

# The Commonwealth

Neil Hardy, the contributor, says:

*Hi Maggie*

*I'm sending you a resource for the first time!*

*I found the original text on the BBC Newsround website at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid\\_3980000/newsid\\_3980300/3980361.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_3980000/newsid_3980300/3980361.stm)  
I think this site is really useful when I need to get hold of something with fairly straightforward sentence structures and vocabulary.*

*I did a few things with it. Firstly some listening work – I read the text aloud twice then asked the students questions like "How many countries are in the Commonwealth?" and "Who are the richest members?" etc. I was amazed at how much they remembered without making any notes and without knowing the questions beforehand – it generated a real buzz amongst the group.*

*Next we had a group discussion and every learner checked the 'members' sheet to see if their country of origin was on there. Learners from other countries told us about how Commonwealth Day is celebrated and we even touched on the history of the British Empire & colonialism!*

*Finally we looked at capital letters for proper nouns (which we had worked on in previous sessions). I gave out copies of the text without any capital letters and asked the learners to put them back in. Afterwards we discussed all the different examples like names of countries, titles ("Head of..."), abbreviations, etc.*

### ***Ideas for extension work***

*I tried out the 'web hunt' as an extension activity and it worked really well (see page 5). Learners used <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/> to locate information about their chosen country. We did a lucky dip to decide who got what country and then they swapped answers with each other to check their work – this meant opportunity for extra practice and less marking for me!*

*History enthusiasts could find out more about the history of the Commonwealth, or the British Empire.*

*Sports enthusiasts could research the Commonwealth Games.*

*I'm sure there are plenty of other ideas that I've not thought of...*

*Neil*

## What is the Commonwealth?

The Commonwealth is made from 54 independent countries. The Head of the Commonwealth is HM Queen Elizabeth II. Its headquarters are at Marlborough House in London.

There are 1.7 billion people in the Commonwealth (30% of the world's population). About half of this population are less than 25 years old. The member with the biggest population is India (one billion) and the smallest are Nauru and Tuvalu in the Pacific ocean (11,000 people each).

The richest members are Australia, Canada, Singapore and the UK. Some of the poorest are Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.

Commonwealth countries work together to make their economies stronger, to improve their systems of government and to improve the skills of their people.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) takes place every two years. The next CHOGM is scheduled to take place in Malta. The summit will take place in the country's capital, Valletta, on 25-27 November 2005.

BBC (2005), *BBC Newsround*. Viewed 26 November 2003, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/  
http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid\\_3980000/newsid\\_3980300/3980361.stm](http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_3980000/newsid_3980300/3980361.stm)

## Put in capital letters where they are needed.

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## Members

53 independent states working together in the common interests of their citizens for development, democracy and peace.

Antigua and Barbuda		Jamaica		St Vincent and the Grenadines	
Australia		Kenya		Samoa	
The Bahamas		Kiribati		Seychelles	
Bangladesh		Lesotho		Sierra Leone	
Barbados		Malawi		Singapore	
Belize		Malaysia		Solomon Islands	
Botswana		Maldives		South Africa	
Brunei Darussalam		Malta		Sri Lanka	
Cameroon		Mauritius		Swaziland	
Canada		Mozambique		Tonga	
Cyprus		Namibia		Trinidad and Tobago	
Dominica		Nauru		Tuvalu	
Fiji Islands		New Zealand		Uganda	
The Gambia		Nigeria		United Kingdom	
Ghana		Pakistan		United Republic of Tanzania	
Grenada		Papua New Guinea		Vanuatu	
Guyana		St Kitts and Nevis		Zambia	
India		St Lucia			

# Web Hunt



Use the internet to find out the following information.

Name of country \_\_\_\_\_

Joined Commonwealth	
Official language	
Capital	
Currency	
Life expectancy	
Date of last elections	