Languages

Language used most frequently at home	
Language	Percent
English	36.9%
Mandarin	34.9%
Malay	10.7%
Tamil	3.3%
Others	14.2%

The Singapore government has chosen four official languages: English, Malay, Chinese (Mandarin), and Tamil. English is the primary language. Singapore English is the main language in Singapore.
English is the first language of the nation, but it is not the most common. English is the second most commonly spoken language among Singaporeans. The most commonly spoken language amongst Singaporeans in their homes is Chinese (51%), followed by English (32%), Malay (13%) and Tamil (7%). This means that 32% of Singaporeans are native English speakers. Most of the rest of the people speak it as a second language. However, English has the largest total number of speakers including native and second language speakers. Mandarin Chinese is the second most common.
Almost 40% of people in Singapore are foreign. Most foreigners come from Asia. The two countries where most foreigners come from are Malaysia (mostly Malaysian Chinese) and China. In 2009, there may have been 350,000 Malaysians working in Singapore. Many Chinese-speaking foreigners and Chinese-speaking Singaporeans work in services. Thus, Chinese is the main language of many workers such as hawkers, retail assistants, hairdressers, etc. in Singapore today.

Singapore from Chinatown

Singaporean English mainly comes from British English. There are many Singapore accents in English because of the many languages and identities of people in the city. Languages can even change over the generations and children may speak different languages and have different accents from their mother. For example, in a Singaporean Chinese family, the grandmother might speak Hokkien as her first language. Differently, the mother might speak Mandarin as her first language and Hokkien/English as her second languages, while the grandson might speak English as his first language and Mandarin as his second language.

Culture

Singapore has many kinds of people and immigrants from many places. Therefore, Singaporean culture has often been described as a mix of cultures – British, Malay, Chinese, Indian and Peranakan. Also, foreigners are 42% of the population in Singapore and they are part of changing Singaporean culture.

Food

The Hainanese chicken rice, a local food in Singapore

Dining is an important part of life in Singapore. Singaporean food is an example of the many different cultures in the country. It is also an example of mixing among cultures. British, Chinese, Indian, Malay, Tamil, and Indonesian styles of cooking all mix together. It is especially known for its sea food. Typical Singaporean food includes: Satay, Nasi lemak, Chilli crab, and Hainanese chicken rice