

# EMPOWERMENT IN DISMAL TIMES: RESOURCES FOR ARMENIAN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

*Posted on September 10, 2022 by Keghart*



Category: [Opinions](#)



**By Lucine Kasbarian**, New Jersey, 28 August 2022

Most Diasporan Armenians are not in a position to provide today's Armenia/Artsakh with their most essential needs: sophisticated weaponry, closed skies, secure borders.

Yet, many are thankfully focusing upon issues over which Armenians do exercise control and agency. One such issue is perpetuating the Armenian identity by endowing new generations with the tools to generously use and preserve the Armenian language.

Following is what is hoped will become an occasional roundup of valuable new media releases for Armenian language learners of all ages (in Eastern and Western dialects, respectively).

You may ask why these materials are being reviewed in written English when the products themselves are presented in spoken/written Armenian. Partly because some of these resources have already been announced in Armenian-language media. But what of today's parents and individuals who speak the language haltingly or not at all but wish to and are not aware of such tools? And what of the parents who may not speak Armenian with the competency level they would like, but seek resources so that their children will speak Armenian with greater fluency than they? The intention of this new feature is to inform English-language readers of evolving Armenian language materials at their disposal, what they can expect from them and where they can obtain them.

Below are new language learning tools in the Western Armenian dialect.

***Agool Doogool and Alniss Palniss***

**(Աղոլլ Տոլոլլ + Ալնիս Քալնիս; rhyming nonsense words)**

**TV Programs**

**(For ages 2-6 and 7-12, respectively)**

**By the Yertik Collective**

**To view: [www.yertik.com](http://www.yertik.com)**



In 2021, a high-quality creative TV program was launched for children, presented in Western Armenian. Entertaining, addictive, humorous and educational, these videos can be found on YouTube and Yertik.com. The creative content funded by the Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, has been devised by Yertik (Armenian for “roof”) Collective members Vahan Kerovpyan, Sevana Tchakerian, Kayane Gavrilof, Hrayr Kalemkerian, Anouche Mekhsian, Vahakn Keshishian and Dzavy Bilalian.

Through songs, stories, games, puppets, puzzles, sketches and more, Yertik creates a playful environment where children up to 12 years old can have fun while developing their communication skills. Children can grow their vocabulary, learn or improve their knowledge of Western Armenian and find an enticing world in the language that speaks to their daily lives in the Diaspora.

Yertik produces two original weekly videos. Agool Doogool («Ակո՛ւԼ Տո՛ւկո՛ւԼ») targets two-to-six-year-olds. Both Armenian-speaking and non-Armenian-speaking children can watch and follow the program. They will become familiar with unique puppet characters, including the wacky Berge, his sidekick Takoush the toucan, and sock puppets Soorj and Moorj, encouraging children to develop their listening and observational skills, creativity and memory. Here's a sample:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWrtdCSdnQo>

Alniss Palniss («Ալնիս Բալնիս») targets seven-to-twelve-year-olds. The program covers different daily subjects -- ranging from archaeology to pollution – encouraging children and preteens to improve their communication skills in the Armenian language, as well as to develop their analytical skills. The videos allow for moments of creative brainstorming and foster debates over a variety of themes using new vocabulary. The program also encourages children to build upon their curiosity and investigate the “whys” and the “hows.” Here's a sample:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2b6kk8Z7m0&t=91s>

