

Ethnologue: Languages of Jamaica

Twenty-sixth edition data

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Contents

List of Abbreviations	3
How to Use This Digest	4
Country Overview	6
Language Status Profile	7
Statistical Summaries	8
Alphabetical Listing of Languages	10
Language Map	13
Languages by Population	14
Languages by Status	15
Languages by Family	17
Language Code Index	18
Language Name Index	19
Bibliography	20

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List of Abbreviations

A	Agent in constituent word order
<i>alt.</i>	alternate name for
<i>alt. dial.</i>	alternate dialect name for
AOV	Agent-Object-Verb
C	Consonant in canonical syllable patterns
CDE	Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)
<i>Class</i>	Language classification
CPPDCE	Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)
CSICH	Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
<i>dial.</i>	primary dialect name for
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
km	kilometer(s)
L1 / L2	first language / second (or other additional) language
<i>Lg Dev</i>	Language development
<i>Lg Use</i>	Language use
m	meter(s)
P	Patient in constituent word order
PARADISEC	Pacific And Regional Archive for Digital Sources In Endangered Cultures
<i>pej.</i>	pejorative
pl.	plural
S	Subject in constituent word order
sg.	singular
<i>Type</i>	Typological information
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
V	Vowel in canonical syllable patterns

How to Use This Digest

This *Ethnologue* country digest provides an extract of the information about the language situation in Jamaica that is published in the 26th edition of *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (see <http://www.ethnologue.com>), including some ways of presenting the information that are not available in the online version. The digest begins with a “Country Overview” (page 6) and “Statistical Summaries” (page 8) of languages and number of speakers by language size, by language status, and by language family.

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) provides detailed information on the 8 languages listed in the *Ethnologue* for the country of Jamaica. This includes languages that are indigenous to the country, languages that have developed well-established multigenerational speaker communities after immigrating in the past, and languages that have a significant presence in the country but are not established (that is, not being transmitted to the next generation within the country). A complete language entry has the following form and content:

Primary language name [ISO 639-3 code] (Alternate names). Autonym. *Users*: Country user population. Population stability comment. Population remarks. Monolingual population. Ethnic population. *Location*: Location. *Status*: EGIDS level. Special cases. Language function in country. *Class*: Linguistic classification. Macrolanguage membership. *Dialects*: Dialect names. Intelligibility and dialect relations. Lexical similarity. *Type*: Linguistic typology information. *Lg Use*: Remarks on use of the language. Domains of use. User age range. Language attitudes. Bilingualism remarks. Use as second language. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rates. Literacy remarks. Use in education. Publications and use in media. Revitalization efforts. Language development agencies. *DLS*: Digital support. *Writing*: Scripts used. *Other*: Non-indigenous. General remarks. Religion. *Worldwide*: Total population in all countries. Other countries where used.

See <http://www.ethnologue.com/methodology/#languagePages> for a full description of these information elements. If the autonym contains the “?” character, this indicates a complex non-Roman character that the PDF-creating software we are using is not able to render. We regret the inconvenience.

Many ways of finding languages are provided. “Languages by Population” (page 14) lists the languages in order of their first-language speaker populations. “Languages by Status” (page 15) lists the languages by their level of development or endangerment as measured on EGIDS, the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). “Languages by Family” (page 17) lists the languages by their linguistic classifications. “Language Code Index” (page 18) gives an alphabetical listing of all the three-letter codes from ISO 639-3 that are used in this digest to uniquely identify languages. “Language Name Index” (page 19) lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. A total of 28 unique names are associated with the 8 languages described in this digest.

Finally, a listing of all the published sources cited within this digest is found in “Bibliography”

(page 20). The published sources are cited using standard in-text citations enclosed in parentheses, consisting of the author's or editor's surname followed by the year of publication. Unpublished sources including personal communications and unpublished reports are also acknowledged when specific statements or facts are attributed to them. They are identified using in-text citations enclosed in parentheses in which the year of the communication is given first, followed by the source's first initial and surname. In such a case, there is no corresponding entry in the bibliography.

