



GREAT BRITAIN

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Where's great Britain?



The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the UK) occupies most of the territory of the British Isles. It consists of four main parts: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. London is the capital of England, Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland, Cardiff— of Wales and Belfast — of Northern Ireland. The UK is a small country with an area of some 244,100 square kilometres. It is washed by the Atlantic Ocean in the north-west, north and south-west and separated from Europe by the North Sea in the east and by the English Channel in the south.

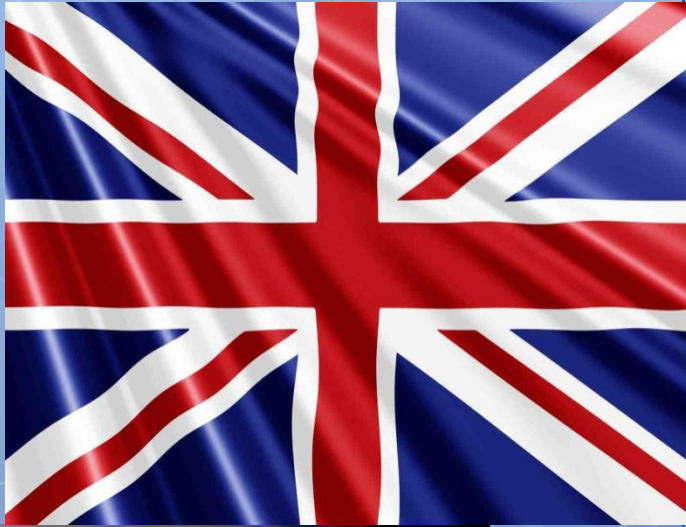
Language and industrial.



The official language of the United Kingdom is English. But in western Scotland some people still speak Gaelic and in northern and central parts of Wales people often speak Welsh.

The UK is a highly developed industrial country. It is known as one of the worlds largest producers and exporters of machinery, electronics» textile» aircraft, and navigation equipment. One of the chief industries of the country is shipbuilding.

Monarchy and flag.



The UK is a constitutional monarchy. In law, Head of the State is Queen. In practice, the country is ruled by the elected government with the Prime Minister at the head. The British Parliament consists of two chambers: the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

There are three main political parties in Great Britain: the Labour, the Conservative and the Liberal parties.

The flag of the United Kingdom, known as the Union Jack, is made up of three crosses. The big red cross is the cross of Saint George, the patron saint of England. The white cross is the cross of Saint Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland. The red diagonal cross is the cross of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland.

London.



London is the capital of Great Britain, its political, economic and cultural centre. It's one of the largest cities in the world. Its population is more than 9 million people. London is situated on the river Thames. It was founded more than two thousand years ago.

London is an ancient city. It appeared at the place where the Roman invaders decided to build a bridge over the Thames. There are four parts in London: West End, East End, the City and Westminster.

Interesting places in London.



The official London residence of the Queen is Buckingham Palace. The palace was built in 1703 by the Duke of Buckingham. The daily ceremony of the Changing of the Guard takes place in its courtyard.

There are many museums in London. For example, the British Museum, the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum. The British Museum is the biggest museum in London. The museum is famous for its library — one of the richest in the world.

There are many beautiful parks in London. St James's Park, Green Park, Hyde Park, and Kensington Gardens are linked together and form above 300 hectares of parkland in the heart of London.



Big Ben.



Big Ben is one of London's best-known landmarks, and looks most spectacular at night when the clock faces are illuminated. You even know when parliament is in session, because a light shines above the clock face.

The four dials of the clock are 23 feet square, the minute hand is 14 feet long and the figures are 2 feet high. Minutely regulated with a stack of coins placed on the huge pendulum, Big Ben is an excellent timekeeper, which has rarely stopped.

The name Big Ben actually refers not to the clock-tower itself, but to the thirteen ton bell hung within. The bell was named after the first commissioner of works, Sir Benjamin Hall.



Oxford - the University Town



This university town is very beautiful. The oldest university there is Oxford. The first of its colleges was founded in 1249. The university now has thirty-five colleges and about thirteen thousand students, many of them from other countries.

There were no women at Oxford until 1878. When the first women's college Lady Margaret Hall, opened. Now most colleges are open to men and women. It is not easy to get a place at Oxford University to study for a degree.

But outside the university there are many smaller private colleges which offer less difficult courses and where it is easy to enrol. Most students in these private school take business, secretarial or English language courses.



Elizabeth Alexandra Mary, this is the full name of the Queen, became queen at the age of 26 when her father, King George VI, died while on an official tour of Kenya in 1952.

Quite a number of Brits consider having to play the role of the queen to be a very difficult job which prevents you from having a normal lifestyle. By the way, the majority of people in Britain think the Queen is doing her job of representing Britain around the world excellently and very professionally. In her country she does charity work and participates in various events of symbolic importance.

As a princess, Elizabeth II tried to lead as «normal» life as possible in her situation. She was allowed to play with other girls and she never showed she was superior to them. She even bought shoes for one of her girlfriends who was very poor. Princess Elizabeth enjoyed acting, too. With her younger sister Margaret and the children of members of the staff of the Royal Household she staged pantomime at Windsor at Christmas.

Elizabeth II



Elizabeth II was lucky to have found a man whom she truly loved and worshiped, for her he was the one. His name was Philip Mountbatten, now Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. They say in his youth he was rather a reckless man – he used to drive his car too fast and Elizabeth even got in a car accident with him once. His clothes weren't very tidy and Liz's family complained that he didn't have polished shoes and an elegant suit and behaved himself in an unduly familiar manner, sometimes he was just rude. But he also was a handsome young man and Elizabeth loved him anyway, she loved him as he was. Her parents were not too happy to have Philip as a son-in-law, but they didn't want their daughter to be unhappy, so the marriage took place in 1947, when the would-be queen was twenty-one.

Always keeping a brave face throughout the trials and tribulations of her reign, Elizabeth II is a role model for British public figures and commoners alike.





The end.