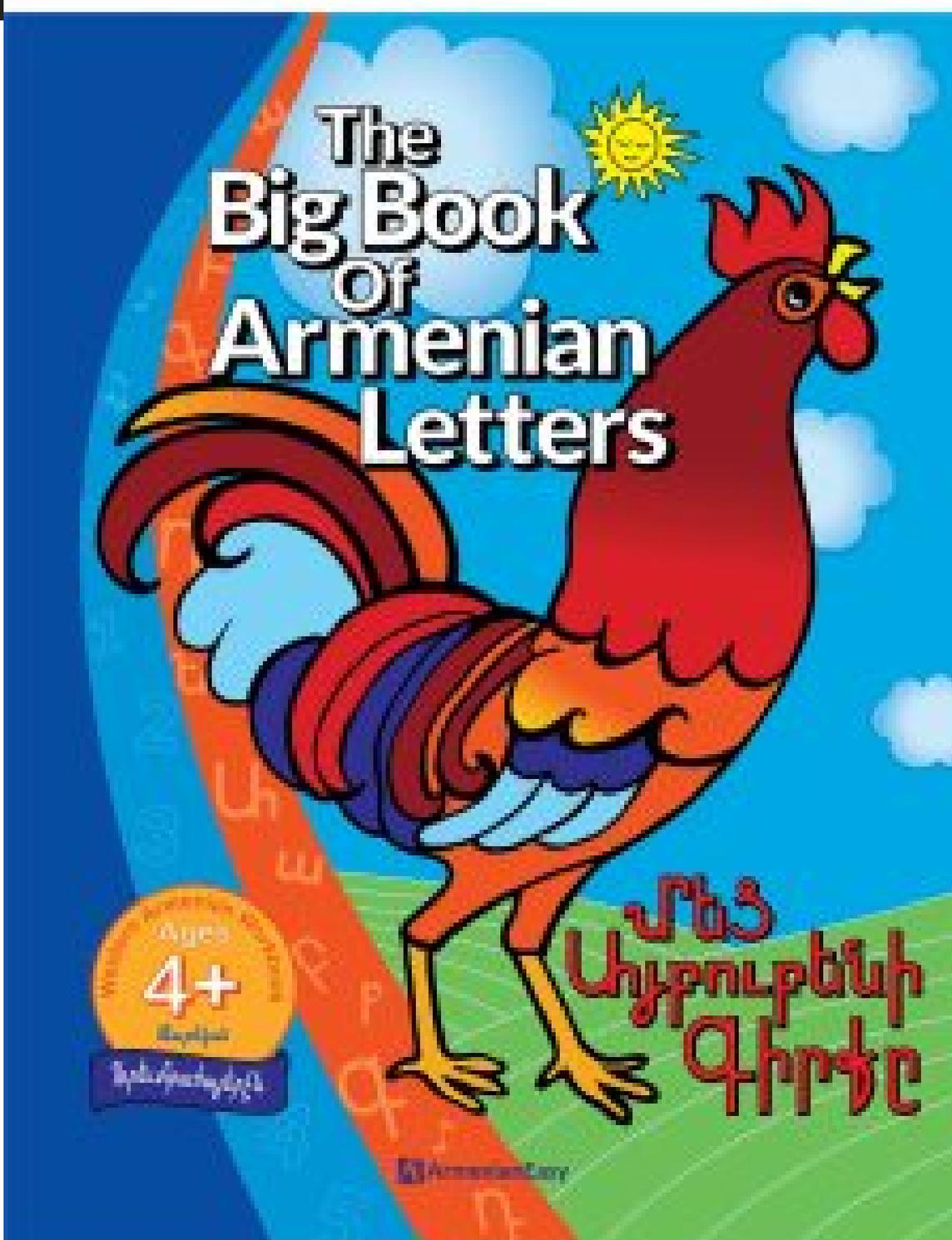
***The Big Book of Armenian Letters***

**Activity Book**

**(For ages 4 and up)**

**By Cathy Toukhanian-Jacobs Brito and Jenny Toukhanian-Jacobs Mullen**

**To order: [www.armenianeasy.com/s/shop](http://www.armenianeasy.com/s/shop)**



This illustrated, black and white spiral-bound book contains 295 activities for the young Armenian-language learner. Activities promote Armenian alphabet recognition, expand vocabulary, and help develop coordination for learners ages 4 and up. Each page is designed to be fun and engaging for the

reader who is just beginning to learn Armenian letters. There are activity pages for each of the 38 letters of the *Aypoupen*, as well as review pages at the end of each section. Activities include coloring, mazes, tracing, songs, matching, connect-the-dots, 240 Armenian words and a Bible verse in Western Armenian.

As a homeschooling mother of four, Jenny was looking for preschool/ kindergarten level activities that would help teach the Armenian letters to her eldest child. Her artist-designer sister, Cathy, began creating activity pages for Jenny's children which evolved into this book. The sisters aim to facilitate Armenian language learning (speaking, reading, and writing) for all, including those who may not have the benefit of hearing Armenian spoken in their homes.

Cathy and Jenny's mother, Hourig Toukhanian-Jacobs, laid the groundwork for this endeavor. Hourig excelled at teaching Armenian to non-native speakers. As a teacher for the Detroit-area Armenian Relief Society schools and as an independent educator, she taught Armenian language to learners of all levels and backgrounds for more than 40 years, usually creating her own curricula from scratch.

