

PLACES AND LANGUAGES

▶ 35 There are over one hundred and ninety countries in the world and about seven thousand languages. Chinese is the first language of more people than any other language. Over one billion people in China speak Mandarin Chinese. Hindi, spoken in India, is in second place. Spanish is in third place. Spain isn't a big country, but there are over four hundred and seventy million Spanish speakers in different countries around the world. Four hundred and eighteen million Spanish speakers live in Latin America. They all speak Spanish as their first language.

As a first language, English is the fourth most common native language. About three hundred and eighty million people are native English speakers. But English is a second language for over one billion other people. They speak English for business, reading the news, or studying science and medicine. In some countries, English is not the native language, but it is the official language of

the government. It is also the language of education in many colleges and schools.

25 About eighty percent of the world's population speak the "big four" languages, and the other twenty percent speak around seven thousand languages between them. Many countries use lots of different languages. For example, the country of Vanuatu in the South Pacific Ocean has sixty-five different islands and one hundred and nine different languages. That's one-and-a-half languages for every island.

Unfortunately, the world loses a language every two weeks. This is because lots of younger people only speak one of the big four languages and they don't learn the languages of their parents and grandparents. For example, Charlie Muldunga lives in Australia and he speaks English, but his native language is Amurdag. Charlie is the last speaker of this language. When he dies, the language dies, too.

3 Work in pairs. Read the article again and answer these questions.

- 1 Where do most Spanish speakers live?
- 2 Do more people speak English as a first language or as a second language?
- 3 What do many people use English for?
- 4 How many people speak Amurdag?

8 Work in pairs. Find collocations in the article with the words *language* and *speaker*. Match the collocations with these definitions.

- 1 the language you learn after your first language _____
- 2 the main language that a person speaks _____
- 3 the language of the government _____
- 4 the language you first learn from your parents as a child _____
- 5 a person who speaks Spanish _____
- 6 a person who speaks the language from when they were a child _____