

# [Formation of malaysia](https://assignbuster.com/formation-of-malaysia/)

The formation of Malaysia Malaysia was formed in 1963 out of a number of former British colonies: the Federation of Malaya (comprising 11 states), which had achieved independence in 1957; Singapore, which had been self-governing since 1959; and two territories in northwestern Borneo, Sarawak and Sabah (then known as North Borneo), which by 1960 were well advanced on the road to independence.

The newly elected government of Singapore was in favour of merging with Malaya, and in 1961 Tunku Abdul Rahman, prime minister of Malaya, took the initiative and suggested that a plan should be devised whereby Singapore, North Borneo, Brunei (another British territory in Borneo that had achieved autonomy), and Sarawak would be brought closer together with Malaya in political and economic cooperation. The proposal was on the whole well received.

Trade benefits would accrue from the creation of a larger economic unit, and resources could be pooled. There would also be political advantages. For Malaya amalgamation with Singapore with its largely Chinese population would be offset by the largely indigenous populations of the states in Borneo. For Singapore it was a means of ending colonial status, and for Sarawak, Brunei, and North Borneo it would advance the date of independence.

There was also the advantage that the existing central government at Kuala Lumpur was already federal in structure. Britain was also favourable to the proposal. In 1962 a joint Malayan and British commission under Lord Cobbold concluded, after testing public opinion, that most people in Sarawak and North Borneo were in favour of federation; and a referendum in Singapore showed a considerable majority for the merger.