



Teacher Resource

Mother Language Day

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. How many languages are spoken in Australia?
2. How many languages are spoken around the world?
 - a. 70
 - b. 700
 - c. 7,000
3. Why was International Mother Language Day created?
4. How do the kids in the BTN story feel when they speak their mother language?
5. What is your mother language? Share with your classmates.

Activity: Class Discussion

Discuss the information raised in the BTN Mother Language Day story. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:

- What is the meaning of mother language? Find a definition.
- Why is it called mother language?
- What is your first language?
- Who is in your family? What language do you speak to them?
- What does bilingual mean?
- Are you bilingual? If so, what languages do you speak?
- How does your mother language help you connect with your cultural heritage and community?
- Why was International Mother Language Day created?



EPISODE 3

18 February 2025

KEY LEARNING

Students will celebrate language and cultural diversity in their school community.

CURRICULUM

Civics & Citizenship – Year 3

Why people participate within communities and how students can actively participate and contribute.

Civics & Citizenship – Year 4

The different cultural, religious and/or social groups to which they and others in the community belong.

Civics & Citizenship – Year 6

The world's cultural diversity, including that of its indigenous peoples.

Civics & Citizenship – Year 7

How values, including freedom, respect, inclusion, civility, responsibility, compassion, equality and a 'fair go', can promote cohesion within Australian society.

How groups, such as religious and cultural groups, express their particular identities; and how this influences their perceptions of others and vice versa.

Activity: Vocabulary

Students will brainstorm a list of key words that relate to the BTN Mother Language Day story. Here are some words to get them started.

MOTHER LANGUAGE	CULTURAL HERITAGE	CULTURAL DIVERSITY
LINGUISTIC	BILINGUAL	DIALECT

Ask students to write what they think is the meaning of each word (including unfamiliar words). They will swap definitions with a partner and ask them to add to or change the definition. Check these against the dictionary definition.

Further activities for students:

- Why is it called mother language? What are some other ways you can refer to mother language?
- What does bilingual mean?
- Where do words come from? For example, "safari" comes from the Arabic word safar, which means "to travel" or "to make a journey". It then became the Swahili word safari, which means "journey" or "trip". Find examples of English words that are borrowed from other languages.
- How do you say 'hello' in the language spoken by students in your class?



Activity: Survey

Students will run a survey to find out how many languages are spoken by the people in their school community. The survey could include results from your class or your whole school community including students, teachers, SSO's, librarians and front desk staff.

Formulate survey questions

Write a list of questions you will ask in your survey, For example:

- What is your mother language?

- How do you say hello, goodbye and thankyou in your mother language?
- Do you speak more than one language? List.
- Share something about your culture that we might not know.

Collect data

Survey the students in your school community to find out what languages they speak. If you are working in small groups assign different roles and responsibilities to each student.

- How will you collect the data?
- What will your survey look like? (a paper survey, digital, face to face)
- Design a form or simple table to record the information.

Represent the data

- Sort and enter the information you have gathered into an excel spreadsheet. Use mathematical equations like sum, percentage and averages in your spreadsheet.
- What is the best way to represent the data you have collected? Summarise the information you have gathered and create a graph (e.g., column graph, pie graph, line chart) using excel.
- Create an infographic to highlight the survey results.
- Think of a creative way to share and celebrate what you have learnt with the school community.

Activity: Belonging in your Community

Remind students that having a diversity of languages and cultures enriches our world, and everyone's mother language is an important part of their identity.

Ask students to think about the diversity in culture, languages, backgrounds and experiences of people in their school community. Broaden your discussion and talk about your local community and Australia as a whole.

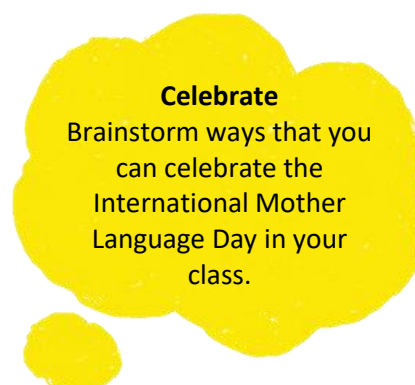
Discuss how celebrating students' language and cultural diversity is an important and encouraging way to help people feel proud of their identity. Explain to students that developing positive relationships can help build a sense of belonging and inclusion. Provide a range of opportunities for students to share their stories and create an atmosphere of cultural respect and acknowledgement of diversity.

