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Unit 1. COUNTRY AND ITS LAND

WARM-UP

Look at the map. What is Great Britain? Find the country on the map.

Show the parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the UK). Why is the country called a kingdom?



LISTENING

A Listen to the text and answer the questions.

- 1 What is the difference between England, Great Britain and the UK?
- 2 Are all the islands which are closely linked with the UK parts of it?

While studying Unit 1 complete the Country File.

Country File	The UK
Parts	
Total area	
Population	
Capital	
Largest cities	
Language	
Head of the state	
Mineral resources	
Industries	



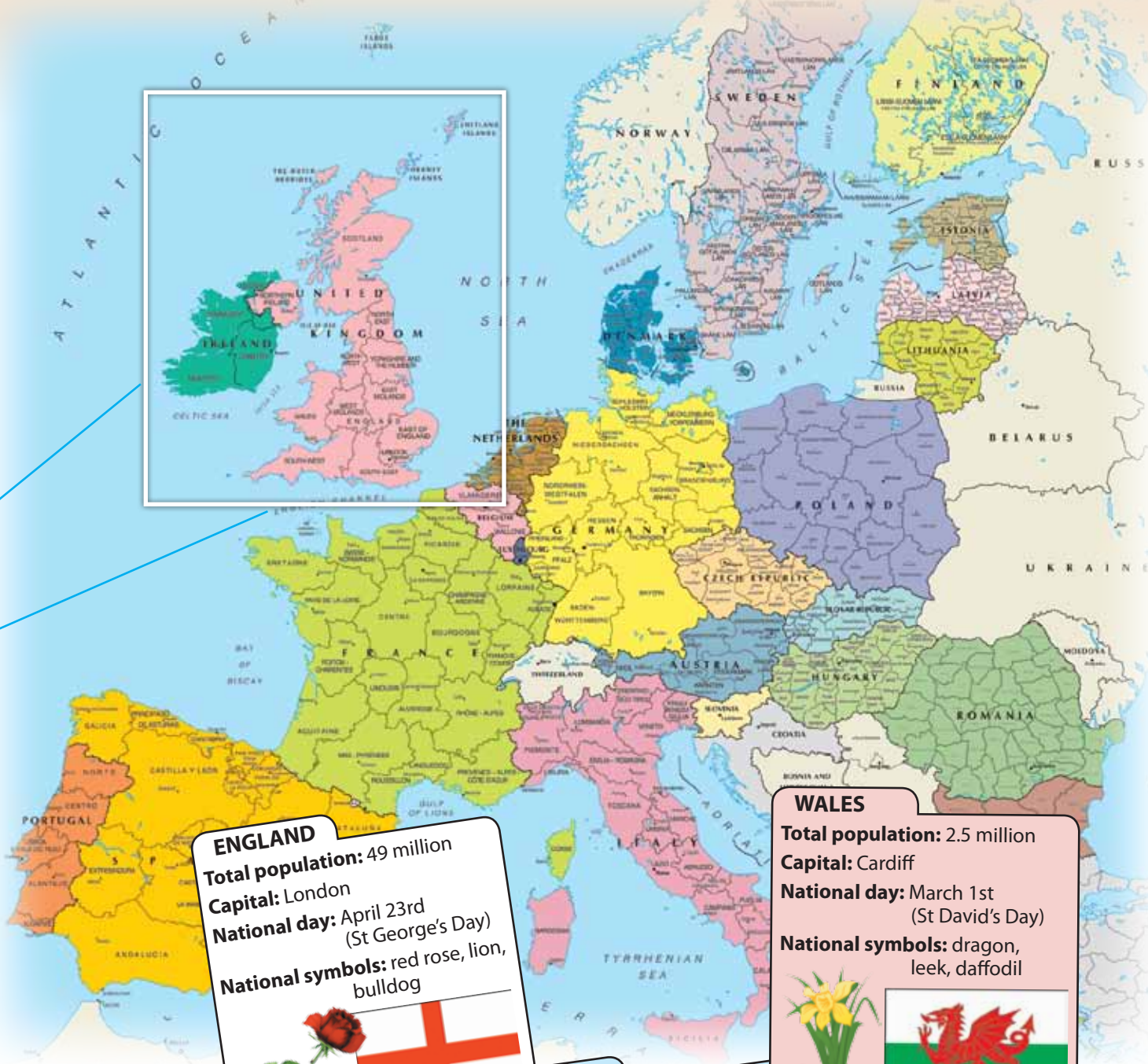
FOUR PARTS — FOUR NATIONS

B Look at the map and read the Country Files on page 5.




C List the national symbols from files according to these categories.

Plants	Animals		Abstract Patterns
	Real	Mythical	




ENGLAND
Total population: 49 million
Capital: London
National day: April 23rd
 (St George's Day)
National symbols: red rose, lion,
 bulldog




SCOTLAND
Total population: 5 million
Capital: Edinburgh
National day: November 30th
 (St Andrew's Day)
National symbols: thistle, tartan



WALES
Total population: 2.5 million
Capital: Cardiff
National day: March 1st
 (St David's Day)
National symbols: dragon,
 leek, daffodil



NORTHERN IRELAND
Total population: 1.5 million
Capital: Belfast
National day: March 17th
 (St Patrick's Day)
National symbol: shamrock

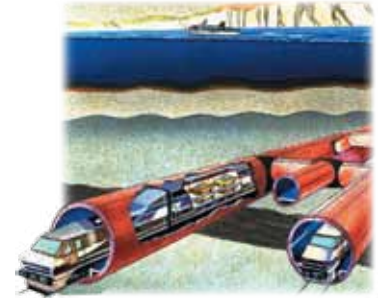


D Compare the countries.
Which of them:

- 1 has the largest/smallest population?
- 2 has a national day in spring?
- 3 has a national day in autumn?
- 4 has a blue and white flag?
- 5 has a red, green and white flag?
- 6 has a white and red flag?

