



**February 21 2015 - Thought to have originated sometime between 400 and 700 AD, Welsh is one of six surviving Celtic languages: the others being Breton, Irish, Gaelic, Cornish and Manx. Cymraeg (“Welsh” in Welsh) is derived from the Brittonic word Combrogī, meaning fellow countryman.**

The Latin alphabet was adapted for the writing of Welsh early in the ninth century and by 1660, 108 books had been published in Welsh. By the second half of the 18th century Wales was one of the few European countries to have a literate majority, thanks in part to Griffith Jones, who in 1734, motivated by a desire to ‘save people’s souls’, set about organizing a system to teach children and adults basic reading skills in their mother tongue in as little as three months, before moving on to the next location.

The mid-19th century was a turbulent period in Welsh history and some attributed the resulting riots and poor provision of education in Wales to the continued existence of the Welsh language. Welsh school children were discouraged from speaking Welsh through the Welsh Not: A plaque which was given to any offending child, to be handed on to whoever next spoke the language. At the end of lessons, the child left with the Welsh Not would be punished.

By the early 20th century Welsh was still the everyday language used in Wales, but the success of the coal mining industry attracted workers from further afield and by 1911 Welsh was a

minority language, spoken by just 43.5% of the population for the first time for around 2,000 years.

This led in 1925 to the founding of [Plaid Cymru](#) , a socialist leaning party seeking self-government and the preservation of the language and culture of Wales. The recent growth of bilingualism in Wales is due largely to their non-violent direct action throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s which led to the imprisonment of hundreds of its members.

According to the latest 2011 Census, 19% of people in Wales can speak Welsh. There are currently over 490 primary and secondary schools which teach entirely or mainly through the medium of Welsh. Some courses at Welsh universities and colleges are available in Welsh and there are numerous Welsh courses for adults.



## Cymraeg: yr unig iaith Geltaidd Nid dosbarthu fel “mewn perygl” gan [UNESCO](#)

**Cymraeg yw un o'r chwech iaith Geltaidd sydd wedi goroesi ers iddi gael ei tharddu rhywbryd rhwng 400 a100 OC: Llydaweg, Gwyddeleg, Gaeleg, Cernyweg a Manaweg yw'r lleill. Mae'r gair 'Cymraeg' ei hun yn dod o'r gair Brythoneg 'Combrogî', sy'n golygu gydwladwr.**

Erbyn ail hanner yr 18fed ganrif Cymru oedd un o'r ychydig wledydd Ewropeaidd lle bu fwyafrif y boblogaeth yn llythrennog, diolch yn rhannol i Griffith Jones. Yn 1734 drefnodd e system i ddysgu plant a oedolion sgiliau darllen sylfaenol yn eu mamiaith, er mwyn 'achub eneidiau pobl' mae'n debyg. Byddai'n cyflawni hyn mewn cyn lleied â thri mis, cyn symud ymlaen i'r lleoliad nesaf.

Roedd canol y 19eg ganrif yn gyfnod cythryblus yn hanes Cymru ac roedd rhai yn beio'r terfysg, a'r ddarpariaeth wael o addysg yng Nghymru ar fodolaeth barhaus yr iaith Gymraeg. Caiff blant ysgolion Cymru eu hannog i beidio â siarad Cymraeg gyda'r Welsh Not, sef plac a roddwyd i unrhyw blentyn defnyddiod yr iaith yn y dosbarth, trosglwyddwyd i bwy bynnag gwnaeth siarad yr iaith tro nesa. Roedd yna gosb wedyn i'r blentyn hynnu a ddelir y Welsh Not ar diwedd y dydd.

Erbyn dechrau'r 20fed ganrif Cymraeg oedd y prif iaith a ddefnyddir yng Nghymru. Gyda llwyddiant y diwydiant cloddio glo yn denu gweithwyr o bell, erbyn 1911 Cymraeg oedd yr iaith leiafrifol, siaredir gan dim ond 43.5% o'r boblogaeth am y tro cyntaf ers tua 2,000 mlynedd.

Arweiniodd hyn yn 1925 i sefydliad [Plaid Cymru](#), plaid sosialaidd sy'n ceisio tuag at hunan-lywodraeth a gwarchod iaith a diwylliant Cymru. Mae'r twf diweddar o ddwyieithrwydd yng Nghymru yn bennaf oherwydd eu gweithredu uniongyrchol di-drais drwy gydol y 1960au, 70au ac 80au. Caracharwyd cannoedd ei aelodau yn y cyfnod.

Yn ôl y Cyfrifiad diweddaraf 2011, gall 19% o bobl Cymru yn siarad Cymraeg. Ar hyn o bryd mae yna dros 490 o ysgolion cynradd ac uwchradd yn addysgu yn gyfan gwbl neu'n bennaf trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Mae rhai cyrsiau mewn prifysgolion a cholegau Cymru ar gael yn

Gymraeg ac mae cyrsiau niferus Cymraeg i oedolion.