This digest is designed for use in both digital and print formats. The cross-references are thus rendered as page numbers that are hyperlinks. When using the document in printed form, simply turn to the referenced page by number. When using it in digital form, click on the blue text to jump to the cross-referenced location.

If you believe any of the information about a language in this digest is in error or if you are able to supply missing information, please send your proposed change to the editor using one of the means given below. Provide as much information as possible about the source of your information. Full bibliographic details of published sources are especially helpful.

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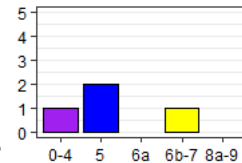
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Country Overview

Name of country	Jamaica
Population	2,819,000 (2022 World Factbook)
Principal language	English
Literacy rate	89% (2015 World Factbook)
Deaf population	7,500–200,000
International conventions	CDE (2006), CPPDCE (2007), CSICH (2010), ICCPR (1975), UNCRPD (2007), UNDRIP (2007)
General references	Hall 1966, Holm 1989

Language counts

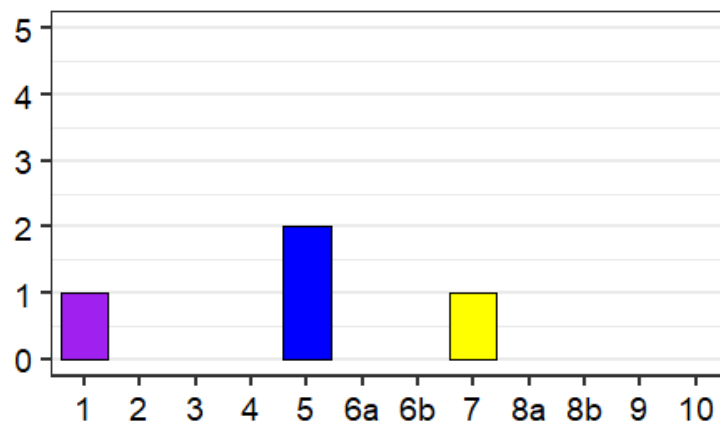
The number of established languages listed for Jamaica is 4. All are living languages. Of these, 3 are indigenous and 1 is non-indigenous. Furthermore, 1 is institutional, 2 are developing, and 1 is in trouble. Also listed are 4 unestablished languages.



See the next page for an explanation of the summary categories for language vitality used in the above counts and graph.

Language Status Profile

The following histogram gives a graphic profile of the established languages in Jamaica with respect to their status of language development versus language endangerment. This includes all of the languages appearing in the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) that report an EGIDS level after *Status*; macrolanguages and unestablished languages are not included in the profile. The horizontal axis plots the estimated level of development or endangerment as measured on the EGIDS scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The height of each bar indicates the number of languages that are estimated to be at the given level. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 15) in order to see the specific languages for each level.



The color coding of the bars in the histogram above matches the color scheme used in the summary profile graph on the preceding page. In this scheme, the EGIDS levels are grouped as follows:

- Purple = Institutional (EGIDS 0–4) — The language has been developed to the point that it is used and sustained by institutions beyond the home and community.
- Blue = Developing (EGIDS 5) — The language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.
- Green = Vigorous (EGIDS 6a) — The language is in vigorous use among all generations and remains unstandardized.
- Yellow = In trouble (EGIDS 6b–7) — Intergenerational transmission is in the process of being broken, but the child-bearing generation can still use the language so it is possible that revitalization efforts could restore transmission of the language in the home.
- Red = Dying (EGIDS 8a–9) — The only fluent users (if any) are older than child-bearing age, so it is too late to restore natural intergenerational transmission through the home; a mechanism outside the home would need to be developed.
- Black = Extinct (EGIDS 10) — The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

Statistical Summaries

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) provides a detailed listing of all the languages of Jamaica. This section steps back from the detail to offer a summary view of the language situation in the country. Specifically, it offers three numerical tabulations of the living established languages of Jamaica and their users: by language size, by language status, and by language family.