Lesson 1. COUNTRY IN BRIEF

The official name of Great Britain is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Great Britain is the name of the major island of the United Kingdom including England, Scotland and Wales. The United Kingdom, or the UK, comprises Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The UK is often referred to as Great Britain or the British Isles. It is an island state consisting of more than 5,000 large and small islands.



English Channel Tunnel

Great Britain is an island lying off the north-western coastline of Europe. The English Channel separates it from the mainland in the south. Great Britain is washed by the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea, the Irish Sea and the North Channel. The North Sea and the English Channel are often called the "Narrow Seas". They are not deep but frequently are rough and difficult to navigate during storms. The Channel Tunnel under the English Channel near Dover links England to Europe (France).



Cliffs of Dover

There are 4,000 km of coast round Great Britain and Northern Ireland. No part of Great Britain lies more than 160 km from the coast. The coastline is broken and has a few bays and excellent natural harbours. Internationally famous ports include London, Bristol, Southampton, Portsmouth, Dover and others. The total land area of the United Kingdom is 240,940 sq km.

The northernmost point of the UK is in latitude 60° North and the southernmost part of Britain is in latitude 50° North. The prime meridian of 0° passes through the old Observatory of Greenwich (London).



Observatory of Greenwich



Clock at Greenwich Royal Observatory

Geographically the island of Great Britain is subdivided into two main regions: Lowland Britain and Highland Britain. Lowland Britain is a rich plain with chalk and limestone hills. The world-famous white cliffs of Dover are also formed of chalk. Highland Britain includes Scotland, the

Lake District, the Pennines, almost the whole of Wales and the counties of Devon and Cornwall in the south-west part of England. The highest mountain Ben Nevis (1,343 m) is in Scotland, the highest peak Snowdon (1,085 m) is in Wales. The soil in main parts of Highland Britain is thin and poor with large stretches of moorland.

In Northern Ireland the large central plain with boggy areas is surrounded by mountains and hills.

There are plenty of rivers in Great Britain. The main rivers of Great Britain are: the Severn, the Thames, the Trent, the Aire, the Great Ouse, the Wye, the Tay, the Clyde, the Spey, the Tweed and the Tyne. The Severn (345 km) is the longest one, while the Thames (346 km) is the deepest and the most important one.

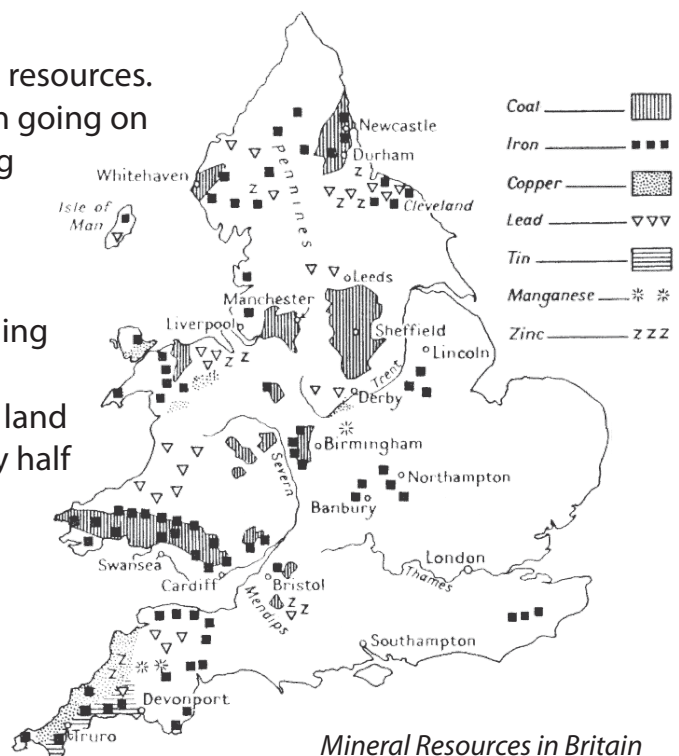
Due to the influence of the Gulf Stream, a warm ocean current washing Britain's western shores, the UK enjoys warmer winters and cooler summers than other countries at the same latitude. There is much rain and fog in England. All over the world Great Britain is notorious for its fogs. October is usually the wettest month, July is the hottest and January is the coldest one.

The country is not very rich in mineral resources. Exploration of natural gas and oil has been going on in Britain since the early 1960s. The leading mineral resource of Britain is coal and coal-mining is one of the most important British industries. The major industries include iron and steel; engineering, including motor vehicles and aircraft; textiles and chemicals. Over three-quarters of Britain's land are used for farming; farms produce nearly half of food that Britain needs.

The largest cities of Great Britain are: London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Bristol, Leeds and Edinburgh. The capital of the UK is London.



Lake District



Mineral Resources in Britain

EXERCISES

READING COMPREHENSION

1 Answer the questions. Work in pairs to check each other.

- 1 Where does Great Britain lie?
- 2 How is Great Britain separated from the mainland? From France, Belgium, Holland and Ireland?
- 3 What parts does Great Britain include?
- 4 What are the most important isles?
- 5 What main regions is the island of Great Britain subdivided into?
- 6 How can you define the climate of Great Britain?
- 7 What are the major industries of Great Britain?

PRACTICE

2 Underline the correct word.

- 1 The UK *includes / consists* of four parts: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 2 When people *mention / refer* to the country, most shorten its name to the United Kingdom, the UK or Britain.
- 3 The North Sea and the English *Canal / Channel separate / divide* the island from Europe.
- 4 The climate is *manipulated / influenced* by the Gulf Stream.
- 5 Northern Ireland which *occupies / conquers* the north-eastern *state / part* of Ireland lies to the west, *across / round* the Irish Sea.

