

Countries whose language I learn

English is a West Germanic language that originated from the Anglo-Frisian and Old Saxon dialects brought to Britain by Germanic settlers from various parts of what is now northwest Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. Today approximately 400 million people speak English as their mother tongue, and more than 600 million people speak English as their second language. Among the countries where English is the mother tongue belong, e.g., the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, countries of the Commonwealth (a voluntary association of Britain and 47 of its former colonies) and many others. In countries such as India and South Africa, English is the second official language. In every day communication there are plenty of occasions to use English – in diplomacy, business, technology, education, sport, aviation, etc.

GREAT BRITAIN

Official name: the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Abbreviation: UK

Capital: London

Size: 244,101 km²

Population: 60 million

Borders: the Irish Republic (south of Northern Ireland), the Atlantic Ocean (north), North Sea (east), the English Channel (south), the Irish Sea (west, but east of Northern Ireland)

Currency: Pound Sterling

Official language: English

Nationality / People: A person of British nationality is a Briton.

OTHER INTERESTING FACTS:

The terms “the United Kingdom”, “Great Britain” and “England” are often confused.

Great Britain comprises England, Wales, and Scotland. The United Kingdom also includes Northern Ireland. Altogether it includes four nations: the English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish. These people differ sometimes in their way of life, customs, values and traditions. Both in Wales and Scotland there are some demands for more recognition of their national distinctions.

IRELAND

Official name: the Republic of Ireland

Irish name: Eire

Capital: Dublin

Size: 70,282 km²

Population: 3.5 million

Borders: Northern Ireland (north), Irish Sea (east), Atlantic Ocean (south, west)

Currency: Euro

Official languages: English, Irish

Nationality / People: A person of Irish nationality is an Irishman or an Irishwoman.

OTHER INTERESTING FACTS:

As Ireland is famous for its green countryside, it is also known as the “Emerald Isle” (green island; emerald - smaragd.) Although Ireland and Northern Ireland are parts of the same island, these two countries are different in their religious and political views. When comparing their geography, Ireland is much larger than Northern Ireland. Ireland, which is also known as ‘the Republic of Ireland,’ is considered a sovereign nation, and its capital is Dublin. Ireland covers about five-sixths of the island. Northern Ireland is considered to be a part of the UK, and its capital is Belfast. When comparing the religion of the two regions, Northern Ireland consists mainly of Protestants and Ireland consists of Catholics. However, in Northern Ireland there are also some people of the Catholic religion, and they consider

Britain as an occupying force. These people who protest against Britain are known as Republicans or Nationalists; they strive for an independent Ireland, free of the British rule.

THE USA

Official name: the United States of America

Abbreviations: the U.S. / the U.S.A.

Capital: Washington, D.C.

Size: 9,529,063 km² (plus approximately 10,360 km² for outlying territories and other politically associated areas)

Population: approximately 281 million

Borders: Canada (north), the Atlantic Ocean (east), Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico (south), the Pacific Ocean (west)

Currency: US Dollar

Official language: English

Nationality / People: A person of the American nationality is an American.

OTHER INTERESTING FACTS:

The United States is the fourth largest country in the world (after Russia, Canada, and China). It consists of 50 states plus Washington D.C. (a federal district) and four outlying territories (Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa). It has a relatively short history compared to other world nations. However, it has one of the world's largest economies, and one of the world's most diverse populations. As such, the United States is highly influential internationally. In the USA it is typical to teach children to be independent from an early age. In most families, once the child graduated from the high school, he or she leaves the home and leads an independent lifestyle. However it is also very common to have big family meetings. Most families, regardless of where they live, will all get together to celebrate family occasions such as weddings, reunions, birthdays and holidays like Thanksgiving or Christmas.

CANADA

Official name: Canada

Capital: Ottawa

Size: 9,970,610 km²

Population: 29.1 million

Borders: the Arctic Ocean (north), the Atlantic Ocean (east), the USA (south), the USA (Alaska), the Pacific Ocean (west)

Currency: Canadian Dollar

Official languages: English, French

Nationality/ People: A person of the Canadian nationality is a Canadian.

OTHER INTERESTING FACTS:

Canada is the second largest country in the world (after Russia). It is divided into 10 provinces and 3 territories. The biggest province is Quebec. Canada is famous for its beautiful nature, extremely large number of lakes and large mountain areas. Almost 10 percent of Canada's total area is inland water.

AUSTRALIA

Official name: the Commonwealth of Australia

Capital: Canberra

Size: 7.7 million km²

Population: 21 million

Borders: no direct borders; the Timor Sea and the Arafura Sea (northwest), the Torres Strait (northeast), the Great Barrier Reef (northeast), the Tasman Sea (southeast), the Indian Ocean (south)

Currency: Australian Dollar

Official language: English

Nationality/ People: A person of the Australian nationality is an Australian.

OTHER INTERESTING FACTS:

Australia is the world's smallest continent and the world's sixth largest country. One third of Australia's land is desert. Australia's agricultural sector is very important to its economy. Sales of beef, wheat, alcohol and wool account for more than one half of Australia's agricultural exports.

Australia is called “Down Under” because the entire continent lies “down under” the equator. “Aussie” is Australian slang for an Australian.

Answer the questions:

1. Why is English such a widespread language?
2. Do you know any differences between British and American English?
3. Which English-speaking country would you like to visit? What makes it interesting for you?
4. Describe a typical American.
5. Explain the difference between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.