According to the 2004 Census of Sierra Leone, the country has 18 major languages. Krio is the most widely spoken language but it is only spoken by 10% of the population as their first language. The languages spoken most commonly as a first language as of 2005 were Mende (32%) and Temne (30%). Although English, as the official language, is spoken in schools, government administration and the media, Krio is widely spoken as a lingua franca. As of 2005, approximately 97% of the population speak the Krio language (either as first, second or third language).

Adult male literacy rate (2018): 51.6%
Adult female literacy rate (2018): 34.8%