photocopies of the **Palace Memorial in Manchu and Chinese Scripts** and **Introductory Questions** at the beginning of this section or the *Visible Traces* poster  
Paper and pencils  
Chalk and board

Assessment Piece Student records of multiple language use, discussion

Procedure **1.** Examine the **Palace Memorial in Manchu and Chinese Scripts** and discuss **Introductory Questions** with students. Discuss why they were executed in two languages. Ask students: What are the consequences of not understanding everyday written language? Have students consider how information is provided in more than one language in their environment.  
**2.** Write the following questions on the board:

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Where do you find examples of the use of more than one language?

Why are things written in more than one language?

In what instances are symbols, rather than language, used?

Why are symbols used in these instances?

**3.** Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Have groups generate examples of types of information found in more than one language.

They should note the purpose of these examples. Remind them that braille and sign language are also considered "languages." Symbols could include stop signs, danger warnings, or signs representing food or rest areas on highways.

**4.** Have students share their lists.

**5.** Have the class compare the use of bilingualism in ancient times with their modern examples. Ask students how the purposes might be similar or different from that of the **Palace Memorial**.

**Extensions** Have students produce a writing sample (elementary students, a paragraph; older students, a short essay) on what the consequences of not understanding the official language of one's country might be. Have them share what they write in class. Discuss the consequences of a limited number of people having access to the official language. Ask students how this might lead to power, prestige, or wealth. Have older students consider how technology provides communication opportunities that separate groups of people and their access to knowledge.

Have students collect further examples of bilingual communications over the course of several days, to be posted on a classroom bulletin board.