

The English Speaking World



After Chinese, English is the second most spoken language in the world, but is definitely the most popular. Here's a list of the largest countries where it is one of the official languages.

Canada

Bordering north with the USA, Canada is a bilingual country, where 59.7% people speaks English, while 32.2% speaks French. Canada has very cold winters and over 80% of the Canadian population lives within 150 km from the US border in the south.

A federation with ten provinces and three territories, Canada is a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as its head of state. Its capital is Ottawa and Toronto is the largest city.

Jamaica

A major island in the Caribbean Sea, Jamaica was a Spanish possession and later became a British colony. With its 2.8 million people, it is the third most populous anglophone country in North America. Famous people from Jamaica include Bob Marley and the fastest human being on Earth, Usain Bolt. Kingston is the largest city and the country's capital.

South Africa

The Republic of South Africa is located at the southern tip of Africa, on the Atlantic and Indian Oceans coastlines. The country had Dutch, Flemish, German and French settlers and became in 1910 a British dominion. South Africa was bitterly known for the Apartheid issue and the racial problems, which took its former President, Nelson Mandela, to serve 27 years in prison. The capital is Johannesburg.

Australia

Placed in the Southern Hemisphere, Australia is the world's smallest continent. Discovered by Dutch explorers in 1606, the eastern half of Australia was claimed by the British in 1770 and initially became a penal colony. The population grew vastly in the following years and during the 19th century became a Crown Colony. The population is roughly 22 million, and 60% concentrate in and around the cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide. The nation's capital city is Canberra. Its original inhabitants, the *Maori*, still survive in the desert area of the country, called *The Outback*.

New Zealand

New Zealand is formed by two main islands, the North Island and the South Island, and several smaller islands. Placed 2,000 km south-east of Australia, New Zealand is notable for its geographic isolation. The majority of New Zealanders is of European descent, and the indigenous *Maori* are the largest minority. The country has developed an unique fauna dominated by birds. Wellington is the capital city.

India

The Republic of India is a country in South Asia, surrounded by the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. Part of the British *East India Company* from the early eighteenth century, India became an independent nation in 1947 after a struggle for independence against Britain, marked by a non-violent resistance launched by Mahatma Ghandi. The capital city is New Dehli.

Now answer these questions:

1. Which is the most spoken language in the world?

2. Which are the two official languages of Canada and how many people speak them?
3. Which is the third most populous anglophone country in the Caribbean area?
4. Where do most of Canadians live and why?
5. Name a couple of important Jamaicans.
6. Who is Nelson Mandela and why is he famous?
7. Which continent was discovered by the Dutch in the 17th century?
8. Who was Mahatma Ghandi and why is he famous in world history?
9. Who are the *Maori* and where do they live nowadays?
10. Why, in your opinion, English is spoken in so many different countries of the world?
Explain.