

## History of French language

French is a Romance language of the Indo-European family. It descended from the Vulgar languages historically spoken in northern France and in southern Belgium. French was also influenced by native Celtic languages of Northern Roman Gaul like Gallia Belgica and by the (Germanic) Frankish language of the post. A French-speaking person or nation may be referred to as Francophone in both English and French.

A major world language, French is an official language in 29 countries across multiple continents, most of which are members of the Organization internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), the community of 84 countries which share the official use or teaching of French. French is also one of six official languages used in the United Nations. It is spoken as a first language (in descending order of the number of speakers) in France; Canada (provinces of Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick as well as other Francophone regions).

In 2015, approximately 40% of the francophone population lived in Europe, 35% in sub-Saharan Africa, 15% in North Africa and the Middle East, 8% in the Americas, and 1% in Asia and Oceania. French is the second most widely spoken mother tongue in the European Union, Europeans who speak other languages natively, approximately one-fifth are able to speak French as a second language. French is the second most taught foreign language in the EU. All institutions of the EU use French as a working language along with English and German; in certain institutions, French is the sole working language (e.g. at the Court of Justice of the European Union). French is also the 18th most natively spoken language in the world, 6th most spoken language by total number of speakers and the second or third most studied language worldwide (with about 120 million current learners).

French is estimated to have about 76 million native speakers; about 235 million daily, fluent speakers; and another from 77 to 110 million secondary speakers who speak it as a second language. French has a long history as an international language of literature and scientific standards and is a primary or second language of many international organizations including the United Nations, the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the World Trade Organization, etc...

## History of English language

English is the world's leading international language. It is the principal language spoken in Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and some other countries such as Uganda and Botswana. Almost 400 million people in the world speak English as their first language, about the same number as Spanish, but less than Mandarin Chinese or Hindi. In addition, over 1,000 million (1 billion) people worldwide speak English as a second language.

### How did English reach the special position in which it finds itself today?

Britain was the world's most active colonial nation in the 19th century, and British explorers and colonists took their language with them wherever they went. English became the official language of most of Britain's colonies. In the 20th century, America has been the world's most powerful nation - and Americans have brought the English language to other countries of the world.

The success story of English has been due partly to the nature of the language, but more to the fact that it had developed into a mature national language just when the countries of Europe were beginning to expand

their influence and spread their culture all over the world. Over a thousand years ago, when the roots of modern Europe were being formed, western Europe was divided into three sections: in the East there were people who spoke Slavonic languages, in the middle there were people speaking Germanic languages (including Scandinavians), and in the south and west there were people speaking "Romance" languages, derived from Latin. In the far west of Europe, there were also people speaking Celtic languages, such as Gaelic or Welsh. In those days, England was a Germanic country; its people spoke a variety of Germanic languages including forms of Danish and Anglo Saxon, as well as some Celtic languages.

In 1066, England was conquered by the Normans, from France, who brought with them their own language - Norman French - a Romance language. In the years that followed, the nobility of England spoke French and read Latin, while the ordinary people spoke varieties of old English; but since they existed side by side, the two languages immediately began to influence each other. Norman French became Anglo-Norman, and Old English, picking up lots of vocabulary from Anglo-Normans, evolved into Middle English. Middle English was thus rather different from other European languages. It was partly Germanic (particularly the *vocabulary* of everyday life, the *grammar* and *structures*), and partly Romance (a lot of the more literary *vocabulary*). Eventually, since Middle English was spoken by far the largest part of the population, it became the dominant language in England; and by the 14th century, it was well on the way to becoming the national language, not just for everyday life, but for administration and literature too.

Finally, English became the established national language just at the point in history when colonial expansion was beginning. It was the spoken and written language of the first men and women from Britain to settle in the Americas; and it was a language that went round the world with England's early traders, commercial adventurers and missionaries.

By the year 1700, England had become the world's leading nation in terms of international trade, ensuring that the English language was taken all over the world as the principal language of international commerce.