



LL Zamenhof Honored By Google

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The creative minds at Google have done it again. This time they are giving us a history lesson by honoring the 150th birthday of L.L. Zamenhof on their doodle. Zamenhof created the constructed language of Esperanto.

Born on December 15, 1859 in Bialystok, Poland, L.L. Zamenhof spoke his father's native language of **Russian** and his mother's Yiddish. There were not many languages that Zamenhof did not learn.

He eventually learned Polish, German, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew and English. Zamenhof also studied Italian, Spanish and Lithuanian.

What led Zamenhof to **learn so many languages** probably derived from what caused him to create the international language of Esperanto. As a child growing up, Zamenhof observed the feuding among the different ethnic groups that lived in Bialystok. See **how multilingualism brings communities together**.

The Poles, German and Belarusians that live in Bialystok were constantly quarreling. Zamenhof believed that a common language among the different groups would stop the misunderstandings.

As a student at a **Warsaw** secondary school, Zamenhof made his first attempt to create an international language. It was very complex and the grammar was rich.

After studying English, Zamenhof began to simplify the grammar in his new language. Zamenhof first project, "Lingwe uniwersala" was almost completed by 1878, but he was too young to publish it.

Zamenhof began to study medicine and graduated in 1885 after graduating from the secondary school. Zamenhof worked as a doctor while he continued to work on his new language.

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Zamenhof obtained the money to publish his booklet on his new language from his future father-in-law. The booklet titled; *Lingvo internacia Antaŭparolo kaj plena lernolibro* (translates to International Language Foreward and Complete Textbook) was published in 1887. Zamenhof used the pen name, "Doktoro Esperanto" or Doctor Hopeful.

The new international language was more than a communication tool for Zamenhof. His objective for it was to help promote peace among different cultures.

The L.L. in Dr. L.L. Zamenhof is referred to mean Ludovic Lazarus. He was actually given the Yiddish name Leyzer (translated from the Hebrew name of Eliezer) at birth.

Zamenhof used both Leyzer and the Russian equivalent Lazar as an adolescent. Then he began using the Russian name Lyudovik while studying medicine at the university.

Like L.L. Zamenhof, his brother Leon became a doctor and started signing his name Dr. L. Zamenhof. So Zamenhof began signing his name Dr. L.L. Zamenhof in 1901.

The interesting facts about his name does not stop with Zamenhof's two Ls. His last name Zamenhof is the Esperantized spelling of his family name. His family name is of German decent and is actually Samenhof.

L.L. Zamenhof died on April 14, 1917. Before he died he created the international language Esperanto that is still in use by some today. Esperanto has never been adaptive as a country's language, but some relief groups and even the military use it.

Today on his 150th birthday, Google has introduced many to Dr. L.L. Zamenhof and his language Esperanto. The Google doodle features the Esperanto flag as its L. Maybe one day the world can all speak in peace as he once dreamed.

Written by Denise Clay
For Huliq

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