3 Fill in the gaps with the prepositions *by, to, of, off*.

- 1 Great Britain is an island lying ____ the north-western coastline ____ Europe.
- 2 The UK is often referred ____ as Britain.
- 3 The UK consists ____ four parts.
- 4 Due ____ the influence ____ the Gulf Stream the UK has the warm and mild weather.
- 5 Two islands are separated ____ the Irish Sea.
- 6 The UK is washed ____ the Atlantic Ocean.
- 7 The main rivers ____ Great Britain are the Thames and the Severn.

4 Make up sentences with the words and word-combinations.

the official name
to be situated in

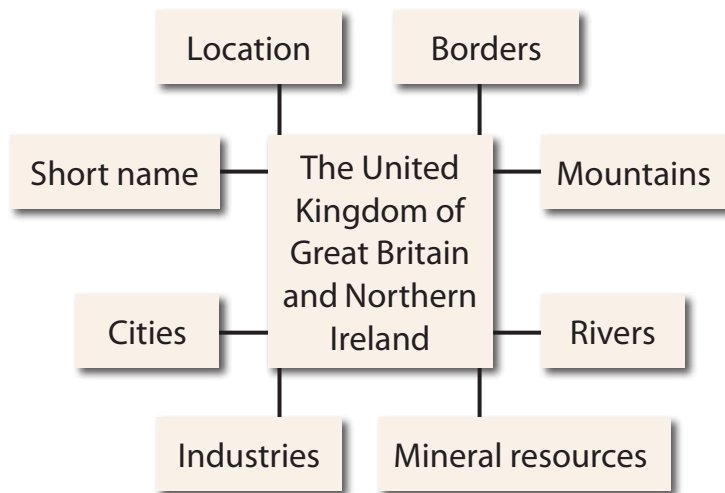
to produce
to border

to be surrounded by
to be washed by

thanks to
to consist of

DISCUSSION

- 5** Read the text again and look at the map of Great Britain. Complete the Word Map below. Using the Word Map and the map of Great Britain, tell your friends everything you know about:
- the geographical position of the UK;
 - the mineral resources and industry of the UK.



- 6** Compare the geographical position of the UK and the geographical position of your country. Say if the UK is an unusual country, in your opinion. Give your reasons.
- 7** Give the equivalent and explain the meaning of the proverb.

The Climate

It is generally believed that Britain experiences weather rather than climate, because of its extreme variability. Periods of settled weather are rare. One day may be very different from the next and prediction cannot be made for more than a very short time ahead. Sunshine can rapidly change to rain, winds can change their direction abruptly as a warm or cold front passes.

Great Britain is situated on islands. It is washed by seas from all sides. That's why the climate and the nature of Great Britain is very specific. It is not very cold in winter and never very hot in summer. There is no ice on the lakes and rivers in winter. It rains very frequently in all seasons. The weather changes very often. Mark Twain said about America, 'If you don't like the weather in New England, just wait a few minutes,' but it is more likely to have been said about England. Besides, Britain is famous for its fogs. Sometimes fogs are so thick that it is impossible to see anything within 2 or 3 metres.



Lesson 2. ENGLAND

England is the heart of Britain. It is the largest, the richest, the most fertile and the most important industrial part of the United Kingdom. It is the most densely populated part. In England people are crammed 575 to a square kilometre, more thickly than in any other European country. The greatest concentrations of population are in London and Birmingham.

The coasts of England are washed by the North Sea, the Irish Sea, St George's Channel, the English Channel and the Strait of Dover. Cornwall is the only part in direct contact with the Atlantic Ocean. No part of England is more than 120 km from the sea. The sea has been important in the history of England. It was a good protection against the attacks of outside enemies.

The sea also has a great effect on England's climate. It is mild and damp throughout the year. Snow is relatively rare in the South of England and sometimes causes traffic chaos, but normal in the North of the country.

The sea gap to France is 34 km. The Channel Tunnel near Dover links England to Europe.

The coastal scenery of England is quite varied. Most of the south coasts consist of high cliffs. The chalk cliffs of Dover, Beachy Head and Dorset are particularly well-known. Lancashire is famous for its wide beaches where the tides are unusually high for an open coast. These beaches are most often of sand. The enclosed nature of the Irish Sea prevents the occurrence of big waves.

There are many rivers in England: the Tyne, the Wear, the Trent, the Don, the Weaver, the Mersey, the Ribble, the Lune, the Eden, etc. The longest and the most important river is the Thames (346 km).

The North and the West of England are mountainous, but the rest of the territory is a vast plain. The North of England contains some of the wildest and loneliest parts in the country. In the Northwest there



English Channel Tunnel



English Channel

are many beautiful lakes with green, wooded or grassy shores and gray mountains all around. It is called the Lake District.

Some of the busiest industrial centres are in the Northeast. The South of England is the most important region in the country in terms of industry, agriculture and population. In this part of England some of the oldest British settlements and traces of ancient monuments such as Stonehenge are found.

A county is the chief regional administrative unit in England. This part of the UK is divided into 39 non-metropolitan and 7 metropolitan (including big cities) counties.



The Thames Barrier at Woolwich is a series of gates which protect London against extremely high tides

EXERCISES

READING COMPREHENSION

1 **Decide whether the statements are true or false. Correct false statements.**

- 1 England is the smallest part of the UK.
- 2 England is the most populated part of the UK.
- 3 The capital of England is Birmingham.
- 4 England is washed by two seas.
- 5 The climate of England is mild and damp.
- 6 The north territory of England is flat, but the west is mountainous.
- 7 England is divided into counties.

PRACTICE

2 **Complete the sentences.**

- 1 England is _____ part of the UK.
- 2 The population of England is _____ .
- 3 England is washed by _____ .
- 4 The sea _____ .
- 5 The Channel Tunnel _____ .
- 6 A county is _____ .

