

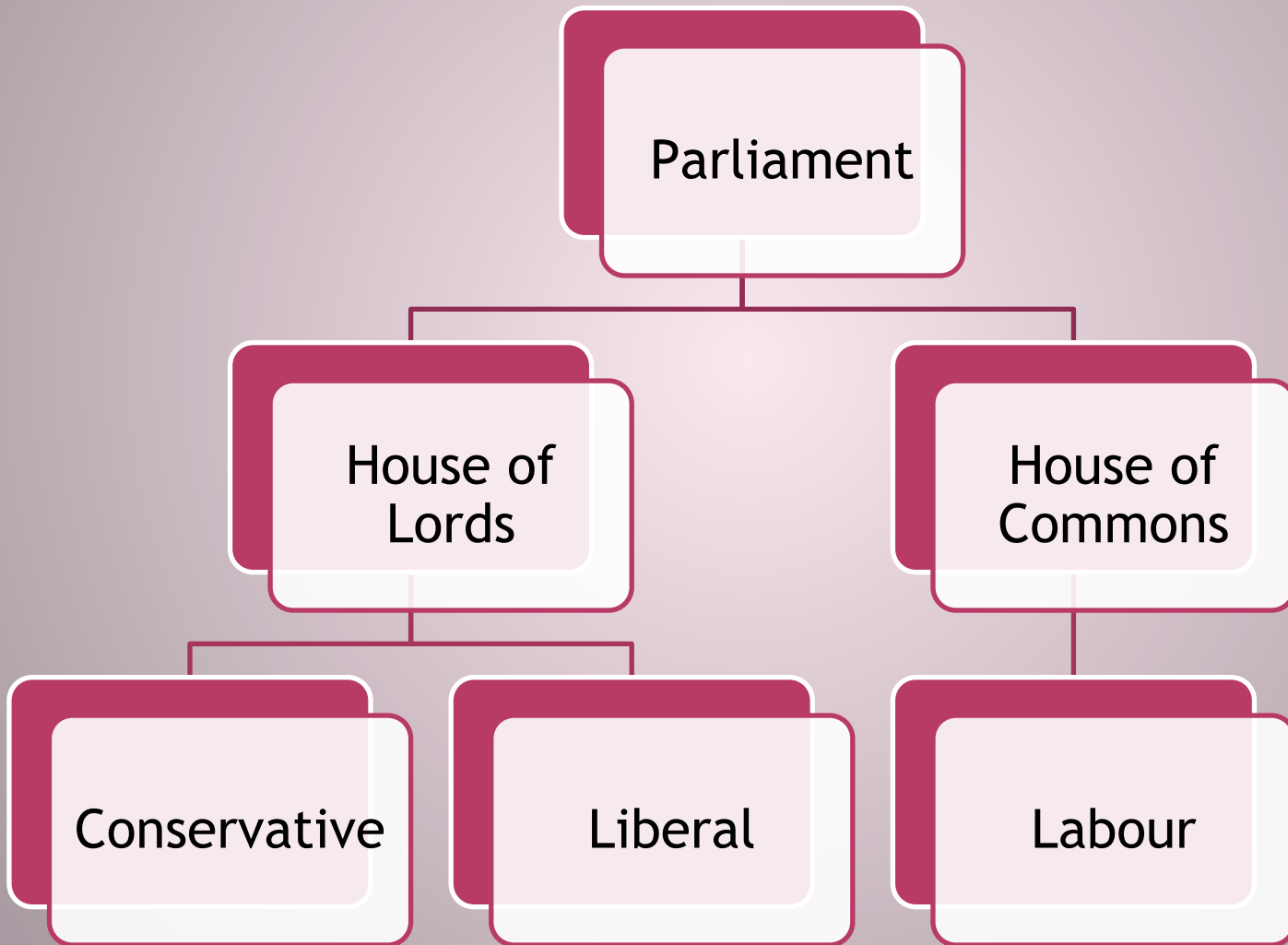
GREAT BRITAIN

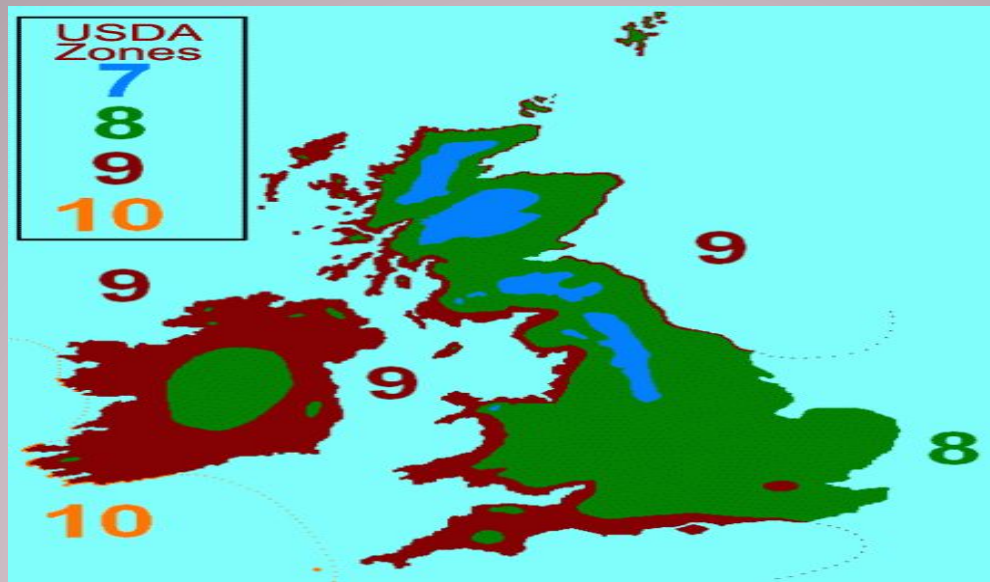


ECONOMY

- The UK has a partially regulated market economy.^[223] Based on market exchange rates, the UK is today the fifth-largest economy in the world and the second-largest in Europe after Germany. HM Treasury, led by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is responsible for developing and executing the government's public finance policy and economic policy. The Bank of England is the UK's central bank and is responsible for issuing notes and coins in the nation's currency, the pound sterling. Banks in Scotland and Northern Ireland retain the right to issue their own notes, subject to retaining enough Bank of England notes in reserve to cover their issue. The pound sterling is the world's third-largest reserve currency (after the US dollar and the euro).^[224] Since 1997 the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, headed by the Governor of the Bank of England, has been responsible for setting interest rates at the level necessary to achieve the overall inflation target for the economy that is set by the Chancellor each year







- The climate of Great Britain is greatly influenced by the Atlantic Ocean, and the warm waters of Gulf Stream. The weather on the island is quite changeable. For example, a fine morning can unexpectedly change into a wet afternoon and vice versa. The most unpleasant aspect of British weather is continuous rain and fog. It is especially common in large cities. During thick fog car accidents are a frequent scene. The best time of the year is spring and the worst is winter. January and February are rather cold, humid and unpleasant. Summer days can be rainy too, so most British people prefer spending their summer holidays abroad.

