

## The English Language

People speak English in many different countries.

The English language started in England, which is now a part of the UK.

The English-speaking people came from Europe, from places in modern Germany.

English started in England about 500 AD – about 1500 years ago. It's an old language.

English has many words - perhaps more words than other languages.

It is difficult to count the number of words. But some experts say that English has about 250,000 words, but German has about 135,000 and French has about 100,000 words. So English is not always easy to learn! There are so many new words to learn.

English is the cousin of other languages in Europe. Dutch and German are cousins of English, and some words are the same. In the old days, more than 1000 years ago, the cousins were more similar and it was possible to understand each other.

English likes to use new words from other languages and other countries.

English has many words from other languages – from French, German, Arabic, Chinese and other languages.

From French, English uses words like façade, matinee, encore, hors d'oeuvre

From Arabic, English uses words like algorithm, algebra, admiral

From Italian, English uses words like pasta, opera, propaganda

From Hindi, English uses words like bungalow, pyjamas, veranda

English has words from African languages too. Words like 'banana' from Wolof, 'safari' from Swahili, 'jazz' from Mandinka and 'cola' from the Temne language.

English also likes to make new words, like the word 'app' for the programme on your phone.

These words are new, and started in the 21st century:

**smartphone** - a phone that can use the internet

**To google** - to search for information on the Google website

**troll** - a person who writes insulting words on Facebook and Twitter and the internet

**Selfie** - a photo of yourself

**Blog** - personal notes you write on the Internet

**Hashtag** - this symbol # which people use to make a label or name for something like #myfavoriteword

**lol** - a short way of writing 'laughing out loud'

**geek** - a technology expert

People speak English in many different countries. And English has a long history in many countries outside the UK, where it was born.

**English in the USA** - English started in North America in 1620, when English people arrived in Virginia.

Now English is the main language of the USA and its neighbour, Canada, and almost everybody can speak English. IN Canada many people speak French too.

**English in Australia** - English started in Australia in 1770, when Captain Cook and English people arrived in ships. Now English is the main language of the country and almost everybody can speak English here in and in New Zealand nearby.

**English in South Africa** - English started in South Africa in 1820, when English people arrived in ships in Cape Town. Now English is one of the official languages and most people speak English.

**English in India** - English started in India in 1612, when English people arrived in ships to do business. They stayed a long time and controlled the country. Now English is one of the 11 official languages and many millions of people speak English – but not everybody.

### New words for this article

- |   |           |  |
|---|-----------|--|
| 1 | difficult | not easy                                 |
| 2 | cousins   | children of my uncle or aunt             |
| 3 | selfie    | a photo of yourself                      |
| 4 | blog      | personal notes you write on the Internet |
| 5 | website   | pages of information on the internet     |

### Comprehension Questions

- When did the English language start?
- Which language has the biggest number of words?
- What languages does English take words from?
- When did English start in Australia?
- How many official language are there in India?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 5 | There are 11 official languages   |
| 4 | Captain Cook and English people arrived in ships in 1770, when English started in Australia |
| 3 | German, Arabic, Chinese and other languages. From many languages including from French.     |
| 2 | English has the biggest number of words about 1500 years ago                                |
| 1 | English started in England about 500 AD –   |

### Comprehension questions

### Answers