



The official language in Haiti is French, but only a very few Haitian people there speak it!

Instead they speak Haitian Creole - which is a form of pidgen French. It developed around 1700 when slaves from West Africa were brought to the island. They spoke many different native languages but had to communicate with the French settlers in Haiti. The result was a mixed up form of French! Here are some examples of Creole words:

"bannann" in French is "banane" and of course means 'banana'  
 "Bondye" in French is "Bon Dieu" which means "God"  
 "vwazin" in French is "voisin" and means "neighbor"  
 "ozetazini" in French is "Aux Etats-Unis" meaning "the United States"!

New words are being developed all the time as new manufactured goods and so on become available. See if you can guess what these Creole words mean in English:

1. kolgat
2. pampez
3. kodak
4. igloo
5. chiclet

Here are some clues:



Most of the people in Haiti consider themselves Christians, mostly Catholics, although not many of them really know Jesus. Many of them practice voodoo which involves worshipping spirits and using witchcraft. They believe in making animal sacrifices and are afraid of being cursed by witches. Voodoo is a mixture of Roman Catholic rituals and African tribal beliefs including magic and worship of serpents. Pray that people in Haiti will come to know Jesus so they can REALLY be free as their forefathers so much desired! 'Til next time,

Your friend, Shirley

Facts from: [www.nationmaster.com](http://www.nationmaster.com) Answers to puzzle: 1. toothpaste, 2. diaper, 3. camera, 4. cooler. 5. gum

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# PAL Page

Issue no. 40    Sept/Oct 2007



## Do you know which country in the western hemisphere is the poorest?

This is its flag - royal blue and red with its coat of arms on white in the middle. It is HAITI! The small country of Haiti consists of the western third of the beautiful island of Hispaniola - and the other two-thirds form the country called the Dominican Republic. If you travel across the island, you can tell immediately when you cross the border between these two countries as the pleasant houses and good roads of the eastern part suddenly change to terribly poor shacks and dirt roads full of pot-holes as you cross into Haiti.

Haiti is only about a 2hr flight from Florida and is to the east of Cuba, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. It covers an area of about 10,580 sq.miles and is slightly smaller than the state of Maryland.



The land is mountainous and rough, and because so many of the trees on the hillsides have been cut down for lumber, the hurricanes and tropical storms that often pass over that area frequently cause flooding and mudslides - making life even harder!

Christopher Columbus discovered Hispaniola in 1492 and within 25 years almost ALL the native Amerindians had been wiped out! The island later became a French colony and for a while was one of the wealthiest in the Caribbean. But thousands of African slaves were



brought there to work the plantations and cut down trees for lumber and the beautiful forests were soon destroyed. Life was so bad for the slaves that finally half a million of them rebelled and for 13 years they fought against their French rulers. Finally in 1804 Haiti was declared independent and became the first Black republic in the world.

But sadly Haiti has never really enjoyed its freedom as since that time it has been ruled by a series of harsh and greedy dictators, who fought over control of the nation. There has been a great deal of violence even until recently, when in May 2006 a democratically elected president finally became the country's leader. Even today Haiti is considered to be one of the most corrupt countries in the world.

Haiti has several natural resources, including copper, gold and marble and yet few benefits ever reach the people. There are about 8.7 million inhabitants of Haiti and 80% of those live under the poverty line - more than HALF are in a desperate situation! The capital, Port-au-Prince is well-known for its slums and violence, but even in rural areas the poverty is shocking. This photo of the main square of a town called Baraderes shows the very poor condition of the town's main buildings.



Two-thirds of the people live on small plots of land where they try to grow enough food to live on - but with frequent droughts, hurricanes and flooding because of soil erosion, crops often are lost. The main crops are coffee, mangoes, sugar cane, rice and corn but since most of the people do not have a regular job, life is very hard.



Most women have 5 or 6 children and only 3% of the population is over 65 yrs old - in fact HALF the population is under the age of 15!! Only half the people over 15 can read and write, so it is even difficult to teach important things such as basic hygiene habits. Many families are so desperately poor that the parents leave behind their children to try to get to the Dominican Republic or the USA, or turn older children out on the street. But read what PROVERBS 28:27 says about the poor!

**True story!** Danita was a typical American Christian lady in her 30's when she visited Haiti. She was shocked to see small children abandoned and walking naked in the streets, and she decided to do something about it - so two months later she moved to live in Haiti. She chose to settle in a town with no running water, no electricity, no phones and no jobs. She didn't know how she could help and so she started to work with the local church.

She writes: "I spent the first few months without clear direction from God. Then it happened: I was eating alone in an open-air restaurant when I noticed the homeless children watching the customers eat. One little boy came close to my table and was watching me carefully, trying to position himself to grab whatever food I had left over. I looked into his soft brown eyes, and I couldn't give him my leftovers. I told him to wait; I wanted to buy him his own meal. As I turned to place the order, a man hit the little one with a huge whip! The man used the same whip he had been herding cattle with to beat this small, helpless child!"



She continues "For a moment, I froze. The screams of the child could be heard up the street. In a split second, I was out of my chair and on that man. The people on the street were shocked, but not as shocked as this man was. I grabbed him and shook him in defense of the child. When the man backed down, I gathered up the children and fed them. I walked away with tears streaming down my face. I knew I'd never be the same." Since then Danita's ministry has grown to help thousands of poor children in Haiti. You can read more at: [www.danitaschildren.org](http://www.danitaschildren.org)