

FRENCH AS A WORLD LANGUAGE

In Canada, we tend to think of French as the language of Québec and of France. But the French-speaking, or francophone, world is much larger than that: French is either the mother tongue, or second language in several countries of Africa, as well as the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, the Indian Ocean and Europe.

For example:

- In Morocco, Arabic is the official language, but more than four million of the country's 22.5 million people speak French. French is used in the media and in education.

- In Cameroon, there are two official languages: French and English. There are also more than 200 different African languages. Of the approximately 10.5 million inhabitants, 1.5 million speak French.

- In Zaire, with a population of 31.7 million, French is the official language, and is spoken by more than 2.6 million people. There are some 250 other languages, although four are

dominant. French is commonly used in schools and the media.

- The Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique are possessions of France. Here,

Creole — a French-based language — is used in daily life.

- Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam used to be called Indochina, part of the former