3 **Work in pairs. Find words or phrases in the text that mean:**

- part of a country where many people live;
- the business of farming;
- a passage under the water which links two countries;



4 Listen to the conversation “Weather Talk” and do the task below.

- 1 Where are the people in the dialogue?
- 2 What is the weather the day George and Leon meet? How does it change?
- 3 What does the girl read about the weather?
- 4 What does the weather forecast say?
- 5 Comment the sayings from the conversation.
 - It never rains but it pours!
 - If you don't like it now, just wait a bit.
- 6 Leon says that English weather is something worth talking about. Do you agree with him?
- 7 Give an imaginary account of how George and Leon managed to get acquainted with the girl. Use the ideas given in the box.

Place of action: a bench in Hyde Park.
Title: Weather Helps to Get Acquainted.
Introduction: pretend to be tired — start talking about weather.
Development: burst out laughing — introduce yourself — walk about the park.
Conclusion: see the girl home — make a date.

DISCUSSION

5 Speak about England using the Word Map.



6 Say why the sea is important for England.

Britain's Alternative Names

Alternative names sometimes used for England have included the slang 'Blighty', from the Hindustani 'bila yati' meaning 'foreign'; and 'Albion', an ancient name popularised by Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy in the 1st century, supposedly in reference to the white (Latin 'alba') cliffs of Dover (in its origins, however, the name was applied to the whole island of Great Britain). More poetically, England has been called '**this scept'red isle...this other Eden**' and '**this Green and Pleasant Land**', quotations respectively from the poetry of William Shakespeare (in 'Richard II') and William Blake ('And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time').

Slang terms sometimes used for the English include 'Sassenachs' (from the Scots Gaelic and used by the Scots), 'Limeys' (used by Americans, in reference to the citrus fruit carried on English sailing vessels to prevent scurvy), and 'Les Rosbifs' (used by the French, as the English traditionally eat a lot of roast beef).

Lesson 3. SCOTLAND

Scotland forms the northern part of Great Britain, including the islands of the Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland. The Cheviot Hills mark the boundary between England and Scotland. Apart from this land link with England, Scotland is surrounded by sea. It is a very mountainous country; three-fourths of the area of Scotland are occupied by mountains with a great amount of moorland, in which few people live.

Scotland is famous for its beautiful large lakes with mountains round them. There are many rivers in Scotland, but they are not long. The longest and the most important Scottish river is the Clyde.

The country is divided into three main regions: the Border or the Southern Upland (the frontier with England), a pastoral area with low hills; the Lowlands, the least picturesque region, containing most of its heavy industries, minerals and agricultural wealth; and the Highlands with their infertile soil, waning population, beautiful landscape and seascape — moors, fresh water running in torrents, lying in lochs (lakes) and their damp climate.

Scotland is not densely populated: total Scottish population is little over 5 million people. The most of population is concentrated in the Lowlands. Three quarters of the whole population and all the towns of considerable size are situated in it. The largest cities are Glasgow and Edinburgh. They are the centres of heavy industry. Edinburgh has been the capital since the 15th century and now it is the cultural centre of Scotland.

The Highlands of Scotland are among the oldest mountains in the world. They reach their highest point in Ben Nevis (1,343 m). Many of the deep V-shaped valleys between the hills are filled with lakes, called by the Gaelic names of lochs. The best-known is Loch Ness where some people think a large monster lives. The beautiful Loch Lomond with its 30 odd islands is the largest. Only about a tenth of population of Scotland lives beyond the Highland Line. The most important city here is Aberdeen. It is the oil centre of Scotland.

Shipbuilding is one of Scotland's most important industries, others are iron and steel, heavy and light engineering and coal-mining.

Scotland has no Parliament of its own, but has a number of seats in the United Kingdom House of Commons.



Edinburgh

The thistle is the national emblem of Scotland. According to the curious legend, in very ancient times the Norsemen (Normans) once landed somewhere on the east coast of Scotland, with the intention of plundering and settling in the country. The Scots assembled with their arms and took their stations behind the river Tay. As they arrived late in the day, weary and tired after a long march, they pitched their camp and rested, not expecting the enemy before the next day.

The Norsemen, however, were near; noticing that no guards protected the camp, they crossed the Tay, intending to take the Scots by surprise and slaughter them in their sleep. To this end, they took off their shoes so as to make the least noise possible. But one of the Norsemen stepped on a thistle. The sudden and sharp pain he felt caused him to shriek. The alarm was given in the Scots camp. The Norsemen were put to fight.

Haggis is a special dish which is served at the most important Scottish holidays — Hogmanay (the New Year's Eve), Robert Burns' Night (January, 25) and some others. Haggis is sheep's heart, lungs and liver, mixed with onions and oatmeal. It is eaten with turnip and washed down by lots of whisky. The haggis is heralded by the music of bagpipes and carried into the dining room behind a piper wearing traditional dress. The piper reads a poem written especially for the haggis.

Since the second World War the cultural highpoint of Scottish life has been the famous annual Edinburgh Festival of Music and Drama. The Festival is held during the latter part of August and early September.

The citizens of the capital join with visitors to the Festival in pleasure of hearing and seeing great works of art performed by the world's famous artists.

Everything in the arts, including orchestral and chamber music and recital, opera, ballet, drama, painting and sculpture, is an Edinburgh Festival attraction.

A highlight of Festival time is the spectacular military tattoo which is a great contrast to the opera, music and drama.

The unique part of the Edinburgh Festival is the 'Fringe'. This is a programme of events which is not a part of the main festival. Many of the 'Fringe' performances are by amateurs.

They can take place anywhere — in pubs, churches, school halls, restaurants, old factories — even in car parks!

It is the second largest Scottish loch (56,4 sq km).