***Arevmdahayeren Hekyatner***

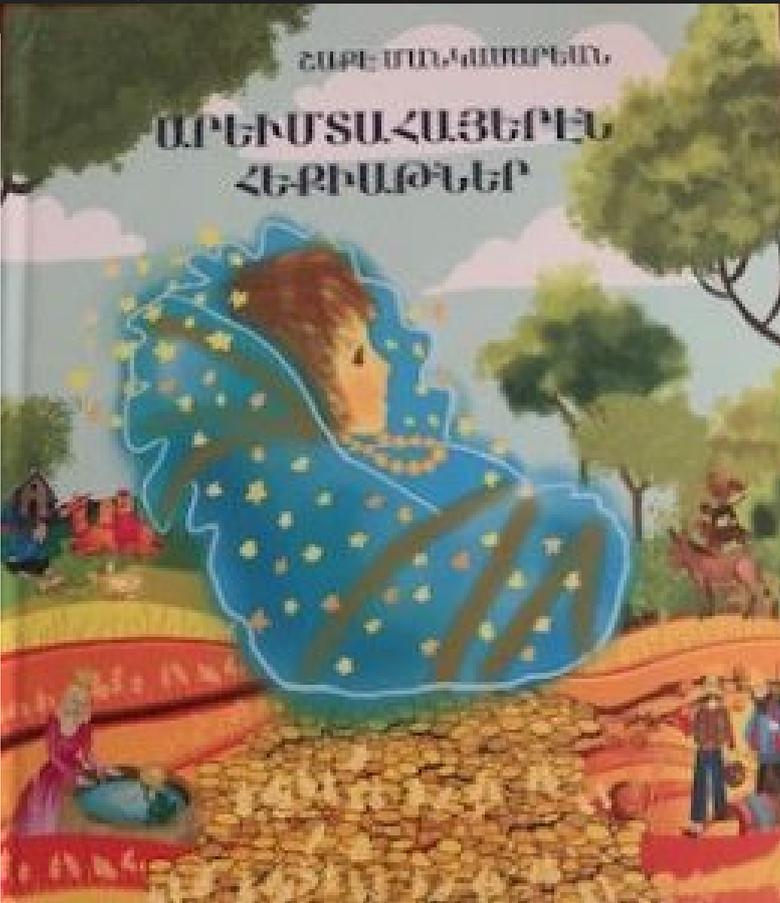
**(Western Armenian Folktales/ Արեւմտահայերէն հեքիաթներ)**

**Illustrated Book of Fables**

**(For ages 4 and up)**

**Written and illustrated by Chakè Mangassarian-Grogan**

**To order: [Contact Us - Կապ | Radio Ayk](#)**



This compilation of carefully-selected fairy tales has been retold and illustrated by Chakè Mangassarian-Grogan, a language professional and graduate of Yerevan State University's Romano & Germanic Language Division of Philology. The 18 tales featured in this volume are either from the canon of Armenian literature first presented by Avedik Issahakian or sourced from Armenian folklore by Hovhannes Toumanian and Suren Kocharian. Mangassarian-Grogan also retells tales sourced from the Brothers Grimm, Oscar Wilde and others.

Each story immerses the reader into a different world of fantasy, be the circumstances supernatural or mundane and contain a moral lesson. Mangassarian-Grogan, who is also the founder and host of RadioAyk.com, showcases the beauty of Western Armenian storytelling, uses many terms that are uniquely Western Armenian and employs many infrequently used, pleasingly descriptive vocabulary words. Some words are defined in the books' glossary while others may require the use of a dictionary, depending on the language proficiency of the reader. These tales offer audiences many opportunities to think about the nuances and complexities of the stories when discussed with peers and adults. Recommended reading level: Age 4 and up with adult participation.