ENGLISH FLAG



England

SCOTTISH FLAG

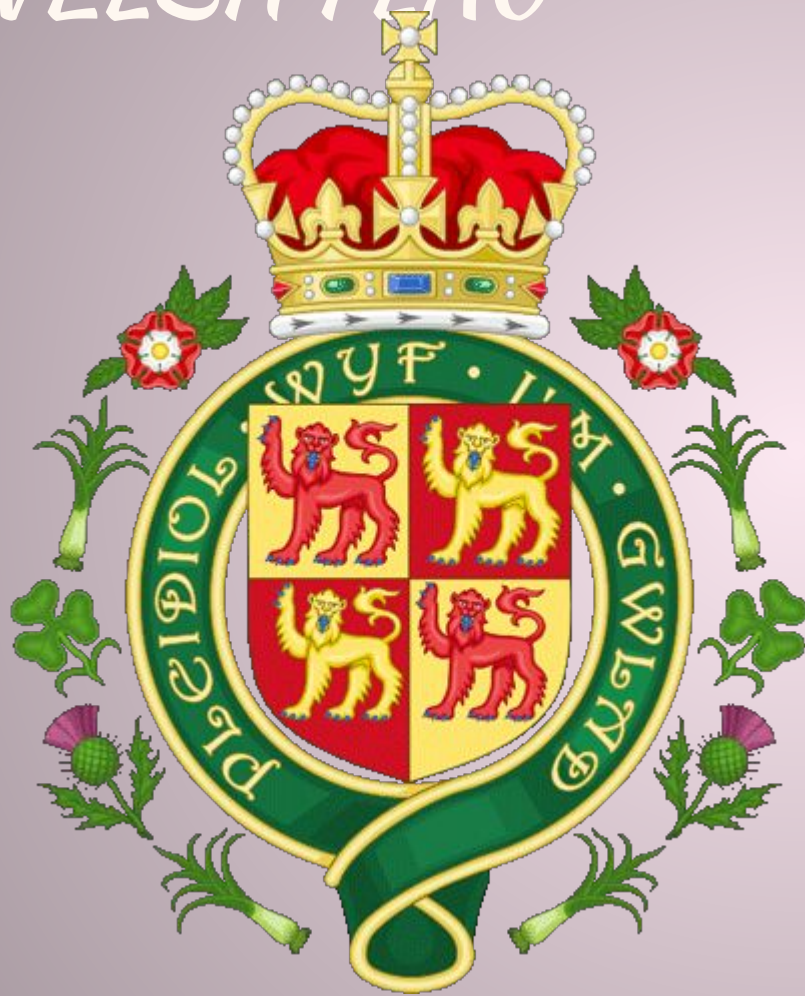


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WELSH FLAG



LITERATURE

- The English playwright and poet [William Shakespeare](#) is widely regarded as the greatest dramatist of all time, ^{[487][488][489]} and his contemporaries [Christopher Marlowe](#) and [Ben Jonson](#) have also been held in continuous high esteem. More recently the playwrights [Alan Ayckbourn](#), [Harold Pinter](#), [Michael Frayn](#), [Tom Stoppard](#) and [David Edgar](#) have combined elements of surrealism, realism and radicalism.
- Notable pre-modern and early-modern English writers include [Geoffrey Chaucer](#) (14th century), [Thomas Malory](#) (15th century), [Sir Thomas More](#) (16th century), [John Bunyan](#) (17th century) and [John Milton](#) (17th century). In the 18th century [Daniel Defoe](#) (author of [Robinson Crusoe](#)) and [Samuel Richardson](#) were pioneers of the [modern novel](#). In the 19th century there followed further innovation by [Jane Austen](#), the gothic novelist [Mary Shelley](#), the children's writer [Lewis Carroll](#), the [Brontë sisters](#), the social campaigner [Charles Dickens](#), the [naturalist Thomas Hardy](#), the [realist George Eliot](#), the visionary poet [William Blake](#) and romantic poet [William Wordsworth](#). 20th century English writers include the science-fiction novelist [H. G. Wells](#); the writers of children's classics [Rudyard Kipling](#), [A. A. Milne](#) (the creator of [Winnie-the-Pooh](#)), [Roald Dahl](#) and [Enid Blyton](#); the controversial [D. H. Lawrence](#); the [modernist Virginia Woolf](#); the satirist [Evelyn Waugh](#); the prophetic novelist [George Orwell](#); the popular novelists [W. Somerset Maugham](#) and [Graham Greene](#); the crime writer [Agatha Christie](#) (the [best-selling novelist](#) of all time); ^[490] [Ian Fleming](#) (the creator of [James Bond](#)); the poets [T.S. Eliot](#), [Philip Larkin](#) and [Ted Hughes](#); the [fantasy](#) writers [J. R. R. Tolkien](#), [C. S. Lewis](#) and [J. K. Rowling](#); the graphic novelists [Alan Moore](#) and [Neil Gaiman](#).



