Yugambeh Nation

Name: _____

Date: _____

AGES 12 TO 16 · LANGUAGES AND ENGLISH

Three Languages, One Sky

Compare the three languages

	Latin	Yugambeh	English
Words for "the" and "a" (articles)?	No	No: Yugambeh uses a set of "this" and "that" words instead	Yes: *the*, *a*, *an*
How is a noun's job shown?	By changing the word's ending (case)	By changing the word's ending (case)	Mostly by word order and prepositions (*of, to, from*)
Is word order free?	Quite free	Quite free, because every noun's place is clearly marked	Fixed: "dog bites man" and "man bites dog" mean different things
Examples of cases	Genitive (of), dative (to), ablative (from)	Object, genitive, allative (to), ablative (from), locative, aversive (things you fear or fight)	Only a few left, in pronouns: *he, him, his*

One sky, three ways

Latin	Yugambeh	English
Caelum	**Ngurung**	Sky
Caelī	**Ngurungah**	Of the sky
Caelō	**Ngurungba**	To the sky
Caelum	**Ngurungi**	Sky (object)
Caelō	**Ngurungu**	From the sky

English still has a little case!

English pronouns change their form depending on their job. Fill in the gaps.

Doing the action	Receiving the action	Owning
he	him	his
she		
who		

Which sky word?

In Yugambeh, the ending does the job of the English preposition. Use the table to write the Yugambeh word for *sky* in each sentence.

The rain fell **from the sky**. _____

We love the colour **of the sky**. _____

The eagle flew up **to the sky**. _____

Look at **the sky**! (the sky is the object) _____

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Reading: Yugambeh Nation, 3 November 2025; "5 things that make Yugambeh a special and unique language!", yugam.be/stories

Yugambeh Nation

THREE LANGUAGES, ONE SKY

Discussion

How to discuss. Think on your own first and jot notes. Then talk with a partner. Then share with the class. Use the sentence starters to build on each other's ideas.

- I think… because…
- I agree with… and I'd add…
- I see it differently because…
- An example of this is…
- This makes me wonder…

Discussion prompts

1. Endings or little words? What are the advantages of showing a word's job with an ending (Latin and Yugambeh) compared with prepositions and word order (English)?

2. Latin is often called a "classical" language and studied in schools. Why do you think Aboriginal languages with similar features have not always been given the same respect?

3. Yugambeh has an *aversive* case for things you fight or are afraid of. What does a language's grammar tell you about what matters to the people who speak it?

4. The Reading says these languages "solve the same problem … in totally different ways". Can you think of another problem languages solve differently (for example counting, or saying who is included in "we")?

5. Why might it matter to Yugambeh people today that their language is recognised as complex and sophisticated?

After the discussion

Write one thing you learned and one question you still have.

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