

British and Britishness

I. United Kingdom vs Great

The UK is composed of four different countries :
Scotland, Northern Ireland,
England and Wales.



Whereas Great Britain is made up of England, Scotland and Wales.



The Queen Elizabeth II is the Queen of the United Kingdom.

You must know that Southern Ireland is an independent country.

Moreover, they are in the European Union so, they have made the euro their official currency while the UK's one is still the pound.

England is the most important country in the UK because it dominates the other countries since they all speak English although they have their own cultures, accents, dialects, customs and traditions.

British-ness is the state of being British with all the customs and traditions. Some examples can be: having a great sense of humour or being a gentleman which means being polite. Of course it is connected to the history of the countries and to their habits but it is also a way of behaving when you're British. To explain the noun British-ness you could have said, for example that, dark-ness is the quality of being dark or kindness the state of being kind. I think that now you can understand what the suffix-ness means when it is added to an adjective.



II. Let's focus on Scotland, Wales and Northern

These texts have been written by people of the three countries below:

Scotland

First, you should know that the symbol of this country is the **thistle**. Scottish people have another symbol but nearly nobody knows it and most of the people may not use it. This symbol is named **the Unicorn** (for your own knowledge). And, like the two other countries, we have the symbol of **St Andrew**, which is also unknown to the foreigners. The capital is Edinburgh with its castle even if Glasgow is a bigger city. The landscape of Scotland is both mountainous and flat with magnificent and huge meadows. It is so diverse! Also, with wonderful beaches and sunsets. I wish the weather were a little bit warmer! Well, it's enough talking about bad weather I'm going to make enemies.

So let's talk about famous Scottish people, I'm sure you know these writers: Arthur Conan Doyle or Alexander Fleming. Or actors like Hugh Grant and Sean Connery. There is also the famous tennis player Andy Murray and musicians like Amy Mc Donald or Calvin Harris. Of course, both football and rugby are the two most important sports in Scotland!

Now the political life is dominated by the separatists. The Scottish parliament is now bigger than it used to be in 2012.

Stefen
Hamilton



These three countries are independent because they have some liberties at the political level. Indeed each country decides what they want to do concerning education, health, tourism, sport and culture.

But they are also independent of the UK because, the assemblies also decide on their own and each country is responsible for a certain number of decisions.

However, England has never had any assembly so far and is totally under the political power of GB.

Wales

I'm happy to talk about my country: **Wales**. The symbol of MY country is the **leek**, a red dragon and St David. I'm very proud of living in the capital: **Cardiff**. The Welsh national assembly is very important for the country because it is allowed to make legislation in Wales.

Wales is such a beautiful city! The landscape is flat and just a little rugged next to the sea, but it's very beautiful. So, we have a unique and diverse culture. You must know some Welsh people like Ken Follett the famous writer or Anthony Hopkins and Christian Bale who are two really famous actors.



Sookie Swann

Northern Ireland

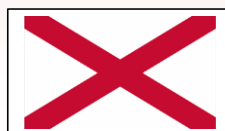
So, let's talk about Northern Ireland! Of course, the symbols of my country are the **shamrock** and **St Patrick**. These are famous symbols around the world. The Capital is **Belfast**, a beautiful city with so many different architecture.

What's more, the landscape is so perfect! You can see beautiful castles, wonderful sunsets on the sea, and the landscape is mainly agricultural and rural. Besides, the country is heavily forested too. It is such a rich and varied landscape!

Unfortunately, as you know, in our country no one is really famous but you may know Ray Stevenson or Bronagh Gallagher, who are well-known actors.

One of my favourite sports is the Gaelic football which is a mixture of football, rugby and basketball. With, of course, some other and different rules.

At the political level, I reckon that I can say that we are both dependent and independent because the political powers are shared between the countries of the UK. And each country has a different political assembly.



Oliver Allen

III. Relationship between the countries of the UK.

We asked Irish from Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh about their relationship with English people. Here are their reactions:

Welsh

First, I have to underline the fact that English are welcoming and nice. But sometimes that's true to say that English people are looking down on us and on people coming from other countries. I suppose that they must do it because they feel superior although they are totally wrong! I wish they were a little more tolerant... I resent seeing them acting like that! I consider that they have to be part of our huge united country and fit in with all the differences between the countries.