Its deepest point is 230 m. For many years it has been supposed that there is a large dinosaur — like 'monster' resident in Loch Ness. The evidence for its existence are a series of sightings of a plesiosaur — like dinosaur throughout the last 100 years. Many people believe that the size and great depth of the loch, together with potential underwater caves, gives the monster many places to hide. Regardless of the truth, the suggestion of the Monster's existence makes Loch Ness one of Scotland's top tourist attractions.



EXERCISES

READING COMPREHENSION

1 **Decide whether the statements are true or false. Correct false ones.**

- 1 Scotland consists of four parts.
- 2 Scotland is famous for its whisky.
- 3 Lakes in Scotland are called 'lochs'.
- 4 The most famous lake is Loch Ness.
- 5 The highest mountain in Scotland is Snowdon.
- 6 Glasgow is the capital of Scotland.
- 7 English is the native language of the Scottish people.
- 8 Kilt is the national men's outfit.
- 9 The word 'Mac' means 'daughter'.
- 10 The thistle is the national emblem of Scotland.

PRACTICE

2 **Read the text again and choose the most suitable answers to these questions.**

- 1 Where is Scotland situated?
a) in the north b) in the south
- 2 What is the surface of Scotland?
a) it's flat b) it's mostly mountainous
- 3 How many regions are there in Scotland?
a) three b) two
- 4 Is Scotland densely populated?
a) yes b) no
- 5 Where does the most of population of Scotland live?
a) in the Lowlands b) in the Highlands
- 6 What is the most important industry in Scotland?
a) steel industry b) shipbuilding

The Association with Scotland

One of the things that people associate with Scotland is the kilt. The kilt is a relic of the time when the clan system existed in the Highlands. Everybody in the clan had the same family name, like McDonald or MacGregor (Mac means 'son of'). The clan had its own territory and was ruled by chieftain. Each clan had its own tartan.

The English language is spoken all over Scotland with a variety of regional accents. But the Gaelic language is still used among the people of the remote Highland districts. There are many peculiar words and phrases which the Scottish use, thus maintaining national distinctness.

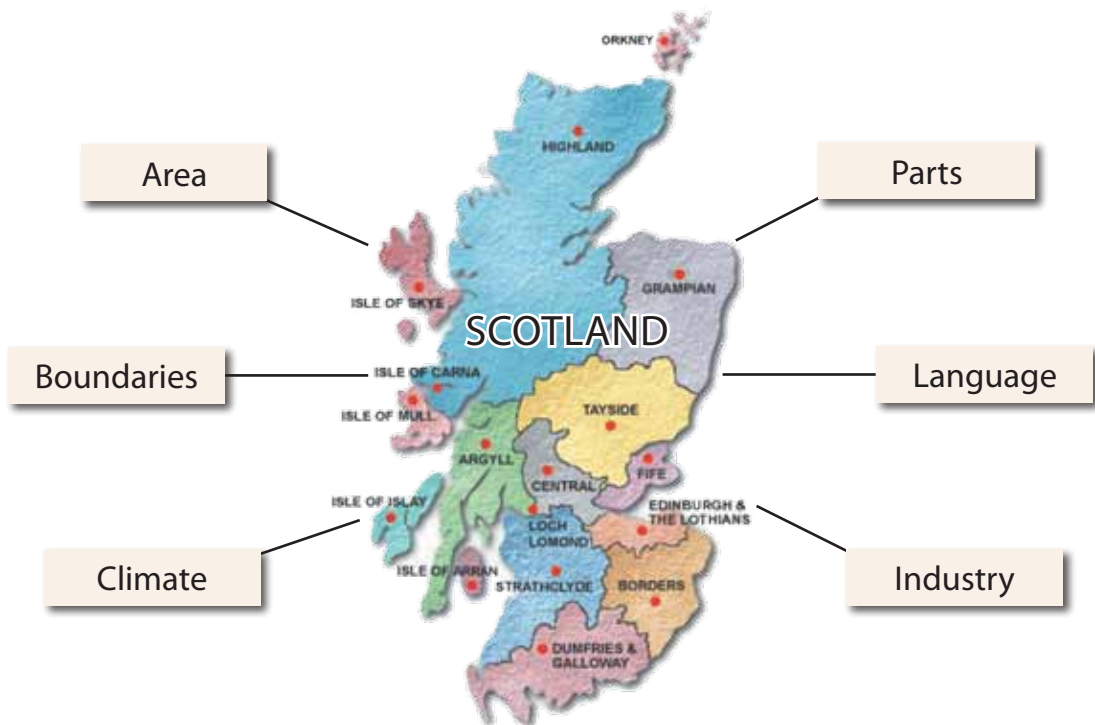


3 Match the parts of the sentences.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 The Cheviot Hills mark | a) Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea. |
| 2 Three-fourths of the area of Scotland are | b) the oldest mountains in the world. |
| 3 Scotland is famous | c) occupied by mountains. |
| 4 Scotland is washed by | d) for its lakes. |
| 5 The Highlands of Scotland are among | e) the boundary between England and Scotland. |

DISCUSSION

4 Speak about Scotland using the Word Map.



5 Compare the climate of Scotland to that of England and other continental countries of the same latitude.

USING INFORMATION

**Find more information about the beauty of the Highlands.
Tell the class about a person whose life was closely connected with the Highlands and who is regarded by the Scotch as their national poet.**

Lesson 4. WALES

Wales is situated on a peninsula of Great Britain. It is bounded on the north by the Irish Sea, on the south by the Bristol Channel, on the east by the English counties and on the west by St George's Channel.

The land midway along the western side of the island juts out into the sea in the form of a rectangle about 193 km long and 97 km wide. It has an area of more than 20,779 sq km and a population of about 3 million people. There are several islands off the north and west coasts, with Anglesey being the largest.