In pairs or small groups students will discuss ways they can learn more about different cultures. For example:

- sharing stories
- learning about different languages
- celebrating important cultural events
- learning about someone's customs or beliefs
- do your own research about different cultures.

Further research

- What are the advantages of belonging to a culturally diverse community?
- How does your school promote and celebrate diversity?



Activity: Local Indigenous Languages

Students will learn more about their local Indigenous languages by exploring the [Gambay – First Languages Map](#). As a class or in small groups, students can investigate the following:

- On the Gambay map type in the area where your school is situated.
- What is the local Indigenous language in your area?
- Do your own research to learn more about the local language. Find out the local language words for hello and goodbye.
- Look for stories by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples valuing their oral traditions. Can you find stories told through dance, song and other art forms as well as through text?



50 Words Project (Source: [Gambay - First Languages Map](#))

Many of the languages have videos or resources to support students to learn more about the language. Here are the [Teachers Notes](#) to support teachers.

Activity: 50 Words Project

Learn words in your local Indigenous language! The [50 Words Project](#) provides words in Indigenous languages and includes audio provided by a language speaker. Use the map to search the local language and learn 50 words. Here are the [Learning Materials](#) to support teachers.

Further Learning

Invite an Indigenous language speaker to your school to learn more about the local languages.

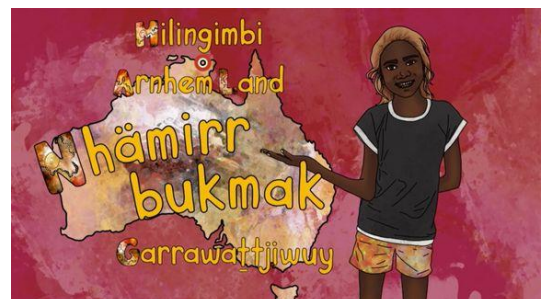


50 Words Project (Source: [The University of Melbourne](#))

Good Mornings

How would you greet someone in the language of the land on which you live? In these [ABC Education videos](#), children from around Australia encourage you to join them as they share greetings in their Indigenous languages.

Meet Garrawattjiwuy and learn how to say hello in the local language in Arnhem Land.



ABC Education Good Mornings (Source: [ABC iView](#))

Activity: Quiz

1. How many languages are spoken around the world?

- A. 700
- B. 7,000
- C. 70,000

2. Which country has the most languages?

- A. Australia
- B. Indonesia
- C. Papua New Guinea

3. What percent of people in the world can speak at least two languages?

- A. 13%
- B. 43%
- C. 73%

4. What is the most spoken mother language in the world?

- A. Mandarin Chinese
- B. English
- C. Spanish

5. About how many Indigenous languages are there in Australia?

- A. 50
- B. 100
- C. 250

6. What is the 2nd most spoken language spoken in Australia?

- A. Mandarin Chinese
- B. Arabic
- C. Italian

7. How do you say 'hello' in Hindi?

- A. Pranaam
- B. Namaste
- C. Alvida

8. How do you say 'yes' in Mandarin?

- A. Nǐ hǎo
- B. Shì de
- C. Hǎo

9. In the Yolngu language what is a yidaki?

- A. Boomerang
- B. Drum
- C. Didgeridoo

10. How do you say 'thank you' in Italian?

- A. Grazie
- B. Ciao
- C. Arrivederci

Quiz Answers:

1B, 2C, 3B, 4A, 5C, 6A, 7B, 8B, 9C, 10A

Useful Websites

- [International Mother Language Day](#) – UN
- [Languages](#) – ABC Education
- [Language App](#) – BTN
- [Reviving Indigenous Languages](#) – BTN
- [Daniel's Life and Languages](#) – BTN
- [Mother Language Day](#) – BTN