

# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR ORAL REPLY  
QUESTION 101

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**Adv A H Gaum to ask the Minister of Education:**

What steps will be taken to ensure that, in practical terms, smaller languages of tuition are not overwhelmed and eventually swallowed by English?

**N1080E**

**REPLY:**

There are three simple principles to our language policy in schools.

First, our language policy encourages the use of the mother tongue as a language of instruction in the primary school phase. The policy recognizes that past policy and practice has disadvantaged millions of children. Consequently, it promotes the use and learning of all the languages of South Africa, including previously neglected indigenous languages.

Second, our policy requires all school children to learn to speak and write a second language.

Third, our policy requires all school children to learn to speak a third language. All learners are required to have studied a South African indigenous language for three years by the end of Grade 9.

Our intention is to develop all languages so they can be used as languages of learning and teaching. In addition, we have focused on the revitalization of the teaching of indigenous languages in universities, to increase the number of students taking them, and also to increase the pool of teachers with the necessary depth of understanding to teach in these languages.