



Family origins: Teacher notes

How many different languages are spoken across the school? How can we find out?

Facilitate a classroom discussion about languages other than English. Brainstorm the different languages students know are spoken by families across the school.

The Global Kids website (www.globalkidsoz.com.au/global_greetings.php) has greetings in different languages, including many Indigenous tongues.

On the Australian Bureau of Statistics website (www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/o), you can enter the name or postcode of your location to find the languages spoken; this information appears under the heading Ancestry charts.

What is the best way to survey students across our school about the languages their families speak?

Model data collection by surveying the class, creating a table, and finally creating a graph to represent the different languages spoken by families across the class.

Students can then work in small groups to survey different classes across the school to identify which languages are spoken by families at home. Groups share the information collected with the class, then the data can be collated as whole school data.

What is the best way to display the data we have collected about languages spoken at home?

Students should create a graph to represent the whole school data. They should decide what type of graph would most effectively display the data. This discussion could be held as a fishbowl.

Were you surprised about the information collected?

Facilitate a classroom discussion in which the students compare the data from their own class to data collected across the school.

Extension

How did the class' data collection compare to the school's official records?

You could also compare the data the students have collected with the school's official records about languages spoken at home. Using the three sets of data obtained, students can pose an hypothesis as to the reasons why a particular language is spoken more frequently at home.

They can discuss the variability of results and why that might occur. The focus should be on when to trust data and how data can vary according to different methods of collection and the size of the sample.