Wales is a land of high hills and wide valleys stretching into downlands and plains. So its surface is largely mountainous, reaching 1,085 m in Snowdon (the mountain in north-west Wales), the highest point in southern Britain (in England and Wales). 6 per cent of Wales is covered by forest, and much of the country is pastureland for sheep and cattle. Although some parts of Wales are good for farming, the centre of the country has very poor land.

Wales is traditionally divided into North Wales and South Wales (sometimes into North Wales, Mid Wales and South Wales). Wales consists of 8 counties.

South Wales is a region of contrasts. The industrial cities of Swansea, Cardiff and Newport are only a short journey away from sandy beaches and busy holiday resorts. About one half of the total population of 3 million people lives in the South Wales coastal area.

North Wales is a country of rugged mountains and deep valleys. The climate in this part is milder as it is influenced by the nearness of the sea and the decreasing height. Tourism is mainly concentrated in the northern coastal strip. Surrounded on three sides by an attractive coastline, Wales has become a popular holiday resort. It is



Mountain Snowdon



Caernarvon Castle

also well known for its hills and dales, and in these places a great number of people derive their livelihood from tourists and holiday-makers. North Wales has several impressive castles built by English kings. Anglesey is flat, but the rest of the region is very mountainous. There are two nuclear power stations: one is in North Wales, the other is on Anglesey.



Cardiff Castle

Mid Wales is rather sparsely populated. It is well farmed and there are comparatively few towns. Along the coast there are many fishing ports. The climate here is better than in other parts of Wales, but winters are increasingly cold with the increase of the distance from the sea.

There are several lakes and artificial reservoirs in Wales. Some of them provide water supply for the cities of Birmingham and Liverpool in England. One or two power dams provide electricity.

Wales is noted for mineral wealth, producing iron, coal, copper, lead, zinc, gold, slate and limestone.

The capital of Wales is Cardiff. It is situated near the mouth of the Taff. It is an important industrial city and a port. It is also an administrative and educational centre. The ancient capital of Wales is Caernarfon, where the British monarch's eldest son is traditionally crowned Prince of Wales. Prince Charles became Prince of Wales, the 21st in line, in 1969 at a ceremony held in Caernarfon Castle which looks today as in the 13th century.

The Welsh call their country Cymru, and themselves they call Cymry, a word which has the same root as 'camrador' (friend or comrade).

There is no other part of the British Isles where national spirit is stronger, national pride more intense or national traditions more cherished than in Wales. The Welsh still proudly wear their national dress on festive occasions; the Welsh language is still very much a living force and is taught side by side with English in schools.

WELSH

The earliest existing written records of a language identifiable as Welsh go back to about the 6th century. Late Modern Welsh began with the publication of William Morgan's translation of the Bible in 1588. Of course, many minor changes have occurred since then.

Welsh is very much a living language. The 2001 Census in the UK returned that 20.5 % of the Welsh (580,000 people) speak Welsh as a first language. It is used in conversations every day, and is seen in Wales everywhere. Local government (including the Welsh Assembly) uses Welsh as its official language; public bodies issue official literature and publicity in Welsh versions (e.g. letters to parents from schools, library information and council information). All road signs in Wales are in English and Welsh, including the Welsh versions of place names (although a few of these are recent inventions based on the English names). Many websites for or about Wales are published in two editions, including those of such organisation as the BBC.



Everything is written in Welsh and English



Here are some Welsh words and phrases that you can use if you visit Wales

Welsh	English
Bore da.	Good morning.
Sut ydych chi?	How are you?
Lawn, diolch.	Fine, thanks.
Os gwelwch yn dda.	Please.
Diolch.	Thank you.
Chi eisiau paned o de?	Do you want a cup of tea?

EXERCISES

READING COMPREHENSION

1 Answer the questions. Work in pairs to check each other.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Where is Wales situated? | 5 Is Wales an industrial part of the UK? |
| 2 What is the capital of Wales? | 6 What mineral resources are there in Wales? |
| 3 What is the population of Wales? | 7 What languages are spoken in Wales? |
| 4 What kind of land is Wales? | |

PRACTICE

2 Complete the sentences. Fill in the gaps using words from the box.

Wales is not an independent _____, but it has its own culture and language.

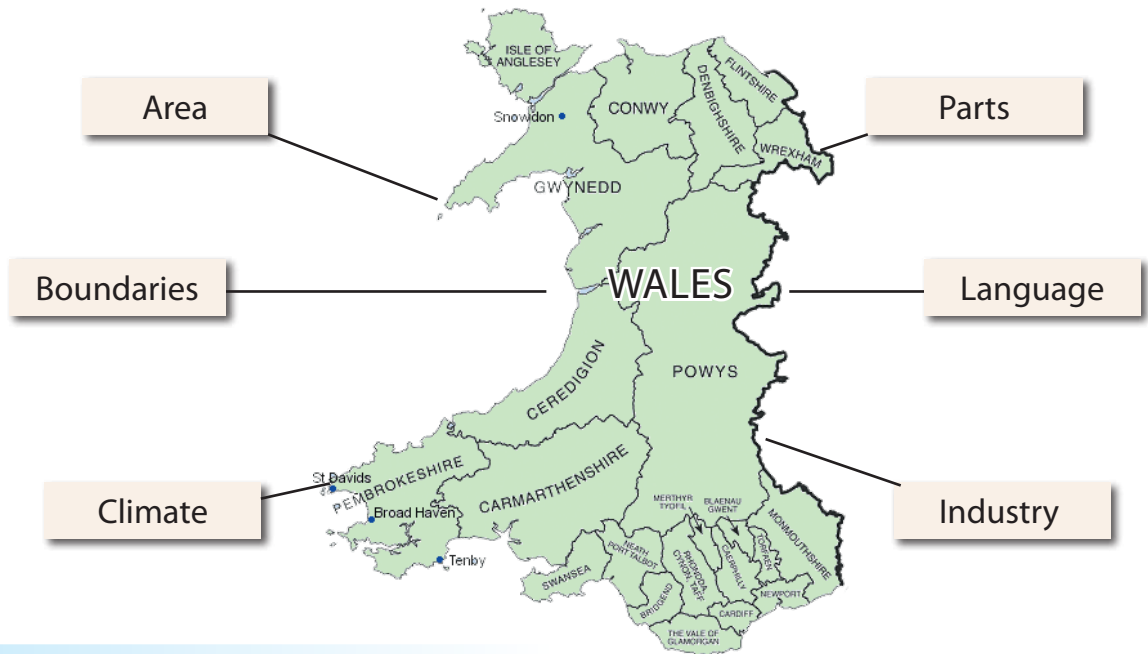
Welsh is a _____ language and one of the oldest in Europe.