Summary by language size

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Jamaica by number of L1 speakers. The *Population range* column categorizes the sizes of the languages by order of magnitude (in terms of the number of digits in the population of first-language speakers). Consult “Languages by Population” (page 14) for a listing of the specific languages in each range category.

The *Count* column gives the number of living established languages within the specified population range. The *Percent* column gives the share of the count for that population range as a percentage of the total number of languages given at the bottom of the Count column. The *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sum of the percentage of languages going from top to bottom in the column.

The *Total* column gives the total L1 population of all the languages in the given range category. The second *Percent* column gives the percentage of the total country population as estimated at the bottom of the Total column. Note that if the table has a row for Unknown, representing languages for which the *Ethnologue* does not have a population estimate, the calculation of population percentage is not able to take those languages into account. The final *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sums of the population percentages going from top to bottom in the column.

Table 1: Distribution of languages by number of first-language speakers

Population range	Living languages			Number of speakers		
	Count	Percent	Cumulative	Total	Percent	Cumulative
1,000,000 to 9,999,999	1	25.0	25.0%	2,670,000	98.39545	98.39545%
10,000 to 99,999	1	25.0	50.0%	36,000	1.32668	99.72213%
1,000 to 9,999	1	25.0	75.0%	7,500	0.27639	99.99853%
10 to 99	1	25.0	100.0%	40	0.00147	100.00000%
<i>Totals</i>	4	100.0		2,713,540	100.00000	

Summary by language status

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Jamaica by their status in terms of language development or language endangerment. The *EGIDS* column categorizes the languages by their level on the EGIDS scale. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 15) for a

listing of the specific languages that have been assigned to each level. Note that the EGIDS level reported here is for the status of the language in Jamaica. Languages that are also used in other countries may be assigned to a different EGIDS level in those countries.

The next six columns are as in Table 1. In addition, the *Mean* column gives the average L1 population of all the languages with the given EGIDS level and the *Median* column gives the median L1 population for the languages at that level, that is, half of the languages at that level have a higher population and half have a lower population. If there are any languages with an unknown population, these are ignored in the calculation of the mean and the median.

Table 2: Distribution of languages by vitality status

EGIDS	Living languages			Number of speakers			<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>		
1	1	25.0	25.0%	36,000	1.3267	1.3267%	36,000	36,000
5	2	50.0	75.0%	2,677,500	98.6718	99.9985%	1,338,750	1,338,750
7	1	25.0	100.0%	40	0.0015	100.0000%	40	40
<i>Totals</i>	4	100.0		2,713,540	100.0000			

Summary by language family

The genealogical classifications given in the language entries of the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) name 3 different top-level groups. Table 3 summarizes the distribution of living established languages and their L1 populations within these families. The columns are as for table 2, with the exception that *Cumulative* is excluded since there is no inherent ordering of the families.

Table 3: Distribution of languages by language family

Language family	Living languages		Number of speakers			
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Creole	1	25.0	2,670,000	98.4	2,670,000	2,670,000
Indo-European	1	25.0	36,000	1.3	36,000	36,000
Sign language	2	50.0	7,540	0.3	3,770	3,770
<i>Totals</i>	4	100.0	2,713,540	100.0		

Alphabetical Listing of Languages

Arabic, Levantine [apc]. *Users*: 22,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Central, South, Arabic. *Lg Dev*: Radio. TV. Dictionary. Grammar. Bible portions: 1940–1973. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 47,595,360 (as L1: 47,236,360; as L2: 359,000). Global EGIDS level: 3 (Wider communication). Indigenous in: Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Turkey. Also established in: Mexico. Unestablished in: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Côte d’Ivoire, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, French Guiana, Gambia, Germany, Guinea, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Kuwait, Libya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Martinique, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Portugal, Qatar (North Levantine Spoken Arabic), Saudi Arabia (North Levantine Spoken Arabic), Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela, Yemen.

