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**LESSON 1 - Wondering about Jamaica**

**Jamaica Enquiry Cards**

**1 - Jamaica’s People**

**Fact:** **Jamaica has a population of 2.9 million (in 2018) and two major languages – English (used by the government, media and in education) and Jamaican Patois (the primary spoken language).**

**Question: Why is English the main language used for public life in Jamaica?**

See this portrait of an African Jamaican, Francis Williams. He was the son of a freed slave who became rich by profiting from slaves himself. Francis was a writer, lawyer and teacher, who wrote in English and Latin.

See this digital tour of the portrait of Francis Williams:

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/francis-williams-a-portrait-of-a-writer>

**Time to go further?**

See this document in the National Archives about the decision of the Jamaican people to be independent from Britain in 1961:

<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-106-cp-142.pdf>

Portrait of Francis Williams, artist unknown, oil on canvas,

circa 1745 from the V&A Museum ([Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Francis_Williams.jpg))

**2 - Jamaica’s Geography**

**Fact: Jamaica is 11,000 square kilometres and located to the West of Haiti.**

**Question: What are the key features of Jamaica’s physical geography and how did colonialists adapt to them?**

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**Find** a map of Jamaica online e.g. <http://ontheworldmap.com/jamaica/>. What can you tell from the place names? What do you notice about the landscape?

**Time to go further?** Look at Google Maps of the Caribbean and see what you can find out about Jamaica and its links to neighbouring countries.

Screenshot from Google Maps

**3 - Jamaica as a Colony**

**Fact: Jamaica was a British colony for 400 years.**

**Question: What impact did the British have on the island, its people, land and natural resources?**

A picture containing text, gallery, picture frame, room

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To help answer this, look at this photograph and others in the National Archives collection online using the link below.

Think about: **What does the photographer choose to show? How has the land been changed?**

Jamaican images from the Colonial Office Photographic Library, uploaded to celebrate 50 years of Jamaican Independence:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/sets/72157630743140716/>

**Time to go further?** Here’s another colonial document held in the National Archives: [Memo from the Secretary of State for the Colonies about the state of the sugar trade, 10 February 1930](http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-24-209-CP-40.pdf)

What was the crisis? Why did it matter?

The National Archives UK ([Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/sets/72157630743140716/))

**4 - Slavery and Jamaica**

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**Fact: African people were enslaved and transported to islands like Jamaica to work as slaves for the colonial plantation owners.**

**Question: How did slaves resist and rebel?**

Find out about Queen Nanny, the leader of the Maroons, the slave rebels living in forests and mountains of Jamaica.

Impression of Queen Nanny ([Public Domain Vectors](https://publicdomainvectors.org/en/free-clipart/Nanny-of-the-maroons/80991.html))

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**Time to go further?** Look at this advert to catch the runaway slave, Jack.

Do you think escaping was a good way to rebel?

More information:

<https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/journeys-caribbean-stories/>

200 years of campaigning against slavery:

<https://www.antislavery.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/18072007.pdf>

The Jamaica Mercury & Kingston Weekly Advertiser' Vol. 1 No. 32, Sat 27 Nov–Sat 4 Dec 1779 (MGS/45) ([National Maritime Museum](https://collections.rmg.co.uk/archive/objects/478145.html))

**5 - Jamaica: A Place of Mining**

**Fact: Jamaica has been mined for bauxite, which is used to make aluminium.**

**Question: What impact has Bauxite mining had on Jamaica’s landscape?**

A picture containing tree, outdoor, outdoor object, forest

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Search to find out how Jamaicans are trying to protect their environment from bauxite mining. **What are their arguments?**

**Time to go further?** Find out what else is being mined in Jamaica. Why is this industry expanding?

Bauxite mining in central Jamaica ([Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bauxite_Jamaica_1984.jpg))

**6 - Climate Change in Jamaica**

**Fact: Jamaica is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as worse hurricanes and floods.**

**Question: What evidence is there that hurricanes affecting Jamaica have grown worse?**

A picture containing tree, outdoor, sky, river

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Look at a list of hurricanes in Jamaica. **What patterns can you detect?**

**Time to go further?** Why do you think climate change makes hurricanes and other kinds of storms worse?

A flooded road in Kingston during Hurricane Dean ([Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flooded_road_in_Kingston_during_Hurricane_Dean.jpg))

**7- Jamaica: A Biodiversity Paradise**

**Fact: Jamaica’s habitats support over 900 plant species that are found nowhere else on Earth, and several endangered wildlife species.**

**Question: In what ways did Jamaica’s biodiversity change when coffee, bananas and sugar were planted on a large scale?**

A picture containing mountain, nature, outdoor, highland

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Discuss the impact it must have had, then search to see what evidence you can find.

**Time to go further?** Do you know of any animals or plants that are native to Jamaica? What would you expect to find there? Why? Search to find out.

*A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica* by James Hakewill, (1875) ([Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hakewill,_A_Picturesque_Tour_of_the_Island_of_Jamaica,_Plate_16.jpg))

**8 - Jamaica and Oil Extraction**

**Fact: Oil and gas are extracted from beneath the seabed around Jamaica.**

**Question: Why does Jamaica support the oil and gas industry?**

**A picture containing sky, outdoor, water, boat

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Petrojam is a fossil fuel company owned by the Jamaican government. It produces 35,000 barrels of oil a day. The UK firm United Oil & Gas has a licence to drill in Jamaica. **Why might the Jamaican Government support this, even though fossil fuels have a dangerous impact on the climate?**

**Time to go further?** What are some different types of renewable energy and where could they be located in and around Jamaica?

An offshore oil rig ([Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Oil_platform#/media/File:Oil_platform_P-51_(Brazil).jpg))