Many people in Wales are _____: they speak _____ as their first language.

Celtic
state
Welsh
bilingual

DISCUSSION

3 Speak about Wales using the Word Map.



USING INFORMATION

Find more information about Wales and present it in class.

Lesson 5. NORTHERN IRELAND

Ireland is the second largest part of the British Isles lying in the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Great Britain.

The island of Ireland is politically divided into two parts: Northern Ireland (Ulster), which forms part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, capital Belfast, and the Republic of Ireland — a separate state named Eire in Irish; its capital is Dublin.

Northern Ireland has an area of 14,139 sq km and has a population of about 1.6 million. It occupies only one-sixth of the island of Ireland. Six of the counties of Ulster: Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Tyrone and Londonderry or Derry, formed the country. These traditional counties are no



Belfast

longer used for local government purposes; instead there are 26 districts of Northern Ireland. The majority of people are descendants of Scots and English settlers who crossed to the north-east of Ireland, mainly in the 17th century.

Northern Ireland is surrounded by sea to the north and east and by the Republican counties to the west and to the south. The Antrim Coast (to the east) is a remarkable stretch of the country. Its geographical composition goes back 300 million years.

The west coast of Northern Ireland is characterized by steep cliffs and hundreds of small islands torn from the mainland mass by the powerful forces of the Atlantic Ocean.

Several large

bays cut into the coast. Bay Foyle and Belfast Bay provide excellent harbours for Londonderry and Belfast. Lake Neath (Lough Neagh) is the largest lake in the United Kingdom. It is about 29 km long and about 18 km wide. It has an area of about 390 sq. km. The rivers of Ireland are short but deep. The largest of them is the river Shannon.

There are low hills and peaks of rocks in the northwest, while



Titanic Memorial, eastern side of Belfast City Hall



Belfast City Hall



Northern Ireland badge



The influence of Irish Gaelic is also found in the names of people and surnames which often begin with 'O' meaning 'from the family of' (O'Brien, O'Neil), 'Fitz' meaning 'the son of' (Fitzgerald).

The Giant's Causeway can be named the eighth wonder of the world. The legend says that it was built by giant Finn McCool, who fell in love with a lady giant from one of the Scottish islands. He wanted to take her to Ulster and tried to build a kind of bridge which never was finished.

the northeast part of the island is a plateau. The Mourne Mountains are in the southeast. The highest point is Slieve Donald (848 m).

One of the most famous sights of Ireland (Ulster) is the Giant's Causeway, the eerie geometric pillars, which is an area of 40,000 tightly packed basalt columns resulting from a volcanic activity 60 million years ago that runs from the cliffs into the sea. The tallest of them are 13 m high.

The outstanding feature of the Irish weather is its changeability. Extremely high or low temperatures are unknown. The Irish Sea also has some warming influence in winter. The rainfall over most of the island is not as great as it is sometimes supposed to be. Ireland is considered, as a whole, drier than either Wales or Scotland. There is an old Irish saying that Ireland must be the cleanest place in the world, because God washes it every day. Ireland is also called the Emerald Isle because of its beautiful green fields. It is not very cold in Ireland because it is the first European country to meet the warm waters of the Gulf Stream.

The capital of Northern Ireland is Belfast. Although the official language is English, most of people speak Gaelic. It is their historic mother tongue and it is taught in most schools as the first language.



Carrick-a-rede Rope Bridge



The basalt columns of the Giant's Causeway

Legends

The legend about the red right hand, which we can see on the Irish coat of arms, is said to have come in the following way.

The Vikings from Scandinavia on their way to Ireland, Greenland and Vinland in the 8-10 centuries stopped over in Ireland to fill their boats with food and water. Once on returning home two Viking chiefs decided that one of them would become the king of Ireland. As Vikings did not fight among themselves, it was decided that the one who would first touch Irish soil would become king. They set off in their big boats, the race between them was very even and each crew did everything to win. When they were quite close to the shore, Heremon O'Neil, that was the name of the Viking chief that became king, cut off his right hand and threw it on the land. It is due to this that the red right hand had been a part of the coat of arms of Ireland ever since.

Numerous legends are connected with the name of St Patrick who was known for his wonderful power. Perhaps the best known legend is that he cleared Ireland of snakes. The story goes that one old snake, the king of snakes, resisted him, so he made a box and invited the snake to enter it. The snake refused saying it was too small; but

St Patrick insisted it was quite large enough to be comfortable. At last the snake got into the box to prove that it was too small, at that moment St Patrick shut the box and threw it into the sea. The other snakes jumped into the water after their king and drowned. One fact remains true that there are no snakes in Ireland and probably there never were, but the legend lives in the folklore of the Irish.



THE SNAKE STOPS HERE



Postcards on St Patrick's Day

Cultural Traditions

The Irish people are great story-tellers. Medieval monks developed an oral tradition of telling tales and stories. For centuries story-tellers travelled from place to place and were warmly met by people. They could easily find shelter and food as it was respectable for anyone to have a story-teller in his house.