Chinese, Hakka [hak]. *Users*: 76,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Chinese. *Type*: SVO; tonal. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Newspapers. Periodicals. Radio. TV. Videos. Dictionary. Grammar. Bible: 1916–2012. *Writing*: Han script, Simplified variant. Han script, Traditional variant. Latin script, used since early 19th century. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 44,271,630 (as L1: 44,020,430; as L2: 251,200). Global EGIDS level: 4 (Educational). Indigenous in: China, China–Hong Kong. Also established in 12 other countries and unestablished in 8 more.

English [eng]. Autonym: English. *Users*: 86,000 in Jamaica, all users. L1 users: 36,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. L2 users: 50,000 (Crystal 2003a). *Status*: 1 (National). De facto national language. *Class*: Indo-European, Germanic, West, English. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; genitives after noun heads; articles, adjectives, numerals before noun heads; question word initial; word order distinguishes subject, object, indirect objects, given and new information, topic and comment; active and passive; causative; comparative; consonant and vowel clusters; 24 consonants, 13 vowels, 8 diphthongs; non-tonal; free stress; phrasal verbs. *Lg Dev*: Taught in all primary and secondary schools. Taught in all tertiary schools. Fully developed. Bible: 1382–2002. *Writing*: Braille script. Deseret Alphabet, developed in 1854 with limited usage until 1877. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. Shavian (Shaw) script, no longer in use. *Other*: Non-indigenous. When Creole languages exist alongside their lexifier language, a continuum forms of variations between the Creole and the lexifier language. It is therefore difficult to substantiate the exact number of Creole speakers and speakers of the lexifier language. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Ireland, United Kingdom. Also established in 167 other countries and unestablished in 16 more.

Jamaican English Creole [jam] (Bongo Talk, Jamaican Patois, Jimiekn, Jimiekn Langwij, Jumieka Kruyol, Jumieka Languij, Jumieka Langwij, Jumieka Taak, Jumiekan, Jumiekan Kriol, Jumiekan languij, Langui Jumieka, Patois, Patua, Patwa, Patwah, Southwestern Caribbean English Creole, “Quashie Talk” *pej.*). Autonym: Jamiekan. *Users*: 2,670,000 in Jamaica (2001). *Location*: Widespread. *Status*: 5* (Developing). De facto language of national identity. *Class*: Creole, English based, Atlantic, Western. *Dialects*: None known. The basilect and standard English mutually inherently unintelligible (Voegelin and Voegelin 1977, LePage 1960, Adler 1977). May be partly intelligible to speakers of Cameroon Pidgin [wes] and Krio [kri] of Sierra Leone, spoken by descendants of Jamaicans repatriated between 1787 and 1860. Inherently intelligible to creole speakers in Panama and Costa Rica. Reportedly very similar to Belize Creole [bjz], similar to Grenada, Saint Vincent, different from Tobago, very different from Guyana, Barbados, Leeward and Windward islands. *Lg Use*: Vigorous. Dominant language and gaining in prestige. Post-Creole continuum from distinct Creole to provincial English of town dwellers. Not widely accepted as a literary language. Positive attitudes. Most consider that they speak standard English [eng]. Also use English [eng]. Used as L2 by Konchri Sain [jcs]. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rate in L2: High in English. Literature. Dictionary. Grammar. NT: 2012. *DLS*: Ascending (0.29). *Writing*: Latin script. *Other*: There is a continuum of variation from basilectal Creole to acrolectal English of the educated. Linguistic influences from Akan [aka] languages in Ghana and Bantu languages (Hancock 1988). *Map*: 13. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 3,094,530 (as L1: 3,090,840; as L2: 3,690). Also established in: Costa Rica (Southwestern Caribbean English Creole), Panama (Southwestern Caribbean English Creole). Unestablished in: Bahamas, Canada, Dominican Republic (Southwestern Caribbean English Creole), United Kingdom (Southwestern Caribbean English Creole), United States (Southwestern Caribbean English Creole).

