

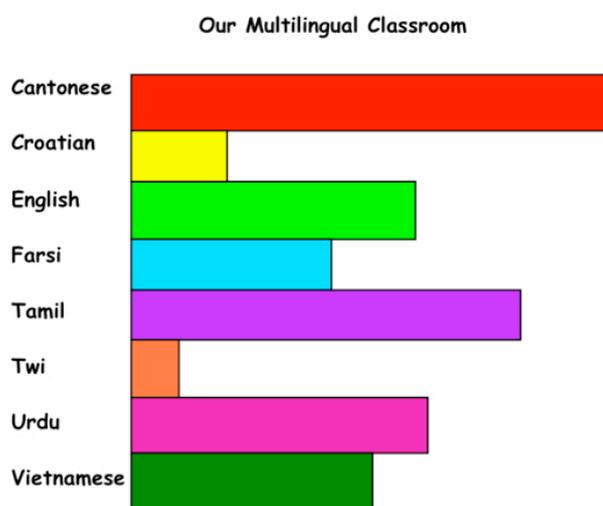
Language graphs and charts

Language surveys

This activity will help you to learn about the language backgrounds and needs of all students at the beginning of each school year. The information obtained at the time of registration may not always be accurate, because some parents may believe that they create a better impression on school staff if they say they speak the school language at home, even if they don't. However, an interactive language survey in class, making language diversity important and interesting, can provide very useful insights. The activity also provides opportunities for purposeful conversation among students of different backgrounds in a way that validates linguistic diversity and makes it "normal".

LANGUAGES IN OUR CLASSROOM			
Language	First Language	Second Language	Additional Language
Amharic	Adena		
Arabic	Fatima Hussein Samira	Daud Faisal	
Bulgarian	Stefan		
English	Miss Adams Alex Chinwe Emma Jason Johnson Wendy	Adena Fatima Hussein Mei Michel Ngozi Ramiro Samira Sofia	Chinwe Daud Djili Gloria Stefan
,,, and so on			

This chart was created with young children who each used a coloured marker to shade one square beside the names of their languages on a large graph-paper chart. English, although it is the language of the school, and although there are more speakers of English than any other language in the class, does not occupy a default position as first on the list, but is listed in alphabetical order.



Language profiles

This project can be completed as a follow-up to the language audit described above. Working in groups according to home or first language, students create a poster or web page about their own language or regional variety of a language (such as Jamaican English Creole or Cuban Spanish) to share with the class. The teacher provides a template and guides students as they do the necessary research. Students can share their language profiles with the class and with other students and teachers in various ways: online in a multimedia presentation, through an oral presentation in class, or through a poster display. This template, designed for students in secondary school, can be simplified for younger students.

Template for a language profile (adapted from Edwards, 1996: p. 12)

A PROFILE OF (NAME OF LANGUAGE OR LANGUAGE VARIETY)		
A sample of handwriting	A sample of printed text	Map showing where the language is spoken or where it originated
History of the language and people		Language family
Information about the naming system		Countries/regions where the language is spoken
Interesting proverbs or idiomatic expressions (with translation/explanation)		Number of speakers
Greetings, polite expressions, and forms of address		Information about the writing system (for example, direction of print, kind of script, punctuation)
Non-verbal language		Famous writers or books

The knowledge you gain through this project will be invaluable. For example, knowing something about the script system may help you to understand difficulties learners may have with learning to write in English. Encourage students to make comparisons among languages, and about the various contexts in which they choose to use one or another of their languages.