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- The official name of the Great Britain is the United Kingdom: the Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Often the Great Britain is named simply Britain or England which is not right, because England is just a part of Great Britain. The others parts of the United Kingdom are Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This state settles down on the British isles washed by the Atlantic ocean. The population of the country is about 60 million people.



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- The state structure is parliamentary monarchy. The official head of the country is the Queen. The power of the queen is limited by the Parliament which consists of two Houses – the House of Lords and the House of Commons.



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- The surface of the British Isles varies very much. The North is mountains, while the South has beautiful valleys. There are a lot of rivers in Great Britain. The Severn is the longest river, while the Thames is the deepest and the most important one. The mountains, the Atlantic ocean and the warm waters of Gulf Stream influence the climate of the British Isles very much. It is mild the whole year round.



# London is the capital of Great Britain

- London is one of the biggest cities in the world. Its population is more than 11 million people. London is divided into three main parts: the City, the West End and the East End. The City is the heart of business and financial life of the country. The West End is the part where rich people live. The main streets and squares, historical monuments and beautiful parks are in the West End. Theatres, museums restaurants, shops and hotels are also situated there. The East End is the part of London where poor people and workers live.







- **Westminster Abbey**, now the political centre of London, was until eleventh century a sacred place. The king Edward the Confessor decided to build a great abbey church. Later he was buried there. His tomb became a popular place of pilgrimage and it can be still found at the heart of present Westminster Abbey. William the Conqueror was crowned in the Abbey and since then all coronations have taken place here. The Palace of Westminster was the royal residence and also the country's main court.



- **The Houses of Parliament** were built in 1834. the building contains two chambers where parliamentary business is debated. On the corner next to Westminster Bridge stands St. Stephens Tower, which houses the famous bell, Big Ben, which chimes the hours.







- **St. Paul's Cathedral** is Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece. The construction of the Cathedral was started in 1675 and was not finished until 1709. The magnificent classical structure is crowned by the dome. Inside the dome there are scenes from the life of St. Paul. Here is the famous Whispering Gallery too. There are many memorials in the Cathedral including those to heroes such as Wellington and Nelson.



- **The Tower of London** has been closely associated with many important events in English history. It has served as palace, mint and menagerie. The Tower was built by William the Conqueror to protect the city. The Tower is famous for its illustrious prisoners, such as Sir Thomas More and Guy Fawks. Many notable people lost their heads on the executioner's block.

