

## Languages

### Task 1 Link Languages

How many other languages can you link to ENGLISH?

ENGLISH
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### Task 2 Find Somebody Who...

Complete the last row with something you would like to find out about your classmates and remember to ask an extra question to get some extra information.

Find somebody who...	Name	Extra information
... likes learning languages.		
... speaks three languages or more.		
... finds languages easy to learn.		
... reads books or watches films in foreign languages.		
... has used a foreign language outside the classroom recently.		
... believes that in the future the whole world will speak the same language.		
...		

**Task 3 Europeans and their Languages Survey.**

The European Commission has recently carried out a survey in Europe to find out which countries speak different languages. Can you guess which country had the worst results? Read the statements and try to put the correct numbers into the gaps to make the statements true.

1. \_\_\_\_ % of people surveyed can't speak any other language apart from English.
2. \_\_\_\_ % of Britons speak at least one foreign language, \_\_\_\_ % speak two and only \_\_\_\_ % of the population speak three or more.
3. The European Union average showed that \_\_\_\_% speak at least one foreign language, \_\_\_\_% speak at least two and \_\_\_\_ % speak three or more
4. The survey confirmed that English was the most widely-spoken foreign language. \_\_\_\_% of EU citizens can have a conversation in English.

51	18	62	6	28	38	56	11
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- Are you surprised by any of this information?
- Why do you think the British are generally such bad language learners?
- How would your country compare to the UK in the same survey?

**Task 4 Speaking Mandarin – Reading task**

Did you know that Mandarin Chinese is spoken by 867.2 million people worldwide? Mandarin Chinese has eight categories of dialects and it's the official language of China and Taiwan. It's a difficult language to learn because there are four and a half tones, so a single word can have many different meanings.

Before you read the text decide if these statements are true or false. When you have read the text complete the third column.

	Guess before reading.	Answer after reading.
Most UK children don't study a foreign language before the age of 11.		
Many students stop studying foreign languages when they are 18.		
More British children study Mandarin than German.		
1000 schools in the UK now teach Mandarin.		

### **Speaking Mandarin**

Mandarin Chinese is being studied by a growing number of students in the UK and is set to become the second most studied foreign language.

### **Languages**

British people have a reputation for not speaking languages other than English. In UK schools it has been unusual for children to study a foreign language before the age of 11, and many students give up languages altogether at 14. The UK government is to make it compulsory to study one foreign language in primary school (pre-11). The most studied languages have traditionally been French, Spanish and German.

### **Mandarin turns heads**

But Mandarin Chinese is set to become the second most popular foreign language learned in UK schools. It is already studied by more children than German or Russian. Only French and Spanish are more popular. If the rate of growth continues it will overtake Spanish in three years. Gareth from Wales, says 'I am learning Chinese, and find it fun.' Another student, Thomas from London, says 'Just telling people that I learn Mandarin turns heads. Even a basic insight gives you an edge.'

### **Preparing for the future**

It is estimated that about 100 schools in the UK are now teaching Mandarin with 2062 candidates at A-level. Brighton College has become the first independent school to make Mandarin a compulsory foreign language. Its headmaster Richard Cairns said, 'One of my key tasks is to make sure pupils are equipped for the realities of the 21st century and one is that China has the fastest-growing economy.'

### **Not my cup of tea**

A conference in February called 'Why all British schools should be teaching Mandarin', supported by the Chinese Embassy, was attended by more than 100 teachers. However, it may not be that easy. Manote from Thailand comments, 'For some reason, Mandarin is not everyone's cup of tea. Seeing a British student learning Mandarin is like seeing a Tibetan learning Greek.'

*Magnus*

*April 2006*

Source: The British Council's Trend UK department.

### **Task 5 Let's discuss languages.**

Discuss these statements in groups.

Everybody should speak at least two languages.

In the future there won't be so many different languages in the world.

Tourists in my country should make an effort to speak my language.

Life would be easier if all countries spoke the same language.

I think learning languages is really important these days.

Girls are normally better at learning foreign languages than boys!

If languages disappear, different ways of thinking also disappear.

I would like to know more foreign languages.

Some languages are more important than others.

English is an 'international language'.

Knowing foreign languages helps you to get a good job.

**Task 6 Say 'Hello' to the world.**

Do you know how to say 'hello' in lots of different languages? Match the words on the left with the language on the right and learn to say 'hello' in fifteen different languages.

If the pronunciation is very different to how the word is written I've put the pronunciation in brackets after the word to help you.

Al salaam a'alaykum (Ahl sah-LAHM ah ah-LAY-koom)	Romanian
Nah-mah-stay	Japanese
Sa-wa dee krab / kah (krab for boys, kah for girls)	Swahili
Buenos dias	Portuguese
Bore da	Spanish
Jambo	Thai
Buon giorno	Hindi
God dag	Welsh
Nazdah	Arabic
Konichiwa	Italian
Shalom	Swedish
Päivää (PIE-vah)	Greek
Kalimera	Hebrew
Buna ziua (BOO-nuh ZEE-wa)	Czech
Bom dia	Finnish