

Mackenzie Howard & Shriya Amin  
// illustrated photo

# Read, write & blue

Requirements to be a citizen unfair to those eager to belong

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Bush, for speaking one short sentence in Spanish. He told Breitbart, "I like Jeb. He's a nice man. But he should really set the example by speaking English while in the United States."

Trump has made similarly controversial comments on any number of topics, yet he is a forerunner in the race. His supporters are undoubtedly English-speaking, but they are not what "informed" looks like.

In New York City's Chinatown, streets are marked with bilingual signs. In swathes of the Southwest, Spanish is almost ubiquitous. In parts of Louisiana, French Creole is spoken not just for pride in culture, but everyday. And these French-speaking citizens have lived in this country longer than many English-speakers.

A report of the 2011 Census notes the "continuing and growing role of non-English languages as part of the national fabric." This diversity is something that should be celebrated, not condemned. There are pockets of the country where English is not spoken at all on a daily basis. Mount Pleasant is not one of them. According to the *Washington Post*, English is the only language spoken in over 90 percent of households in Charleston County.

We consider ourselves open and accepting, but our words can be terribly offensive. Sarah Palin also commented on Jeb Bush's fluency in Spanish and gave her message to immigrants, "...when you're here, let's speak American."

Contradicting herself in the next breath, Palin added that the Republican party is inclusive, "even in terms of the culture, accepting people's differences and the diverse views and everything else."

Henry Ford famously said of the Model-T, "You can have any color, as long as it's black." Well, in this case, you can have any culture, as long as the majority says it's standard.

It is so easy for us to fall into this pattern of insular thinking when we lack exposure to anything but the familiar. This argument is a symbolic one. Do we really want the symbol America puts into the world to be one of hate?

Assuring that English is the only language that should be spoken in America is, frankly,

rather bigoted. Many speak of the tradition and heritage of America. I am American, and part of my heritage is the untranslatable Tamil folk tales my parents narrated as bedtime stories. Should my parents be the ones to let the ancient traditions of India die?

Besides, English is not American. It is German, Latin, French and more. Like English, our American culture is an amalgamation of contributions from every people it has come in contact with. If we can only speak unadulterated English, what do you propose we call ketchup, lo mein, pizza, pasta, gumbo?

Native Americans are the only ones who can lay claim to pure American culture -- and English is a second language to many in the American Indian Nation, according to a resolution by the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona in opposition to a strict immigration law.

My parents became citizens in 2006. English is their best language. They passed the naturalization exam easily. But this is not at all a testament to some innate excellence.

British rule in India laid the groundwork for the school system that taught my parents English from the time they were in preschool.

Imposing the standard of English proficiency on every immigrant from every country isn't ensuring success in America. It is rewarding the vestiges of imperialism. It should be a tragedy, not an advantage, that my parents, born and raised in India, are more proficient in the language spoken by a people that subjugated theirs than in their native tongue.

But our current system values the flawed standard of English at the risk of deterring the people who most value citizenship. yet these exemplary people could be deterred from citizenship because they come from a country like Japan, Ethiopia, or Brazil where English is not quite so prevalent.

We have been taught this information for years and most of us are only fluent in one language: English.

Are we seriously going to ask someone to be better than us before we will consider them our equal?

## Outside of the tribe

### Oregon shooting

Nine people were killed and seven injured after a 26-year-old gunman opened fire at Umpqua Community College in Oregon. The tragedy caused America to reflect on the 142 shootings that have happened since the Sandy Hook shooting in December of 2012.

### 2016 First Democrat Presidential Candidates debates

The first Democrat debate included presidential candidates Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, Jim Webb, Lincoln Chafee and Martin O'Malley. The debate was friendly between the candidates and they agreed on most of the topics mentioned. Clinton and Sanders had a civil difference of opinion about Sanders' views on capitalism and other important topics prevalent in the 2016 presidential campaign.

### Hurricane Joaquin & SS El Faro

The United States National Transportation Safety Board called for an end on the search for the SS El Faro on Oct. 7. The crew consisting of 33 members, who went missing aboard the SS El Faro during the category 4 hurricane Joaquin in the Atlantic. USNI News stated that the disappearing ship was "the worst U.S. merchant marine disaster of recent memory."

### Water on Mars

Images from a spectrometer scanning the surface of Mars have determined that present-day Mars has liquid, flowing water. Hydrated mineral signatures along with various streaked slopes has led NASA scientists to that conclusions and offers a great deal of information on the planet, and has furthered research into the possibility of Mars supporting life and providing valuable resources and materials.

### Bombing in Afghan hospital

A Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan was bombed under uncertain circumstances by U.S. forces. The bombing resulted in the deaths of at least 22 Afghans, 12 of whom were staff members of the hospital as well as three child patients. Doctors Without Borders has called the incident a war crime. However, the bombing's intent and the conditions surrounding the bombardment are left unresolved.

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