

LANGUAGES of the WORLD



There are around **7000** different languages in the world today. Languages that are similar to each other are in groups or **families**. Some languages have a lot of speakers and others have very few. Many of the smaller languages have **only one or two speakers**, so when the last speaker dies, the language dies too.

Europe

Europe has **230** different languages. One language family here is Romance languages, which includes **French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian**. Another is Slavic languages, such as **Russian, Polish, and Czech**.

English belongs to the Germanic group, and is the third largest language in the world: **1.5 billion** people speak it as a first language and **1.5 billion** speak it as a second language. The Basque language from is very unusual. It doesn't belong to any language family!

Asia

Asia has **1,300** languages. Chinese has a billion speakers – more than any other language in the world. **Chinese** is the world's **largest language**, and **Chinese** comes **first**. Some parts of Asia have a very large number of languages.

Australia and Oceania

This area has **250** languages in total. The main language of Australia and New Zealand is English, but there are a lot of smaller languages too.

Australia has only around 8 million people, but it has **500** languages – more than any other country! Unfortunately, some languages are very small now and have only one or two speakers.

Americas

This area has **300** languages. English and Spanish have the most speakers on these continents. Spanish, with **450 million** speakers, is the world's second-largest language. Portuguese is spoken in Brazil. While in Canada people speak mainly English and French. There are also many other native languages, for example Mam, a Mayan language, which people speak in parts of

Africa

Human language probably originated on this continent.

There are **2,000** languages here. Many people in Africa can speak more than one language because, as well as their own language, they also speak



TALKING POINTS

12 Watch the video and discuss the questions.

What languages do you speak?

What languages are you studying?

What languages do your parents speak?