Jamaican Sign Language [jls] (JSL, Jamaica Sign Language). *Users*: 7,500 (2011 E. Parks). Approximately 0.3% of the total population. *Location*: Scattered. *Status*: 5 (Developing). *Class*: Sign language, Deaf community sign language. *Dialects*: Could be considered a dialect of American Sign Language (ASL) [ase] but is gradually diverging, with significant lexical and syntactic differences (Cumberbatch 2012a). *Lg Use*: Vigorous. Used as primary means of instruction in schools run by the Jamaican Association of the Deaf (Cumberbatch 2012a). Used by all. Some also use American Sign Language [ase]. A few also use Konchri Sain [jcs]. Younger deaf in the Top Hill area, St. Elizabeth Parish, use Jamaican SL as L1 and Konchri Sain as L2 (Cumberbatch 2012b). Used as L2 by Konchri Sain [jcs]. *Lg Dev*: Videos. Texts. Agency: Jamaica Association for the Deaf (JAD). *DLS*: Emerging (0.01). *Other*: Evidence of sign language use in the 19th century, with possible early influence from Konchri Sain [jcs] and British Sign Language (BSL) [bfi]. BSL used in a school started in 1939. Starting 1957, strong influence from ASL and Signed English used in American missionary schools (Braithwaite et al 2016). Mostly concentrated in Kingston, but also found in other areas such as Montego Bay, St. Ann Parish, and Mandeville (2016 B. Gayle).

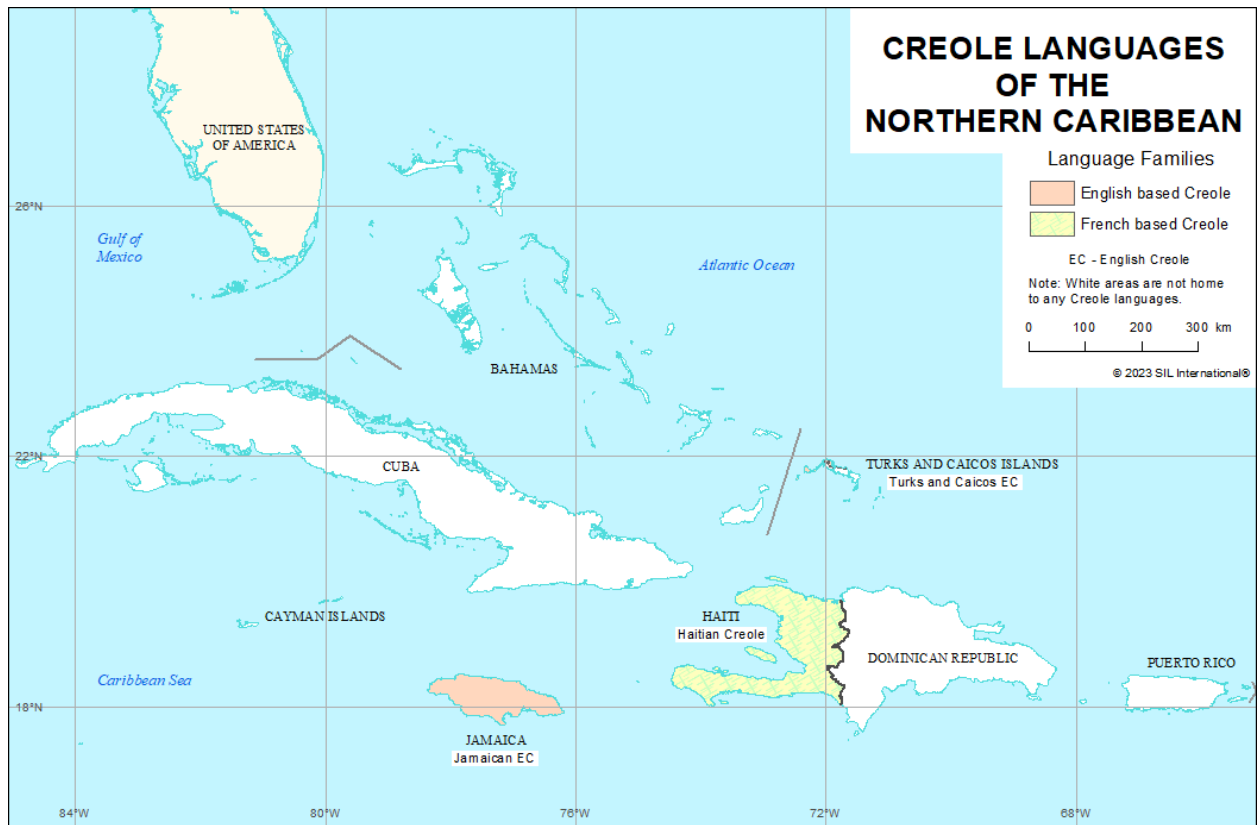
Konchri Sain [jcs] (Country Sign, Jamaican Country Sign Language, KS). *Users*: 40 (Parks et al 2011b), decreasing. Approximately 40 deaf L1 users, number of hearing L1 users is unknown.