- ◉ Various styles of music are popular in the UK from the indigenous [folk music](#) of [England](#), [Wales](#), [Scotland](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) to [heavy metal](#). Notable composers of classical music from the United Kingdom and the countries that preceded it include [William Byrd](#), [Henry Purcell](#), [Sir Edward Elgar](#), [Gustav Holst](#), [Sir Arthur Sullivan](#) (most famous for working with the librettist [Sir W. S. Gilbert](#)), [Ralph Vaughan Williams](#) and [Benjamin Britten](#), pioneer of modern British opera. [Sir Harrison Birtwistle](#) is one of the foremost living composers. The UK is also home to world-renowned symphonic orchestras and choruses such as the [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#) and the [London Symphony Chorus](#). Notable conductors include [Sir Simon Rattle](#), [Sir John Barbirolli](#) and [Sir Malcolm Sargent](#). Some of the notable [film score](#) composers include [John Barry](#), [Clint Mansell](#), [Mike Oldfield](#), [John Powell](#), [Craig Armstrong](#), [David Arnold](#), [John Murphy](#), [Mentz Norman](#) and [Harry Gregson-Williams](#). [George Frideric Handel](#) became a [naturalised British citizen](#) and wrote the British coronation anthem, while some of his best works, such as [Messiah](#), were written in the English language. ⁽¹⁶²¹⁻¹⁷¹³⁾ [Andrew Lloyd Webber](#) is a prolific composer of [musical theatre](#). His works have dominated London's [West End](#) since the late 20th century and have also been a commercial success worldwide

VISUAL ART

- The history of British visual art forms part of western art history. Major British artists include: the Romantics William Blake, John Constable, Samuel Palmer and J.M.W. Turner; the portrait painters Sir Joshua Reynolds and Lucian Freud; the landscape artists Thomas Gainsborough and L.S. Lowry; the pioneer of the Arts and Crafts Movement William Morris; the figurative painter Francis Bacon; the Pop artists Peter Blake, Richard Hamilton and David Hockney; the collaborative duo Gilbert and George; the abstract artist Howard Hodgkin; and the sculptors Antony Gormley, Anish Kapoor and Henry Moore. During the late 1980s and 1990s the Saatchi Gallery in London helped to bring to public attention a group of multi-genre artists who would become known as the "Young British Artists": Damien Hirst, Chris Ofili, Rachel Whiteread, Tracey Emin, Mark Wallinger, Steve McQueen, Sam Taylor-Wood and the Chapman Brothers are among the better-known members of this loosely affiliated movement.







