



Your Guide to **British Life, Culture and Customs**

'When people say England, they sometimes mean Great Britain, sometimes the United Kingdom, sometimes the British Isles - but never England.

'How to be an Alien' by George Mikes



**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
UK, ENGLAND, GREAT BRITAIN (GB)
AND BRITISH ISLES?**

"England" is sometimes, wrongly, used in reference to the whole United Kingdom, the entire island of Great Britain (or simply Britain), or indeed the British Isles. This is not only incorrect but can cause offence to people from other parts of the UK.



British Isles



UK



Great Britain



England



Scotland



Wales

Countries within a Country - The United Kingdom

The name **United Kingdom** refers to the union of what were once four separate countries: England, Scotland, Wales and **Ireland** (though most of Ireland is now independent, only Northern Ireland remains part of the UK).



The UK's full and official name is the **"United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland"**.



The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Where is the UK?

- The UK is situated north-west of the European continent between the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea. It has a total land area of 244,100 square kilometres, of which nearly 99% is land and the remainder inland water. From north to south it is about 1,000 kilometres long.



When was the UK formed (made)?

- The United Kingdom (UK) was formed in on January 1, 1801 and constitutes the greater part of the British Isles.

History of the making of the UK

1536 - Act of Union joins England and Wales

1707 - Act of Union unites Scotland and England, together with Wales to form the **Kingdom of Great Britain**.

1801 - The Irish Parliament voted to join the Union. Then Kingdom of Great Britain becomes the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland**.

1922 - Name changed to **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, when most of the Southern counties in Ireland choose independence.

Why is the whole of Ireland not in the UK?

- Before 1922 the UK included Ireland in the definition, but when the Irish Free State ceased to be part of the Union the title changed to include 'Northern Ireland'.

What are people called in the UK?

- People in the UK are called British although they have different nationalities.

What is the capital city of the UK?

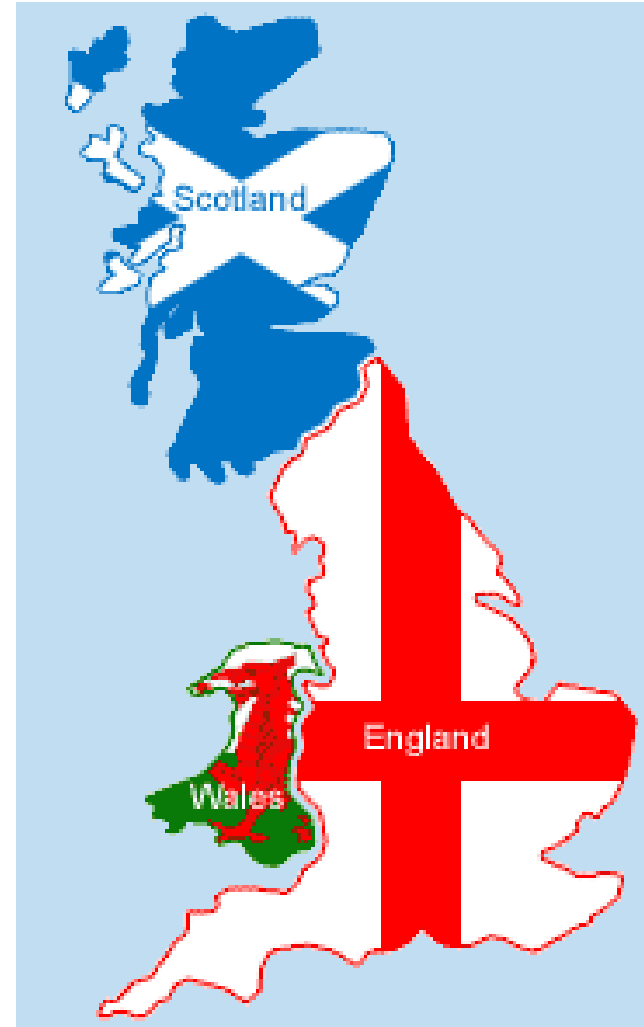
- The capital of the UK is London.



Great Britain

Great Britain

comprises only
England, Scotland and
Wales.



Where and what is Great Britain?



- **Where is Great Britain?**

Great Britain is an island lying off the western coast of Europe, comprising the main territory of the United Kingdom.

- **What is Great Britain?**

Great Britain is the official name given to the two kingdoms of England and Scotland, and the principality of Wales.

- **Great Britain is made up of:**

England - The capital is London.

Scotland - The capital is Edinburgh.

Wales - The capital is Cardiff.

Great Britain is divided into small regions called counties.



Is Great Britain the same as the UK?

No, Great Britain and the United Kingdom refer to different areas.

Great Britain is very often, but incorrectly, used as a synonym for the sovereign state properly known as the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** or the **UK** for short.

If you look at the full name of the UK, you will see that the UK includes Great Britain **AND** Northern Ireland.





- Great Britain is a political term which describes the combination of England, Scotland, and Wales, the three nations which together include all the land on the island. It is also a geographical term referring to the island on which the greater parts of England, Wales and Scotland are situated.

- **Great Britain has an area of 229,850 km² (88,745 sq. mi.) and is the largest island of the British Isles.**



Is Great Britain the same as Britain?

Sometimes people use the shorten name **Britain** instead of **Great Britain**, to mean the same thing, but really Britain only refers to England and Wales.

