

Answer key

1 Students' own answers.

2, 3

- 1 (around) 7,000
- 2 (about) 870,000,000
- 3 (around) 3,000 (years old)
- 4 95%
- 5 (around) 100
- 6 16%

4 a, b, c, g

5 Points that students may mention:

- 1 A large number of languages are spoken by very few people. This might suggest that minority languages will die out.
- 2 These are likely to be older people, rather than younger. Younger children probably do not learn their minority language at school; it may not have a written form; the minority language may not be helpful in terms of job prospects; global communication means that media and the internet tend to use super languages.
- 3 The 'language garden' means a world full of languages: just as the world is currently rich in languages – some more prolific than others, so a garden has a huge mix of colourful flowers. Most people prefer a garden full of a wide range of plants and flowers.
- 4 The growth probably mirrors the growing power of the Chinese economy. School pupils probably consider it a useful language to learn in terms of their job prospects. A good proportion of the learners are also from Chinese families.
- 5 There are thousands of Chinese characters, which computers and phones cannot handle.

6 Students' own answers.

7

grow	increase
about	around
slowly disappear	die out
liken	compare
at risk	in danger
connected	related
dominant	'super'
like	such as

Related websites

The following websites might be useful, for either yourself or your students.

<http://globalgeopolitics.net/wordpress/2010/08/02/china-new-technology-deals-blow-to-writing-mandarin-characters/>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE62B0EW20100312>

<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/mandarin.htm#pinyin>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-11210098> (Mandarin in UK schools – includes video)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-11304255> (minority languages - includes video)

http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp?by=size (statistics on languages)