**The Commonwealth**

General information:

- official title: "The Commonwealth of nations"  
- 53 member states   
- dates back to the mid-20th century   
- decolonization of the British empire   
- official language is English   
- the head is queen Elizabeth II of England  
- 16 members recognize the queen as their monarch -> "commonwealth realms"  
- total area ~ 30,000,000 km²   
- population 2.245 billion people  
- member states all over the world  
- we are presenting: Australia, South Africa, Jamaica

South Africa:

general  
- member of the CW: 1931-1961; 1994-today  
- population: 50.5 million  
- medium HDI: 123th  
- 11 official languages (English)   
- time zone: GMT+2h  
- 9 provinces  
- capital Pretoria  
  
history  
- Dutch farmers came there in 1652  
- Huguenots in 1688

- later: groups from Belgium, Britain, France and Germany  
- augmented by slaves from Malaysia & Indonesia  
- under British control since 1814  
- independence recognized in 1931 (statue of Westminster)  
- apartheid; racism against black people   
 -> danger to world peace in 1961; crime against humanity in 1966

-> end in 1990 (Mandela)   
- joined the Commonwealth; reclaimed its seat in the UN in 1994

Jamaica:

general

- joined Commonwealth: 1962

- population: 2.751.00 (2011)   
- life expectancy of 73 years

- high HDI: 79th

- official language: English

- capital: Kingston

- 3. largest island in the Caribbean - 10.991km²

- Jamaica = "Land of Wood and Water"

- religion: Mainly Christian

history

- Columbus landed there in 1494  
- Spanish rule: 1509–1655

- the first Spanish settlement was founded in 1509

- indigenous people were enslaved

- enslaved Africans replaced them (17th century)

- British rule: 1655–1962

- 17th century

- English conquest

- 18th century

- one of the most valuable possessions in the world through African slave labor

- Second Maroon War in the 1790s. (eight-month conflict between the Maroons of Trelawney Parish, Jamaica, and the British)

- 1740 the British authorities recognized their rights to freedom and ownership of property

- 19th century

- 1866 the country became a crown colony

- 20th century

- The Great Depression 1930

- 1944 an executive council was established

- independence in 1962

Australia:

general

- joined Commonwealth: 1931 (Statute of Westminster)

- population: 22 million

- very high HDI: 2nd

- official language: English

- time zone: GMT +8h

- area: 7,682,395km²

- capital: Canberra

- federal parliamentary; constitutional monarchy

history

- first Europeans were the Dutch (named “New Holland”)

- Captain James Cook in 1770

- England just lost American colonies -> needed new ones

- first settlers were convicts

- mostly settled at the coast

- different colonies (North, South, West, Tasmania, Queensland)

- gold rush in the 1850s

- one nation since 1901: Commonwealth of Australia

- troops fought in WW1 & WW2

- first federal parliament in 1927

- referendum for secession from England rejected by the parliament in 1933

summary:

- different background stories  
- Britain did not conquer first  
- slavery & racism were common  
- if: independent since the mid-20th century

- some still have the monarch of England as leader  
- others had big fights for independency  
- English as the uniting language  
- CW as a unit, uniting those countries  
- some things are alike, but many are different

-> cultural diversity

sources: <http://thecommonwealth.org/>; <http://www.clickforaustralia.com/>