Ireland has one of the liveliest folk music traditions in Europe. All over the country people like to get together, usually in pubs, sing, play or just listen to traditional music. Irish dance tunes (mainly jigs, reels and hornpipes) are fast and lively, while Irish songs are often slow and sad, reflecting Ireland's unhappy history. Typical instruments are fiddle, tin whistle, banjo and bodhran, a kind of drum.

Traditional dancing, for which most of the music played in pubs was actually written, is becoming popular again, having survived mainly in the rural areas of the West of Ireland.



Red Hugh — Irish singer

EXERCISES

READING COMPREHENSION

1 Answer the questions. Work in pairs to check each other.

- 1 What larger country is Northern Ireland part of?
- 2 How is Northern Ireland often called?
- 3 What is the capital of Northern Ireland?
- 4 What is the population of Northern Ireland and where does it mostly live?
- 5 What languages are spoken in Northern Ireland?
- 6 Why is Northern Ireland a unique region within the UK?
- 7 What is an outstanding feature of the Irish weather?

PRACTICE

2 Finish the sentences.

- 1 The island of Ireland is divided _____.
- 2 The nickname of Northern Ireland is _____.
- 3 Northern Ireland is divided into _____.
- 4 Northern Ireland is considered, as a whole, _____.
- 5 The official language is _____, but _____.

DISCUSSION

3 Speak about Northern Ireland using the Word Map.



4 Say if you would like to visit Northern Ireland and why.

USING INFORMATION

Work in groups trying to find the most interesting facts to represent Northern Ireland.

SUMMING UP

1 *Decide whether the statements are true or false. Correct the false ones:*

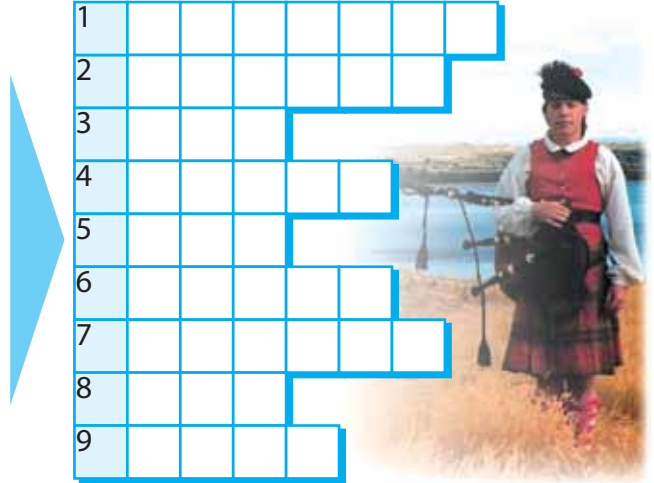
- 1 England occupies the largest part of the island of Great Britain.
- 2 England is mostly a mountainous country.
- 3 England is a densely populated part of the UK.
- 4 There are 46 counties in England.
- 5 Scotland occupies the southern part of the island.
- 6 The Orkneys, the Shetland and the Hebrides are islands belonging to Scotland.
- 7 Glasgow is the capital of Scotland.
- 8 The monster lives in Loch Lomond.
- 9 Wales is a flat country.
- 10 Anglesey is the smallest Welsh isle.
- 11 Wales is divided into 22 unitary authorities.
- 12 Wales has no radio and television broadcasting in Welsh.
- 13 Belfast is the capital of the Republic of Ireland.
- 14 There are 6 counties of Ulster.
- 15 The weather in Northern Ireland is very hot.
- 16 Northern Ireland meets the Gulf Stream as the first European country.

2 *Work in pairs. Answer the questions.*

- 1 What alternative names for England and the English do you know?
- 2 What are the principal geographic characteristics of England?
- 3 What is the climate of England?
- 4 What is the population of England?
- 5 Where is Scotland located and what are the specifics of its landscape?
- 6 Where does the majority of the Scottish population live?
- 7 What are the official and de facto languages in Scotland?
- 8 Where is Wales situated? What does it border on?
- 9 What is the highest mountain in Wales?
- 10 What are the main cities of Wales? What is its capital called?
- 11 What is unique in Wales in terms of the language situation?
- 12 How many Irelands are there? Are they parts of the same country?
- 13 How do people in Ireland call their country?
- 14 What is the most famous sight of Ireland? What do you know about it?
- 15 What is the capital of Northern Ireland?
- 16 What is the weather of Northern Ireland like?

3 Fill in the answers using the clues below and find the name of a famous part of Scotland which people love the best.

- 1 A Scottish name for New Year's Eve.
- 2 A well-known novel by Walter Scott.
- 3 The native language of Scotland.
- 4 One of the most popular Scottish dishes.
- 5 A Scottish name for lake.
- 6 The name of the patron saint of Scotland.
- 7 People who wanted to conquer Scotland.
- 8 A wild animal in Scotland.
- 9 People who live in this country now.



4 Name the cities.

Find the names of the British cities by putting together the jumbled word pieces correctly in pairs.

POOL	CAM	BRIS
CHESTER	BEL	LON
BRIDGE	TOL	LIVER
MAN	DON	FAST

5 Look at the map and summarize everything you have learnt about:

- 1 the geographical position of the UK;
- 2 the physical features of the four parts of the country;
- 3 the population, languages spoken in the UK.

6 Describe differences between 'language' and 'dialect'.

7 Work in groups. Discuss the following.

- What is your opinion about language situation in the UK?
- What do you think of the British people using two languages?
- Does it prevent them from being independent?
- Would it be better for them to use only one native language?

PROJECTS

- **Make a tour.**

Think of a tour of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. What places and sights would you prefer to visit? Explain your choice. Make up a brochure or tourist guide. Present it in class.

- **Make a poster 'Big Cities of the UK'**

Work in four groups. Each group has to find some information about big cities of every part of the UK. Use the information and make a poster with pictures. Display it in class.

