

Living in the UK

Worksheet A

1. Can you label the different countries of the United Kingdom on the map below? Do you know the names of their capital cities?



2. What words / phrases do you associate with each of these countries? Make a list below.

Worksheet B

Work with a partner. Find the answers to these questions about the different UK countries as quickly as you can.

1. Which UK country has bilingual road signs?
2. What is the name of the architect who designed many famous buildings in Glasgow?
3. In which UK country is there a town with one of the longest place names in the world?
4. What English national icons in Manchester are mentioned?
5. What is 'great craic'?
6. Which sport is very important in Welsh culture?
7. Which UK country has about 790 islands off its coast?
8. Which UK country has a border with another European country?
9. Who is the patron Saint of England?
10. What national icons of Scotland are mentioned?
11. What are Eisteddfodau?
12. Where are Van Morrison and the band Ash from?
13. What is Wales' most famous building?
14. Which UK country has the least distinct cultural identity?
15. Where does one of the world's biggest arts festivals take place?
16. In which UK country are the Mountains of Mourne?

Worksheet C

Part 1: Work with a partner. Find words or phrases which go with the following definitions (the words appear in the text in the same order as the definitions):

About England**Paragraph 3**

- 1) someone who is very famous and people think represents a particular idea

Paragraph 4

- 2) difficult to define or see clearly
- 3) a set of questions that you ask a large number of people

About Northern Ireland**Paragraph 2**

- 4) a way of thinking about things
- 5) to deliberately avoid a person, place or activity

Paragraph 4

- 6) to form two very different groups that are completely opposite to each other
- 7) a generalization, not based on specific facts and maybe not completely correct (2 words)

About Scotland**Paragraph 1**

- 8) very impressive or beautiful

Paragraph 3

- 9) to arrange a special event and provide the buildings and services needed

Paragraph 6

- 10) very successful

About Wales**Paragraph 3**

- 11) to be a characteristic that makes something clearly different from other similar things

Paragraph 6

- 12) the place where a sports team is based and plays most of its games

Part 2: Now use the correct form of one of these words to complete the following sentences

1. London _____ the 2012 Olympic Games.
2. Madonna has been a pop _____ since the 1980s.
3. Britain was divided on the Iraq war. Opinions were completely _____.
4. Manchester United's _____ is the Old Trafford stadium, just 3 kilometres from the centre of Manchester.
5. Some people think that British people are cold and unfriendly, but it's a very _____. Actually, the people I've met have been very nice.
6. I argued with my brother and he hasn't called me since. I think he _____ me.
7. Internet businesses had some problems in the 1990s, but now sites like EBay, Amazon and Yahoo! are _____ again.
8. People questioned in a recent _____ said that they spent on average 3 hours a day watching TV.
9. This website _____ from other similar sites by the quantity of upto- date information it contains.
10. I think that people from the capital city have very different ideas from people who live in the countryside. It's a completely different _____.
11. From our hotel window, you can see the mountains and the sea. It's a _____ view.
12. The town centre has all the usual shops. There's nothing different or original. Really, it's _____ from any other British town.

Text: About Northern Ireland**Great craic, live music and the Ulster fry****Where it is**

Northern Ireland is part of the UK but is physically separated from mainland England, Wales and Scotland by the wild and sometimes treacherous Irish Sea. Northern Ireland has sea to the north and east, and borders the Republic of Ireland on the west and south, making it the only UK country with a European border.

Unsurprisingly these physical characteristics affect the mindset of its population, and it is not unusual to find some people who feel simultaneously a UK citizen, and Irish citizen and a European citizen. Alternatively, others shun their UK identity and embrace their Irishness, and many others insist on being 'British' and ignore their Irish neighbours.

In a population of 1.5 million nearly 60% are under 40, making it a country with an influential youth culture.

Religion and identity

Identity tends to be polarised according to the religious divide – Protestants tend to see themselves as 'British' and part of the UK (except when the Irish rugby team is in action and allegiance conveniently switches!), and Catholics tend to embrace the Irish identity and an all-Ireland ethos. As with any such sweeping statement there are many exceptions to the rule, and Northern Ireland is home to many people of other religions and cultural identities. There are also a huge number of people from both the Protestant and Catholic communities who value each other as friends and fellow citizens, and to whom religion takes a back seat.

Language

In common with the UK, people in Northern Ireland speak English (with a distinctive, hard to mimic accent). There also exist the lesser-used languages of Irish and Ulster Scots and many associated cultural activities.

Political devolution

Northern Ireland shares the Westminster government with the UK but has had its own devolved Assembly, currently suspended, with local control over various issues including education and arts. The population waits for local politicians to come to agreement so that the Assembly can be reinstated as independence from Westminster is valued.

Stereotypes

Stereotypical images of Northern Ireland often centre on its troubled and violent past: bombs, shootings, brutality, along with the more positive: building the Titanic, the Giants Causeway World Heritage Site, linen industry and musicians such as Van Morrison and Ash.

