



English Conquers the World

Until the 17th century, English was only spoken on the British Isles. Because of religious conflicts in England some people wanted to find a free land to live on. Sailors and fishermen had sailed across the Atlantic and they claimed that there was a new world behind the sea. The New World is today known as North America. One of the groups who left England to look for a better life was called the Pilgrim Fathers. They settled in the area that is now called New England. They made friends with the Indians. Since then more people from Europe have sailed across the Atlantic and gradually the Indians were forced to leave their lands. Many were killed by the diseases that the white man brought over. A great number lost their lives in wars defending their homes.

Until the late 18th century the original inhabitants of Australia, called the Aborigines, had lived there in harmony with nature for at least 40 000 years. In 1788 the British started sending their worst criminals to Australia and continued doing so for the following five decades. They were the first white inhabitants who spread the English language throughout this new continent. Soon after, the number of Aborigines started decreasing due to viruses and new living conditions that were brought in by the white.

North America and Australia were not the only places where the British went. From the 16th to the early 20th century they took over areas on every continent. They ruled these countries and their people, and took advantage of their natural resources. This is how the British built their empire where "the sun never set". By the late 19th century Britain ruled half the world. Since World War I most of the former British colonies have become independent states. All of these countries now have English as their first or second language. That's why it is easy to cope with English in such a large number of countries.

After World War II English has become more and more widely studied all over the world. It has become the major international language that people use when communicating with other people from different language backgrounds. This is partly due to the enormous influence that the United States has worldwide, partly to the electro-technical revolution that the Internet and other electronic media have brought about.

Keywords

pilgrim
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