



English Around the World

The English language has its origins in the 5th century. Today it is the dominant language in the world, and 1 billion people speak it or are learning it. The number of people who speak English as a first or native language is about 380 million. There are about 50 countries that have English as their first language, but more people speak Chinese and Spanish as their native language.

English as a first language is spoken mainly in the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. Canada also has French as a first language, in Quebec, but 85% of Canadians speak English as their first language. A few people speak Celtic languages in the United Kingdom, but 98% of people there speak English as their first language. About 505 million people in the world speak English as a second language. This is the case in many African countries, India, and Singapore. In India, 12% of the population speaks English as a second language.

English spread to many other countries through colonization and emigration. Its importance today is connected to the strong position of the United States in commerce, technology, and industry. For these reasons, it is unusual to find places where people don't have at least a basic understanding of English.

1. Read the text and tick if it is true or false.

	True	False
a. About 505 million people speak Spanish as a second language.		
b. At least, 1 billion people speak English or are learning it.		
c. English spread to many other countries through food.		
d. Canada has Japanese and German as their native languages.		
e. There are about 50 countries that have English as their first language.		

2. Answer the questions.

a. When are the origins of the English language?

b. Which countries have English spoken mainly as their first language?

c. What two languages are official in Canada?

d. How many people speak English as a second language?