4 monolinguals (2016 B. Gayle). *Location*: Primarily in Saint Elizabeth parish, near Top Hill. *Status*: 7 (Shifting). *Class*: Sign language, Shared sign language. *Dialects*: None known. Most of the Jamaican deaf community does not understand Konchri Sain. *Lg Use*: Formerly used by everyone in the area, deaf and hearing (Adone et al 2012, Cumberbatch 2012b). In the mid-1980s (Dolman 1986) there were about 200 deaf, and only 10 who were bilingual in KS and Jamaican Sign Language [jls]. Adults only. Shifting to Jamaican Sign Language [jls], especially middle-aged people (Cumberbatch 2012b). Also use Jamaican English Creole [jam], especially hearing people (Cumberbatch 2012b). Used as L2 by Jamaican Sign Language [jls]. *Lg Dev*: English literacy is very low because many adults have had no formal education. Texts. *DLS*: Emerging (0.01). *Other*: The word ‘Konchri’ or ‘Country’ in names for this language means ‘rural’; it does not refer to the whole of Jamaica, the deaf of which use Jamaican Sign Language [jls] (2016 K. Cumberbatch). Starting in the 1970s, younger deaf have learned Jamaican Sign Language [jls] at Maranatha School for the Deaf in Ridge (St. Elizabeth Parish), where use of KS is discouraged (Cumberbatch 2012b). Deaf people from St. Elizabeth Parish often move to the larger cities for easier access to employment.

Portuguese [por]. Autonym: Português. *Users*: 6,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Portuguese-Galician. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; gender (masculine/feminine); definite and indefinite articles; verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense; comparatives; 21 consonants, 13 vowels, 11 diphthongs; non-tonal. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1751–2017. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 263,638,850 (as L1: 236,266,650; as L2: 27,372,200). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Portugal, Spain. Also established in 14 other countries and unestablished in 38 more.

Spanish [spa]. Autonym: Castellano, Español. *Users*: 8,000 in Jamaica (Instituto Cervantes 2021). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Castilian. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; genitives, relatives after noun heads; articles, numerals before noun heads; adjectives before or after noun heads depending on whether it is evaluative or descriptive; question word initial; gender (masculine/feminine); definite and indefinite articles; verb affixes mark number, person; passives; tense; comparatives; 20 consonants, 5 vowels, 5 diphthongs; non-tonal; stress on penultimate syllable. Silbo Gomero whistled variety of Spanish used in Canary Islands. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1553–2012. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 559,078,890 (as L1: 485,063,960; as L2: 74,014,930). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Andorra, Gibraltar, Spain. Also established in 40 other countries and unestablished in 32 more.

Language Map



Languages by Population

In this section the languages of Jamaica are listed in order of their population of first-language speakers within the country, from highest to lowest. The entries report just the population and status elements.

1,000,000 to 9,999,999

Jamaican English Creole [jam] *Users:* 2,670,000 in Jamaica (2001). *Status:* 5* (Developing). De facto language of national identity. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 3,094,530 (as L1: 3,090,840; as L2: 3,690).

10,000 to 99,999

Chinese, Hakka [hak] *Users:* 76,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 44,271,630 (as L1: 44,020,430; as L2: 251,200).