Text: About Wales**Language, rugby and the millenium stadium
Living in Wales**

Wales is a land of rugby, singing and beautiful scenery situated on the western side of the UK. Its population is just under three million which is about 5% of the total UK population. The main cities are Cardiff, the capital city, Swansea and Newport.

Wales was ruled directly from London until 1999 when the first elections to the Welsh National Assembly were held. The Assembly has some powers specific to people in Wales and can make decisions on areas such as education and health. Wales remains part of the UK and Members of Parliament (MPs) from Welsh constituencies continue to have seats in the UK Parliament at Westminster. Laws passed by Parliament in Westminster still apply to Wales.

Language

The Welsh language is probably the most important thing that distinguishes Wales from the rest of the UK. Welsh (or Cymraeg) is one of Europe's oldest languages and is spoken by one in five Welsh people. This number doubles among children and teenagers which shows that the language is very much alive among the young.

Road signs and other signs are in both English and Welsh. The language is at its strongest along the Llyn Peninsula in North-West Wales, where 75 per cent of the population speak Welsh. Towns, villages and cities in Wales often have both a Welsh and an English name and Wales is home to one of the longest place names in the world – Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch which means St Mary's (Church) by the white aspen over the whirlpool, and St Tysilio's (Church) by the red cave!

Sport and culture

Wales is also known for its 'Eisteddfodau' which are festivals celebrating Welsh language, art, culture and heritage and which include an eclectic mix of music, dance, drama, debate and cultural competitions. Most people know of the annual National Eisteddfod which is held alternately in North and South Wales and the International Eisteddfod which is held in Llangollen, but there are Eisteddfodau of varying sizes held in towns and villages throughout the land.

The national sport is very much rugby union and the national team are sometimes known as the Dragons as a red dragon appears on the national flag of Wales. The home ground is the Millennium Stadium at Cardiff Arms Park in Cardiff.

Text: About Scotland**Festivals, lochs, shopping and beaches
Living in Scotland****Where it is**

Scotland is the UK's most northern country and has around 790 islands off its coasts – 130 of which have people living on them. Scotland is well known for its stunning landscapes, beautiful beaches and lochs, which are fresh water lakes. There are over 600 square miles of lochs in Scotland including the most famous one, Loch Ness.

It has a population of just over five million people which is about 8.5 per cent of the whole UK population. Over 2 million of these live in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and almost half of Scotland's population live in the Central Belt, where both the largest city (Glasgow) and the capital city (Edinburgh) are located.

Festivals and music

Scotland also hosts one of the biggest arts festivals in the world. This is commonly known as the Edinburgh Festival but is actually made up of a number of different festivals which happen at different times of the year, though many do take place in August and September. Many people have heard of the Fringe Festival, but there are also the International Festival, the Film Festival, the Children's Festival and the Edinburgh Mela which is an intercultural festival.

Musically it has recently produced bands Travis and Franz Ferdinand and other famous Scots include Ewan McGregor, Sean Connery and JK Rowling.

Political devolution

In July 1999 the Scottish Parliament was opened, the first for over 300 years as Scotland had been governed from London. Scottish Parliamentary responsibilities include health, education and local government.

Stereotypes

Stereotypical images of Scotland often focus on things like tartan, kilts, heather and haggis as well as the scenery. These are all still a part of the country but contemporary Scotland is building a name for itself in other areas, such as its thriving computer games industry.

Text: About England**Diverse society, football and food****Where it is**

England is perhaps the country most people first think of when they think of the United Kingdom. It borders both Scotland and Wales and almost 50 million people live there, which is over 80% of the UK's total population.

Major cities include London (the capital), Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle, and Manchester. London is one of the most well-known cities in the world and for many is representative of the whole of England, if not the whole of the UK.

Other icons include football, actors Jude Law and Kate Winslet, Bridget Jones, pubs and beer. But for most these represent the whole of the UK, not just England.

Indistinct identity?

Many of the people in our survey, either English by birth or now living here, commented that it was very difficult to distinguish between English and British culture and identity. People found that they often identify more with other things than with England as a country. These other things include: the place or region in which they live, whether it be a major city or one of the English counties such as Yorkshire, Devon or Northumberland; the UK as a whole; or the religious or ethnic community they are from.

Text: Scottish national icons**Scotland: National icons****If you had to choose one thing to represent Scotland what would it be?**

'It would be a white sandy beach on the North West coast of Scotland. I think this area of Scotland is forgotten about and it's beautiful.'

'Don't think one thing or person could accurately represent the whole nation. But if pushed, fish suppers.'

'The Firth of Clyde, where the lowland and the highlands meet and the ships that shaped the industrial city of Glasgow came to and fro.'

'The scenery and the Lochs represent the natural beauty of Scotland.'

