Fiche

1. Basic facts

Capital city	Kingston
Currency	Jamaican dollar
Population	2,709,300
The national anthem	Jamaica, Land We Love
National motto	*out of many, one people*

2. Significant characteristics

- the largest island in the West Indies;
- the third most populous country in the Americas after the USA and Canada;
- part of the Commonwealth.

3. Key dates

from 4000 BC	The Arawak Indians from South America inhabited the island. They were wiped out before the English settled on the island.
1494	Christopher Columbus claimed the island for Spain. The Spanish started importing slaves from Africa to work on plantations.
1655	The English routed the Spanish and settled on the island. It became a plantation colony made up of immigrants from Europe and Asia. The main crops: sugar and bananas.
1948	The ship *Empire Windrush* transported about 500 Jamaicans to England to work there for a few years. Most of them ended up living there permanently and working in hospitals or the transport sector in the London area. It marked the beginning of the Jamaican diaspora and of multi-racial Britain.
1950s - 1960s	Mass emigration to Britain in search of work on account of lack of jobs in Jamaica. 'Chain emigration' : the man came first and his wife and children later.
1962	Jamaica became an independent dominion.

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