***Pokrig***

**An Armenian Language and Learning Site with Video Programming  
(For ages 4-7 and 8-11)**

**By the Pokrig Collective****To view: [www.pokrig.org](http://www.pokrig.org)**

# Փոքրիկ



Based in Istanbul and established in 2014, Pokrig's Western Armenian language learning site is primarily a repository of more than 100 Armenian tales -- examples of Armenian folk literature, traditional and folk myths, mythological heroes, fables, classics of world children's literature, and modern fairy tales. Pokrig (Armenian for "little one") spotlights tales by famed writers such as Aigektsi, Issahakian, Khankoian, Komikian and Toumanian, classic and global storytellers as well as those of Armenian storytellers living today. Pokrig also offers original Armenian material for children of all ages – such as fun and educational videos about telling time and doing laundry; a song for Paregentan – the Armenian Mardi Gras; a narration of writer Mgrdich Margossian's reminiscences of life in Dikranagerd, Western Armenia; and parent/teacher guides on educational instruction, for example. Various initiatives within the site are produced for learners age 4-7 as well as for others age 8-11. The site's purpose is to create an opportunity for children to read and listen in Western Armenian in order to apply the language to their everyday lives as Armenians. The editorial collective is led by Anna Turai, one of the founders of the Istanbul-based Agos newspaper, along with Marie Galajch and Selma Melekian. Pokrig's programs are made possible by funding from the Istanbul Armenian Minority Schools Teacher's Foundation, the Karagozian School and the Gulbenkian Foundation.

## ***Anbardeli Zabel***

**(Unstoppable Zabel/ Անսպարտելի Չապելը)**

**An Armenian Children's Book**

**(For ages 4-8)**

**By Nora Kayserian****Illustrated by Lusine Ghugasyan****To order: [www.anbardelizabel.com](http://www.anbardelizabel.com)**

**Anbardeli** (Armenian for “unstoppable”) **Zabel** tells in condensed format the story of little Zabel who grew up to become the acclaimed writer and activist Zabel Yesayan. This 32-page illustrated children’s book broadly describes the life and activities of a girl who loved books and made history by pursuing her childhood dreams. Zabel witnessed many injustices growing up and decided that she would devote herself to activism using the power of the pen. Yesayan went on to become one of the great writers of Western Armenian literature.

Istanbul-born author Kayserian noticed many young people’s illustrated books about influential women such as Amelia Earhardt, Rosa Parks and Frida Kahlo. Since no such books for young people existed about Armenian women written in the in Armenian language, she created this work. Kayserian also aimed to provide school-aged children with a heroine who shares a similar ethnic background and who is shown facing challenges, overcoming obstacles, and making a difference in her community. This attractively illustrated book was supported by a crowd-funding initiative.

***Badanegan Orakir*****(Teen Diary/ Պատանեկան Օրագիր)****A Middle-Grade Novel****(For Ages 12-16)****By Shogher Aline Markarian****To order: [www.aghpur.com/products/badanegan-orakir-պատանեկան-](http://www.aghpur.com/products/badanegan-orakir-պատանեկան-)**

[onughn?\\_pos=1&sid=d4c483403&ss=r](https://keghart.org/kasbarian-empowerment/?pos=1&sid=d4c483403&ss=r)

This illustrated work of fiction is a middle-grade offering presented in a journal format in easy-to-understand Western Armenian. Protagonist Sevana is thrilled to start grade 9 and her Armenian course in school includes the assignment of writing a daily diary. Daron, on the other hand, complains that he doesn't have much to say in a diary. As the school year progresses, events take an unexpected turn, secrets are revealed and friendships are shaken. Throughout the pages of the diary emerges a story of perseverance, sportsmanship, courage, and integrity. This work was specifically created for a teenage audience with a narrative that reflects contemporary daily lives of Armenian boys and girls in North America. The Beirut-born Markarian's "Teen Diary" was the winner of the 2020 Armenian Book contest organized by the Hamazkayin Canada Regional Committee.

### ***Armenian Word Search***

**A Puzzle Book**

**(For ages 7 and up)**

**By Stella Kientz and Lisa Kradjian**

**To order: [Home | Mysite \(kiraziag.wixsite.com\)](https://www.kiraziag.wixsite.com)**

Fun For the Whole Family!



## ԲԱՌԻ ՈՐՈՆՈՒՄ Word Search

**MORE THAN 20 CATEGORIES!**

**GOOD FOR ALL AGES!**

**FOOD, CULTURE, GEOGRAPHY & MORE!**

**BY STELLA KIENTZ & LISA KRADJIAN**

*Armenian Word Search Volumes 1 and 2* are for people of all ages who enjoy puzzles and are interested in the Armenian language.

The searches are predominantly in Western Armenian and cover a variety of topics including food, culture and geography. The book is appropriate for beginners and experts alike. Volume 2 features transliterated Armenian for those who do not read Armenian letters, making the word searches easier for a wider audience. The ethnic Armenian authors hail from Southern California and the books were vetted by local Armenian language instructors and advisors.

