

Knowledge Question: How does language help us know?

1. Do Now: Consider the following quotes

- “The limits of my language are the limits of my world.” –Ludwig Wittgenstein
 - the more you expand your language, your vocabulary the more you know
 - the language you grow up with shapes the way your mind works and interacts with the world.
 - Sometimes words don’t exist in different languages which makes it hard to explain thoughts and knowledge
 - Language is intertwined with experience, culture
 - Language and knowledge limit each other. One cannot be greater than the other.

- “I know more than I can say.” - Michael Polanyi
 - hard to transfer personal knowledge to shared knowledge
 - ex. if someone is deaf or unable to speak but can’t communicate they can still *know*.
 - Sometimes we already *know* a concept but we don’t have a word or ability to describe that knowledge without the words for it.
 - Language is like categorization for what you already know.
 - Sometimes you can have an emotion, for example, and you can’t put words to it. Sadness, for example, may not accurately describe what you *know* you’re feeling.
 - Some ideas and knowledge are abstract, love for example

For each quote, explain its meaning in your own words. What connection does each quote make about the relationship between language and knowledge?

2. Introduction to language: With your partners, brainstorm some ideas about the following questions:

- What is language?
- What must be true for two people to communicate through language?
- What are the limitations of communicating through language?
- Why do people miscommunicate?
- How does it help us know? Try to map out the process of one person communicating with another.