English [eng] *Users:* 36,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. 86,000 in Jamaica, all users. L2 users: 50,000 (Crystal 2003a). *Status:* 1 (National). De facto national language. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120).

Arabic, Levantine [apc] *Users:* 22,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 47,595,360 (as L1: 47,236,360; as L2: 359,000).

1,000 to 9,999

Spanish [spa] *Users:* 8,000 in Jamaica (Instituto Cervantes 2021). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 559,078,890 (as L1: 485,063,960; as L2: 74,014,930).

Jamaican Sign Language [jls] *Users:* 7,500 (2011 E. Parks). Approximately 0.3% of the total population. *Status:* 5 (Developing).

Portuguese [por] *Users:* 6,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 263,638,850 (as L1: 236,266,650; as L2: 27,372,200).

10 to 99

Konchri Sain [jcs] *Users:* 40 (Parks et al 2011b), decreasing. Approximately 40 deaf L1 users, number of hearing L1 users is unknown. 4 monolinguals (2016 B. Gayle). *Status:* 7 (Shifting).

Languages by Status

In this section the languages of Jamaica are listed in order of their status within the country as represented by their level on the EGIDs scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The language entries are reduced to just the information elements that are relevant to assessing the EGIDS level: population, status, language use, language development, and writing.

1 (National)

English [eng] *Users:* 86,000 in Jamaica, all users. L1 users: 36,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. L2 users: 50,000 (Crystal 2003a). *Status:* De facto national language. *Writing:* Braille script. Deseret Alphabet, developed in 1854 with limited usage until 1877. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. Shavian (Shaw) script, no longer in use. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120).

5 (Developing)

Jamaican English Creole [jam] *Users:* 2,670,000 in Jamaica (2001). *Status:* De facto language of national identity. *Lg Use:* Vigorous. Dominant language and gaining in prestige. Post-Creole continuum from distinct Creole to provincial English of town dwellers. Not widely accepted as a literary language. Positive attitudes. Most consider that they speak standard English [eng]. Also use English [eng]. Used as L2 by Konchri Sain [jcs]. *Lg Dev:* Literature. Dictionary. Grammar. NT: 2012. *Writing:* Latin script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 3,094,530 (as L1: 3,090,840; as L2: 3,690).

Jamaican Sign Language [jls] *Users:* 7,500 (2011 E. Parks). Approximately 0.3% of the total population. *Lg Use:* Vigorous. Used as primary means of instruction in schools run by the Jamaican Association of the Deaf (Cumberbatch 2012a). Used by all. Some also use American Sign Language [ase]. A few also use Konchri Sain [jcs]. Younger deaf in the Top Hill area, St. Elizabeth Parish, use Jamaican SL as L1 and Konchri Sain as L2 (Cumberbatch 2012b). Used as L2 by Konchri Sain [jcs]. *Lg Dev:* Videos. Texts.

7 (Shifting)

Konchri Sain [jcs] *Users:* 40 (Parks et al 2011b), decreasing. Approximately 40 deaf L1 users, number of hearing L1 users is unknown. 4 monolinguals (2016 B. Gayle). *Lg Use:* Formerly used by everyone in the area, deaf and hearing (Adone et al 2012, Cumberbatch 2012b). In the mid-1980s (Dolman 1986) there were about 200 deaf, and only 10 who were bilingual in KS and Jamaican Sign Language [jls]. Adults only. Shifting to Jamaican Sign Language [jls], especially middle-aged people (Cumberbatch 2012b). Also use Jamaican English Creole [jam], especially hearing people (Cumberbatch 2012b). Used as L2 by Jamaican Sign Language [jls].

Lg Dev: Texts.

Unestablished

Arabic, Levantine [[apc](#)] *Users:* 22,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity.

Writing: Arabic script, Naskh variant. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 47,595,360 (as L1: 47,236,360; as L2: 359,000).

Chinese, Hakka [[hak](#)] *Users:* 76,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity.