I understand that they are proud of their language and culture but we don't have to get mocked for speaking with a different accent. I'm fed up with that!

While I am sure that they are really congenial and affable when they want to be nice to people.

Andrew Holmes

Irish

The UK cultural heritage is unique and diverse and all the countries share some historical values and in fact, a common culture. And I estimate that this is more important than anything else. Unfortunately, we can't say that it's a perfect situation. Because, on the one hand, the accent is totally different and, on the other hand, I think that English people don't try to fit in and listen to the others. They are a little bit self-centred..

Maybe, instead of being close-minded, they should be unprejudiced against and pleasant to other people. Because I think that the English are really prejudiced against us and against the Welsh and the Scottish.

Scottish

I'm holding nobody responsible for the bad relationship between English and other people. Because I think that there is no conflict. First everybody has an English ancestor and we can sum up by saying that we are all from the same country which means we are all BRITISH. And we have a lot of things in common like a good sense of humour so we all share the fact that we are British.

You know what? Even if some people think that they are better than us, I don't care because I know that we are all part of the same population and we can manage to be together.

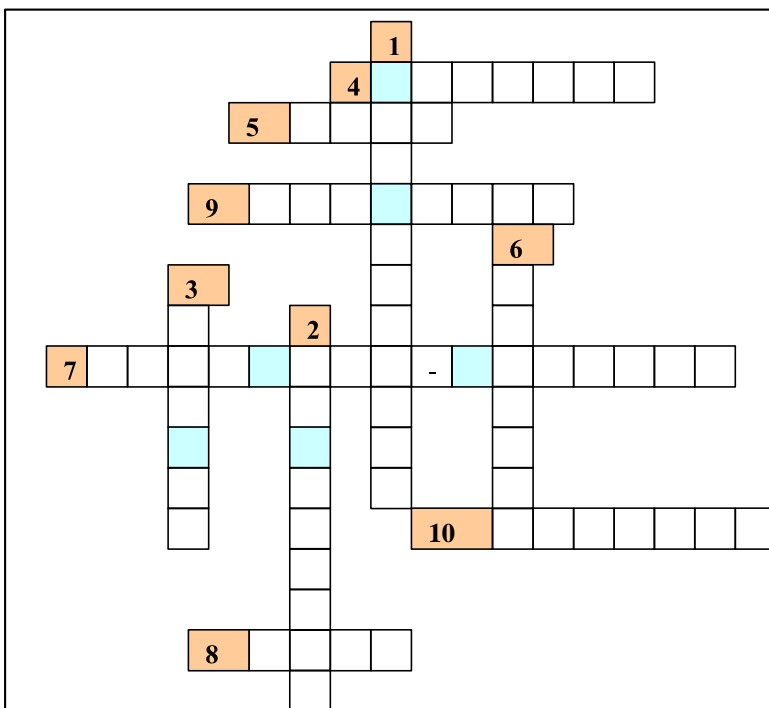
Caroline ftotts

VI. Let's recap' !

Let's see if you remember everything!

1. The state of being British.
2. The Queen of the UK.
3. A famous Scottish tennis player.
4. The capital of Northern Ireland.
5. The money of the Independent State.
6. The Welsh capital.
7. The Independent country.
8. The symbol of Wales.
9. One of the country of GB.
10. A famous Welsh writer.

Find the word that you can write with the blue letters:



V. The English multiculturalism.

*A short definition of « **multiculturalism** »:*

***Multiculturalism** in a society means that different communities live together in the same country or city with a lot of different cultures and traditions. In a word, they have to co-exist and give importance to each culture equally.*



The UK is an ethnically diverse country with so many different communities that live together and reflects the notion of multiculturalism.

Many British families have come from overseas to live in Britain over centuries and people from around the world have come to live there.

The first significant wave of immigrants came by ship from Jamaica in 194 and today, the Notting Hill carnival celebrates this Caribbean culture. Then, in the 50s and 60s, Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani families made Britain their own home. After that, Asian Uganda refugees fled here in the 1970s followed by Somalis in the 1990s. And recently, Eastern European citizens came in search of work.

In a word, Britain is a very rich and diverse country with a varied population. Britain have a huge cultural variety, and it's a vibrant place to live even if sometimes, there are conflicts because of the mixture of cultures and of the different generations.