**Catalan, *Català***

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| elated languages | Catalan is a modern Romance language, closely related to Occitan (the language spoken in southern France). |
| uropean speakers | Estimates of the number of speakers vary. The majority of the 10,500,000 inhabitants of the Catalan countries operate with both Catalan and Spanish and it's estimated that about half of them have Catalan as their mother tongue. Some 3,000,000 other people speak Catalan as their second or third language, with 2 million more understanding but not being able to speak it. |
| erritories | Catalan, with all its variants, is spread over 68,000 Km2. It's the official language of [Andorra](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european_languages/countries/andorra.shtml) and co-official with [Spanish](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european_languages/languages/spanish.shtml) in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. It's also spoken in part of the territory of Aragon, in the French department of Pyrénées Orientales, and in the Italian town of Alghero in Sardinia, where it's co-official with [Italian](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european_languages/languages/italian.shtml) and Sardinian. Valencian, regarded as a variant of the Catalan language, is spoken in the region of Valencia. |
| lphabet | As a direct descendant of Latin, Catalan is written in Latin script. It also uses acute and grave accents (as in é and è), dieresis (as in ï), a mid dot to separate two l, the "ela geminada" l·l, and the "ce trencada" ç. |
| irst examples | Although some very early documents can be traced to the 9th century, the first literary text is the Homilies of Organyà, a collection of sermons dating from the late 12th century. |
| ther facts | In 1978 the Spanish Constitution established that languages different from Castilian could be given official status. Over these years, the Catalan language has been introduced into schools, government, the press and other media. A large number of local radio and television stations have been set up and the language is ranked nineteenth in the world in terms of its presence on the Internet. |

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| **Key Phrases**   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | **Sí.**  Yes. | |  | **No.** No. | |  | **Benvingut!** Welcome! | |  | **Molt de gust de conèixe'l.** Pleased to meet you. | |  | **Hola.** Hello. | |  | **Adéu.** Goodbye. | |  | **Gràcies.** Thank you. | | http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european_languages/images/welcome/welcome_catalan.gif |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | **Em dic ...** My name is ... | |  | **Parla anglès vostè?** Do you speak English? | |  | **Ho sento, no parlo el català.** I'm sorry, I don't speak Catalan. | |  | **Necessito ajuda.** I need help. | |  | **On és el lavabo, sisplau?** Where is the toilet, please? | |