Writing: Han script, Simplified variant. Han script, Traditional variant. Latin script, used since early 19th century. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 44,271,630 (as L1: 44,020,430; as L2: 251,200).

Portuguese [[por](#)] *Users:* 6,000 in Jamaica (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing:*

Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 263,638,850 (as L1: 236,266,650; as L2: 27,372,200).

Spanish [[spa](#)] *Users:* 8,000 in Jamaica (Instituto Cervantes 2021). *Writing:* Braille script. Latin

script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 559,078,890 (as L1: 485,063,960; as L2: 74,014,930).

Languages by Family

This index gives an alphabetical listing of the linguistic classifications used for the established languages of Jamaica. The entries in this index represent the full path in the linguistic family tree from the highest level grouping down to the lowest. All the languages listed in the same entry are members of the same lowest-level subgroup. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language.

Creole, English based, Atlantic, Western

Jamaican English Creole [jam], [11](#)

Indo-European, Germanic, West, English

English [eng], [10](#)

Sign language, Deaf community sign language

Jamaican Sign Language [jls], [11](#)

Sign language, Shared sign language

Konchri Sain [jcs], [11](#)

Language Code Index

This index gives an alphabetical listing of all 8 three-letter codes that are used in this work to uniquely identify languages. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. All codes listed are part of the ISO 639-3 standard; see <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>.

apc Arabic, Levantine, [10](#)

eng English, [10](#)

hak Chinese, Hakka, [10](#)

jam Jamaican English Creole, [11](#)

jcs Konchri Sain, [11](#)

jls Jamaican Sign Language, [11](#)

por Portuguese, [12](#)

spa Spanish, [12](#)

Language Name Index

This index lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. The following abbreviations are used in the index entries: *alt.* ‘alternate name for’; *alt. dial.* ‘alternate name for a dialect of’; *dial.* ‘primary name for a dialect of’; *pej. alt.* ‘pejorative alternate name for’; and *pej. alt. dial.* ‘pejorative alternate name for a dialect of’. Each index entry resolves to the primary name for the language with which the indexed name is associated, followed by square brackets containing the unique three-letter language code from ISO 639-3. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. If the language appears on a map, the entry for the primary name also lists page numbers for the maps on which the language occurs.

- Levantine Arabic**, *see* Arabic, Levantine [apc],
10
- Bongo Talk**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole
[jam], 11
- Hakka Chinese**, *see* Chinese, Hakka [hak], 10
- Country Sign**, *alt.* Konchri Sain [jcs], 11
- English** [eng], 10
- Jamaica Sign Language**, *alt.* Jamaican Sign
Language [jls], 11
- Jamaican Country Sign Language**, *alt.*
Konchri Sain [jcs], 11
- Jamaican English Creole** [jam], 11, 13
- Jamaican Patois**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole
[jam], 11
- Jamaican Sign Language** [jls], 11, 0
- Jamiekan**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole [jam],
11
- Jimiekn**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole [jam], 11
- Jimiekn Langwij**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole
[jam], 11
- JSL**, *alt.* Jamaican Sign Language [jls], 11
- Jumieka Kruyol**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole
[jam], 11
- Jumieka Languij**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole
[jam], 11
- Jumieka Langwij**, *alt.* Jamaican English
Creole [jam], 11
- Jumieka Taak**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole
[jam], 11
- Jumiekan**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole [jam],
11
- Jumiekan Kriol**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole
[jam], 11
- Jumiekan languij**, *alt.* Jamaican English
Creole [jam], 11
- Konchri Sain** [jcs], 11
- KS**, *alt.* Konchri Sain [jcs], 11
- Langui Jumieka**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole
[jam], 11
- Patois**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole [jam], 11
- Patua**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole [jam], 11
- Patwa**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole [jam], 11
- Patwah**, *alt.* Jamaican English Creole [jam], 11
- Quashie Talk**, *pej. alt.* Jamaican English
Creole [jam], 11
- Southwestern Caribbean English Creole**, *alt.*
Jamaican English Creole [jam], 11

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