

**The United
Kingdom of
Great Britain
and Northern
Ireland**



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

The UK of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is the official name of the state that is geographically situated on the British Isles.





Strange it may seem but even people of this country are sometimes confused about its name.

On official occasions they call it the **UK** and in everyday speech it is shortened to the UK. In speaking or writing, where it is not particularly formal or informal, they use **Britain**. The name Britain is usually used in press.



People of England sometimes with a certain portion of selfishness call it England. Official employees such as customs officers or economists use the term **the UK**.

TV weather presenters call it the British Isles, but the Irish people are not quite comfortable with this name.

To avoid this confusion of the terms **the United Kingdom, Great Britain** and **England**, we should know the following: Great Britain is the geographical name of the largest island in **the British Isles** which comprises **England, Wales** and **Scotland**.

The island of Ireland is mainly occupied by **the Irish Republic** and the remaining part of the island is occupied by **Northern Ireland**. **Great Britain** and **Northern Ireland** form the UK. The capital of the UK is London.

The geography of the UK



The British Isles is a geographical name of an archipelago [a:ki'peligeu], which is situated to the northwest of continental Europe and is separated from France by only 34 kilometers of water and is made up of two large islands – Great Britain and Ireland and a number of smaller islands.

The UK is one of the smallest countries in the world. In size it is twice smaller than Spain or France. Its total area is about 245, 000 square kilometers, but the population of the UK is over 60 million people.



Great Britain is an island located within the British Isles and it is **the ninth largest island** in the world and the largest in Europe.

The British Isles are separated from the European continent by **the North Sea** and the **English Channel**. The western coast of Great Britain is washed by the **Atlantic Ocean** and the **Irish Sea**.

Northern Ireland occupies one third of the island, of Ireland. It borders on the Irish Republic in the south.

Islands

In total, it is estimated that the UK is made up of over 1000 small islands, some being natural and some being man-made crannogs, which were built in past times using stone and wood and which were enlarged by natural waste building up over time.

Islands of England

- *Lundy*
- *Isles of Scilly*
- *Isle of Wight*
- *Farne Islands*
- *Lindisfarne*
- *Isle of Portland*
- *Walney Island*

Islands of Scotland

- Orkney Islands
- Shetland Islands
- Inner Hebrides
- Outer Hebrides
- Rockall
- Bass Rock

Islands of Wales

- Anglesey
- Skomer Island
- Skokholm Island
- Ramsey Island
- Bardsey Island
- Holy Island



- There are no high mountains in Great Britain. In the north **the Cheviots** separate England from Scotland, the **Pennines** stretch down North England almost along its middle, **the Cambrian mountains** occupy the greater part of Wales and **the Highlands** of Scotland, are the tallest of the British mountains. There is very little flat country except in the region known as East Anglia.

Rivers and lakes



The British Isles have many rivers but they are not very long. The longest of the English rivers is **the Severn**. It flows into the Irish Sea. The most important river of Scotland is **the Clyde**. Glasgow stands on it. Many of the English and Scottish rivers are joined by canals, so that it is possible to travel by water from one end of Great Britain to the other.



The Thames is over 200 miles long. It flows through the rich agricultural and industrial districts of the country. London, the capital of Great Britain, stands on it. The Thames has a wide mouth, that's why the big ocean liners can go up to the London port.



The UK is known for its beautiful lakes. Most of them are in Scotland and north-west of England. Scottish valleys are filled with lakes. These lakes are called "lochs". There are two kinds of lakes — lakes with fresh water like **Loch Ness** and lakes like **Norwegian fjords**.





There are no great forests on the British Isles today. Historically, the most famous forest is **Sherwood Forest** in the east of England, to the north of London. It was the home of Robin Hood, the famous hero of a number of legends.

Natural resources

Historically, much of the United Kingdom was forested. Since prehistoric times, man has deforested much of the United Kingdom.

Agriculture is intensive, highly mechanised, and efficient by European standards, producing about 60% of food needs with only 1% of the labour force. It contributes around 2% of GDP. Around two thirds of production is devoted to livestock (скотоводство), one third to arable crops (с/х культур).

The UK has a variety of natural resources including:

❖ Geological: *coal, natural gas, limestone(известняк), chalk, gypsum, rock salt, iron ore, tin(олово), silver, gold, lead.*

❖ Agricultural: *arable land(пахотный), wheat(пшеница), barley(ячмень), hill farms, sheep.*

The UK has large coal, natural gas, and oil reserves; primary energy production accounts for 10% of GDP, one of the highest shares of any industrial nation. Due to the island location of the UK, the country has great potential for generating electricity from wave power and tidal power, although these have not yet been exploited on a commercial basis.

The climate



The climate of Great Britain is temperate and it is moderated by the Gulf Stream. The region is known for being cool and cloudy during the winter and the western parts of the island are windy and rainy because they are more influenced by the ocean. The eastern parts are drier and less windy.



As the weather changes with the wind, and Britain is visited by winds from different parts of the world, the most characteristic feature of Britain's weather is its **variability**.

The English also say that they have three variants of weather: when it rains in the morning, when it rains in the afternoon or when it rains all day long. Sometimes it rains so heavily that they say 'It's raining cats and dogs'.

Rainfall is more or less even throughout the year. In the mountains there is heavier rainfall than in the plains of the south and east. The driest period is from March to June and the wettest months are from October to January. The average range of temperature (from winter to summer) is from 5 to 23 degrees above zero. During a normal summer the temperature sometimes rises above 30 degrees in the south.

Winter temperatures below 10 degrees are rare. It seldom snows heavily in winter, frost is rare. January and February are usually the coldest months, July and August the warmest. Still the wind may bring winter cold in spring or summer days.

So, we may say that the British climate has three main features: it is **mild**, **humid** and **changeable**. That means that it is never too hot or too cold. Winters are extremely mild. Snow may come but it melts quickly. In winter the cold is a humid cold, not dry. This humid and mild climate is good for plants. Trees and flowers begin to blossom early in spring.

REGIONS

Great Britain consists of
England, Scotland,
Wales and Northern Ireland.

England is situated in the central and southern parts of Great Britain. Historically it is the most important part of the country. It is also the biggest and the most populated part of the UK.



London is Britain's and England's capital and main communication centre, one of the world's important financial centers, one of the world's three largest cities (with Tokyo and New York) and one of the largest ports. London is the main centre in Britain of printing, cinema film production, food and drink.



Scotland is the part of the United Kingdom and is governed from London.



Comprising an area of 30,000 square miles. Scotland has a population of just over 5 million people of whom one third live in the cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee. All the inhabitants speak English although about 100,000 still speak Scottish Gaelic. **Edinburgh** has long been recognized as the capital of Scotland, in spite of being second in size to Glasgow.

Wales is a small country, bounded on the north and west by the Irish Sea, and on the south by the Bristol Channel.

Its main industries are coal, iron, steel (сталь), and engineering. About two thirds of the population live in the South Wales coastal area, where the three biggest towns are located: Swansea, Cardiff and Newport.

Cardiff is the capital of Wales.

It has a modern shopping centre.



Northern Ireland is the second largest of the British Islands lying in the Atlantic of the west coast of Great Britain.

The island of Ireland is politically divided into two parts: Northern Ireland, 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**.

