



What Language Is (And What It Isn't and What It Could Be)

John McWhorter

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***New York Times* bestselling author and renowned linguist, John McWhorter, explores the complicated and fascinating world of languages. From Standard English to Black English; obscure tongues only spoken by a few thousand people in the world to the big ones like Mandarin - *What Language Is* celebrates the history and curiosities of languages around the world and smashes our assumptions about "correct" grammar.**

An eye-opening tour for all language lovers, *What Language Is* offers a fascinating new perspective on the way humans communicate. From vanishing languages spoken by a few hundred people to major tongues like Chinese, with copious revelations about the hodgepodge nature of English, John McWhorter shows readers how to see and hear languages as a linguist does. Packed with Big Ideas about language alongside wonderful trivia, *What Language Is* explains how languages across the globe (the Queen's English and Surinam creoles alike) originate, evolve, multiply, and divide. Raising provocative questions about what qualifies as a language (so-called slang does have structured grammar), McWhorter also takes readers on a marvelous journey through time and place—from Persian to the languages of Sri Lanka— to deliver a feast of facts about the wonders of human linguistic expression.

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