

## “Elementary,..!” Esperanto Course - extract

Throughout the course we include information on the culture and background of Esperanto, to help you understand where we are coming from and where we are going to. We reproduce two edited extracts below to give you a sample of some of the various topics we cover.



### Who or what is an Esperantist?

At the first World Esperanto Congress in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, in 1905, the participants agreed this definition of an Esperantist:

*Esperantisto estas nomita ĉiu persono, kiu scias kaj uzas la lingvon Esperanto, tute egale por kiaj celoj li ĝin uzas. Apartenado al ia aktiva societo esperantista por ĉiu esperantisto estas rekomendinda, sed ne deviga.*

Translation: An Esperantist is any person who knows and uses the language Esperanto, irrespective of whatever purposes he uses it for. Belonging to some active Esperantist society is recommended for every Esperantist, but is not compulsory.

Some Esperantists hope for, and work towards, a time when Esperanto will have a predominant role in international communications – for politics, diplomacy, commerce and humanitarian aid. They are known as *finvenkistoj*, because they aspire to this *finvenko* (final victory).

Other Esperantists take the view ...

... In practice, most Esperantists belong to neither one extreme nor the other. They would welcome more official recognition for Esperanto, and the more widespread teaching of the language, but they are also quite happy to use and exploit it to support their own interests, hobbies and friendships. ...



### Crocodiles in Esperanto

At international Esperanto meetings, people speak in Esperanto; it's often the one language they have in common.

But at national conferences, regional meetings, local groups and clubs, you'll also find people speaking in Esperanto. Why do they do this, when they have a national language in common? ...

To encourage such use of Esperanto, there is a slang word – *krokodili*. This means 'to speak in a national language at an Esperanto gathering'. Here's what Zamenhof said about that in 1910, in a speech in St. Petersburg:

*'... Tio estas la ĉefaj motivoj, por kiuj ni en ĉiuj niaj kongresoj ne sole en la universalaj, sed ankaŭ en la naciaj aŭ regionaj, nepre devas paroli ne sole pri Esperanto, sed ankaŭ per Esperanto.'*

Translation: '... Those are the main motives, for which we, at all of our congresses, not just in the world ones but also in the national or regional ones, must speak not just about Esperanto, but also in Esperanto.'

As a beginner, you may also not understand some (or even many) of the words you hear when listening to a talk, presentation or song – but don't give up! ...