Family languages and origins: Teacher notes

The two parts of this activity (family language and family origins) may need to be done on different days. Although the languages spoken at home will be well known, students might need to discuss family origins with parents and grandparents.

What languages other than English are spoken at home?

Facilitate a class discussion on what languages other than English might be spoken at home. Ask the students to decide the best way to collect and record the data.

Students can then create a pie graph of the data. Encourage students to write a short paragraph about their findings to share with the class.

It is not sensible to be too accurate about the angles for each sector, unless you use technology.

How does our class data on languages compare to the data from the 2011 Australian census?

You may need to explain that a census covers an entire population, which means that in 2011 every person in Australia was surveyed. Lead a class discussion on the difficulties of conducting a census in our country.

The most recent census was taken in 2011, and the data is only now becoming available. At the time of writing this is all we can learn about languages for the Australian population. Later in 2013 the data will be expanded giving n more detail for the whole country, and also for local regions.

The data says that English (only) is spoken in 76.8% of homes, so there are other languages in remaining 23.2%. The five most common languages combined make up only 6.7%. This means the remaining16.5% of the population speak other languages, and their proportions are less than1.2% for each language.

- English
- others
- Mandarin
- Italian
- Arabic
- Cantonese
- Greek
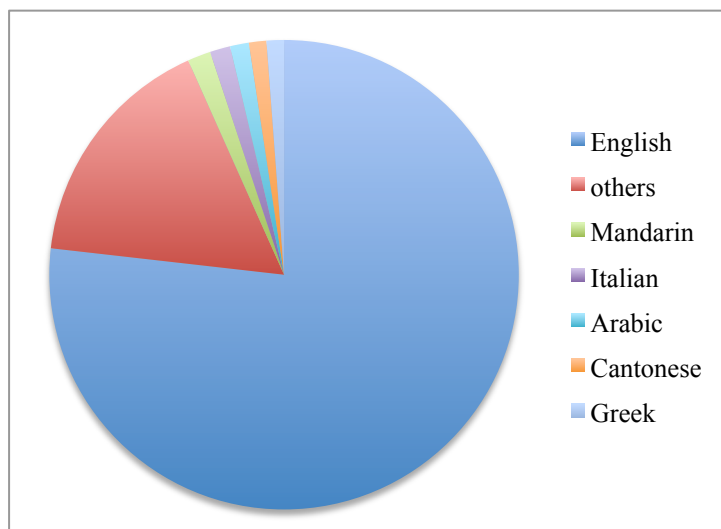
Where do our families come from?

Collect the data from the class and record in a suitable form. Ask students to construct a fraction bar graph. There are some instructions in the teacher notes as well as on the student worksheet. Encourage students to write a short paragraph about their findings to share with the class.

To construct a fraction bar graph, draw a rectangle, as many centimetres long as the number of people in your class (e.g. if there are 23 students the rectangle would be 23 cm long). Group all the people from the same country together, and choose a colour to show that country.

## How does our class data on family origins compare to the data from the 2011 Australian census?

Students use census data to construct a bar graph showing the ancestry of the Australian population. They can then construct a fraction bar graph to show how this would look if their class had the same ancestry, and make comparisons.

The census tells us that the top five ancestries add to 68.5%. This means that 31.5% of the population comes from other countries, each with less than 3.3% of the population.

How would this look for a class size of 25? Since these are percentages, and 25 is a quarter of 100, we divide the percentages by 4 and round to the nearest 1.

English ~ 6, Australian ~ 6, Irish ~ 2, Scottish ~ 2, Italian ~ 1, other origins 8.

The fraction bar graph would look like this.
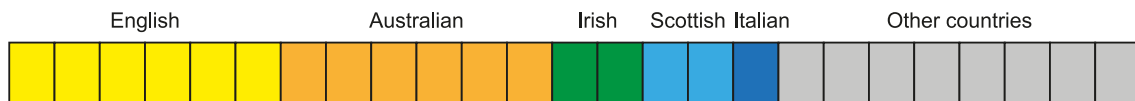
Extension

You can now turn this strip into a circle with the colours inwards.

Place it on butcher's paper and mark its centre. Draw lines from the centre to the edge of each shape. It is a pie chart!