**ԵՐԿԻՐՆԵՐ (COUNTRIES)**

Ի	Մ	Ս	Դ	Բ	Հ	Տ	Գ	Ե	Ն	Օ	Ծ	Փ	Ն
Բ	Ն	Գ	Ց	Բ	Օ	Ն	Ա	Ն	Գ	Լ	Ի	Ա	Բ
Ե	Հ	Ն	Դ	Կ	Ա	Ս	Ա	Ն	Բ	Մ	Ս	Գ	
Գ	Ց	Հ	Ե	Ծ	Հ	Ա	Ց	Ա	Ս	Ա	Ն	Ի	
Ս	Ե	Զ	Ս	Ի	Կ	Օ	Գ	Ե	Տ	Տ	Ա	Գ	Գ
Օ	Տ	Բ	Ն	Գ	Ն	Ա	Ն	Ա	Բ	Ի	Լ	Ե	Ռ
Ե	Հ	Փ	Մ	Բ	Դ	Ի	Ց	Բ	Լ	Ե	Գ	Բ	Ռ
Գ	Ե	Գ	Բ	Ա	Ն	Բ	Գ	Ա	Բ	Փ	Ս	Ն	Բ
Ի	Ծ	Ա	Ի	Դ	Ն	Բ	Տ	Ն	Գ	Ե	Տ	Օ	Ս
Գ	Փ	Ն	Գ	Ե	Ց	Ի	Փ	Գ	Դ	Ծ	Գ	Ե	Ի
Տ	Ց	Ա	Գ	Գ	Ս	Ծ	Ա	Կ	Ի	Բ	Ե	Մ	Ա
Ռ	Օ	Տ	Ե	Ն	Ա	Տ	Ս	Ա	Ն	Ի	Ց	Տ	Ս
Ս	Գ	Ա	Բ	Ս	Կ	Ա	Ս	Տ	Ա	Ն	Դ	Ն	Ի
Ս	Ծ	Դ	Ց	Ռ	Ի	Ն	Ա	Ս	Տ	Ա	Ն	Բ	Ս

ԱՄԵՐԻԿԱ (AMERICA)  
 ԳԵՐՄԱՆԻԱ (GERMANY)  
 ԱՆԳԼԻԱ (ENGLAND)  
 ԴՆԱՆԿԱՍՏԱՆ (IRAN)  
 ԻՏԱԼԻԱ (ITALY)  
 ԳՈՒԼԱՏԱՆ (CANADA)  
 ՐՈՍԻԱ (RUSSIA)  
 ՉԻՆԱՍՏԱՆ (CHINA)  
 ԼԻԲԱՆՈՆ (LEBANON)

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆ (ARMENIA)  
 ՑԻՒՆԱՍՏԱՆ (GREECE)  
 ՀՆԴԿԱՍՏԱՆ (INDIA)  
 ՄԵՔՍԻԿՈ (MEXICO)  
 ԵԳԻՊՏԻՍ (EGYPT)



**Note to readers:** If you have produced an Armenian language media resource you would like to have considered for review in a future installment of **Resources for Armenian Language Learners**, you may message the author on Facebook about sending an evaluation copy. **Lucine Kasbarian is an Armenian-American journalist, cartoonist and award-winning children's book author.** [www.facebook.com/lucine.kasbarian](http://www.facebook.com/lucine.kasbarian) She can be reached at [lucinekasbarian@hotmail.com](mailto:lucinekasbarian@hotmail.com) .

# # #

## Comments



**Ani Tateos Bostanian** – 2022-09-12 11:41:39

Every language has been born out of necessity and has its own place on a certain level and in a certain magnetic field. In time it starts to shift. This shift is caused by various aspects. It can be viewed as positive or negative. In fact, it has nothing to do with the latter. Therefore, it is necessary to study all the available and possible factors that cause the shift. This being said, it is also imperative to understand the importance of each language and its vibratory influence on both humans who speak a certain language and the universal aspect of that vibration in its totality. In reality, language is only a mirror of the people who speak it. It embodies everything the nation who carries the language including certain codes and mystical symbols which have been passed down from ancient times till the ones who speak it today. Armenian is an ancient language that survived not only centuries but millennia. Thus, it is evident that it contains vibrations that is necessary for both our world and the universe. The question is how to continue keeping it alive? How to integrate elements to secure its continuity for millennia to come? That is the work of the educators. How to be open to the new that is already at work. How to let go of the obsolete. How to bring each element in its right place in a very subtle way. That is the work of the educators who feel the responsibly in each and every aspect of the said "language".



**Tavo** – 2022-09-10 13:08:06

Great job on listing all these valuable resources! Preservation of our language and our communities is vital for the future.