The name Britain goes back to Roman times when they called England and Wales "Britannia" (or "Britannia Major", to distinguished from "Britannia Minor", ie Brittany in France). The Roman province of Britannia only covered the areas of modern England and Wales. The area of modern Scotland was never finally conquered.

What is the British Isles?

- The **British Isles** is a geographical term which includes two large islands, **Great Britain** and **Ireland**, and **5,000** small islands, most notably the Isle of Man which has its own parliament and laws.



The islands in the British Isles

The British Isles consists of the following islands:

Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales)

Ireland (the Republic of Ireland)
A country west of England across the Irish Sea (not part of the United Kingdom)

Northern Ireland (part of the United Kingdom)

The Orkney and Shetland Islands

Islands off the northeast coast of Scotland

The Isle of Man

An island in the Irish Sea

Hebrides (including the Inner Hebrides, Outer Hebrides and Small Isles) All are islands off the northwest coast of Scotland

The Isle of Wight

An island off the southern coast of England

Isles of Scilly

An island off the southwest coast of England

Lundy Island

An island off the southwest coast of England

The Channel Islands

A group of small islands in the English Channel, off the coast of Normandy, France. The principal islands of the group include **Jersey**, **Guernsey**, **Alderney** and **Sark**.

Plus many other offshore islands

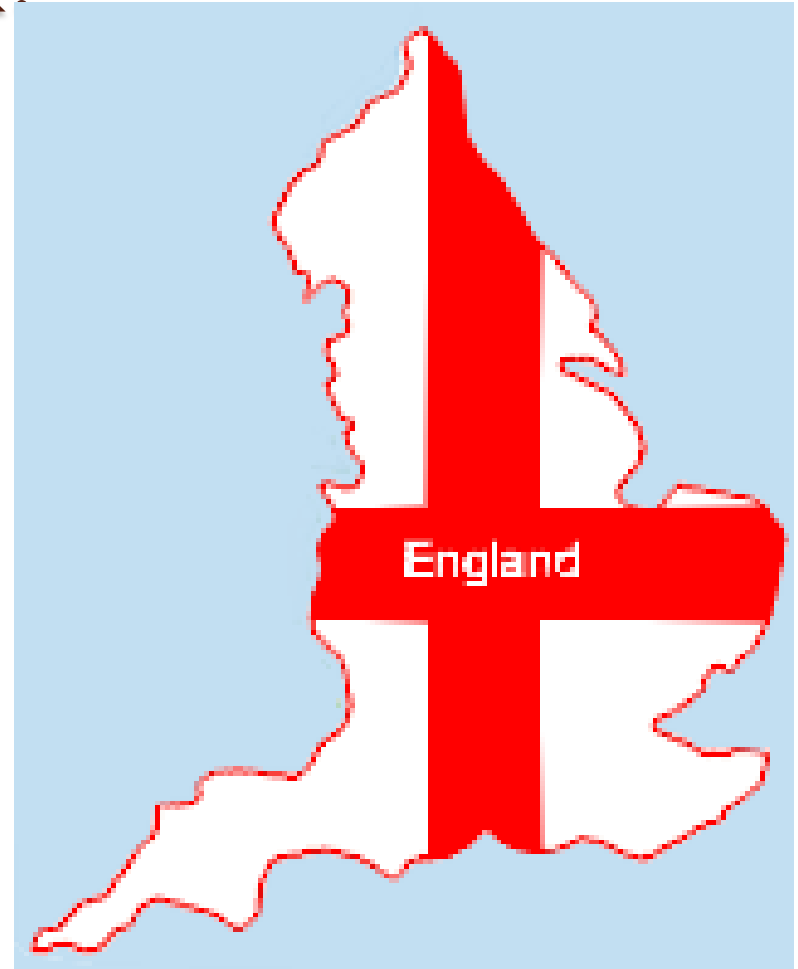


Why and how does England dominate the UK?

England is the biggest country in the UK

England is a country in the UK and occupies most of the southern two thirds of Great Britain. The total area of England is 130,410 sq km (50,352 sq mi).

England contains about 84% of the UK population.



The capital of the UK is in England

The capital, seat of government, and the largest city in the United Kingdom is London. London is also is the capital of England.

All of Great Britain has been ruled by the UK government in London since 1707. (In 1999 the first elections to the newly created Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales took place leaving England as the only part of the Great Britain with no devolved assembly or parliament.)

The English language comes from England

As it names suggest, the English language, today spoken by hundreds of millions of people around the world, originated as the language from England, where it remains the principal tongue today.

English is the official language of the UK and the first language of the vast majority of the population. Both Wales and Scotland land have their own languages but English is spoken in both countries more.



Questions about Great Britain

- What is Great Britain?
Is Britain the same as
Great Britain?
Which countries are in
Great Britain?

Questions about the United Kingdom

- Where is the UK?
What countries make up
the UK?
What is the official title
(name) of the UK?
Why is the whole of
Ireland not part of the
UK?
How and why was the UK
formed?

The story of the United Kingdom and the Union Flag.

- The Union Flag, popularly known as the *[Union Jack](#), is the national flag of the [United Kingdom](#). It is the British flag.
- It is called the Union Flag because it symbolises the administrative union of the countries of the United Kingdom. It is made up of the individual flags of three of the Kingdom's countries all united under one Sovereign - the countries of ['England](#), of ['Scotland'](#) and of **'Northern Ireland'** (since 1921 only Northern Ireland has been part of the United Kingdom). As Wales was not a Kingdom but a Principality it could not be included on the flag.