Text: National icons from Northern Ireland**Northern Ireland: National icons****What one thing represents Northern Ireland for you?**

*'The Mountains of Mourne because
-immortalised in song
-wonderful natural recreational facility
-representative of the beautiful landscape and scenery across Northern
Ireland.'*

*'I'm afraid it would probably be the good old Ulster Fry, plenty of potato bread and
soda bread dipped in egg. Yum. Why? Because it is perfect for that other thing
Northern Ireland is known for – curing the morning after the night before.'*

*'Going up Cavehill on a sunny day. You can see right across Belfast.
Cavehill is also special being the inspiration apparently for Gulliver's Travels as it
looks like a giant lying down on the landscape sleeping.'*

*'The cranes at Harland and Wolff. A distinct feature of Belfast which encompasses
not just the past but stability in the face of major difficulties.'*

Text: English national icons**England: National icons**

If you had to choose one thing to represent England what would it be?

'London – the Royal family and London (landmarks) remain the iconic image for visitors.'

'Buckingham Palace.'

'London – our capital city and a great example of the old and the new combining together to make a world class city.'

'Football.'

'St George's cross – his flag is associated with the national football team.'

'Manchester. Birthplace of the computer, Industrial Revolution, Emmeline Pankhurst. Local and friendly but quirky and full of the old Cromwell attitude (go against them Royals, do your own thing). Music: The Smiths and Morrissey, Joy Division, New Order, Happy Mondays, Stone Roses. Exactly!'

'I think it would be the centre of Manchester. Within a few miles of the Town Hall you have a microcosm of the entire country: Victorian industrialisation, stunning countryside, thriving modern and traditional culture and leisure, urban deprivation and cuisine from every continent. Oh, and pubs and football clubs as well.'

'The album by One Giant Leap, as it says so much about who we are and where we come from, with particular respect to our place in the world.'

'St George: What else is there that isn't British?'

Text: Welsh national icons**Wales: National icons**

If you had to choose one thing to represent Wales what would it be?

It seems as if the Millennium Stadium is set to become Wales' best known landmark if the enthusiasm of the Welsh for the building is anything to go by!

'Millennium Stadium – instantly recognisable as a Welsh landmark'

'Millennium Stadium – a fantastic innovative stadium (the first in the UK with a sliding roof) in the heart of the Welsh capital and where the religion of rugby takes place'

Millennium Stadium - best stadium in the UK. Built at a fraction of the cost of Wembley, has hosted key events of the other home nations, big concerts, and symbolises successful regeneration.'

'The mountain of Snowdonia which reflects the strength of the Welsh nation without being overpowering'

'Mountains- Snowdonia, Brecon Beacons'

Text: The culture of Northern Ireland

What one thing represents Northern Ireland for you?

*'The Mountains of Mourne because
-immortalised in song
-wonderful natural recreational facility
-representative of the beautiful landscape and scenery across Northern Ireland.'*

'I'm afraid it would probably be the good old Ulster Fry, plenty of potato bread and soda bread dipped in egg. Yum. Why? Because it is perfect for that other thing Northern Ireland is known for – curing the morning after the night before.'

'Going up Cavehill on a sunny day. You can see right across Belfast. Cavehill is also special being the inspiration apparently for Gulliver's Travels as it looks like a giant lying down on the landscape sleeping.'

'The cranes at Harland and Wolff. A distinct feature of Belfast which encompasses not just the past but stability in the face of major difficulties.'

Text: The culture of England
If you're asked about the culture of England what kinds of things do you say?

England perhaps differs from the other countries of the UK in that it is much harder to identify culture that is specifically English rather than British. This can be seen in some of the responses given which range from Morris Dancing (distinctly English) through to attitudes and activities that could relate to anywhere in the UK and probably many other countries – for example a love of eating out but an over reliance on junk food!

'Nostalgia, living in the past on previous successes, parochial.'

'Morris dancing, football, football hooligans, beer louts, pretty country.'

'Traditions, architecture, history, the Royal family, museums and galleries, sport, pop music, fashion, the BBC.'

'Annual 2 week holidays, small homes with small gardens, love of pets, openness and intimacy with partners...high percentage of single parent families. Families are very child focussed and children are given rights which in other countries would be accorded adults only.'

'Love of eating out, clubbing and boozing. Little interest in (learning) other world languages but love of other cultures' food. English people it seems don't make for very good cooks and eat junk food a lot...Being young is perhaps seen as more desirable than being 35+.'

'Westminster, the English language, international power.'

'Very diverse in terms of values, living standards and interests...There is a wealth of activities to keep us busy. Surprised and delighted that reading seems to be getting a look in these days...We are more open to different culinary experiences and this is a passive as well as an active interest – I love this. I feel that a lack of community has led to massive interest in reality shows as we don't often have local drama to push our noses in. We love to see dysfunctional behaviour in others and act as moralists. We are personality/celebrity obsessed and this brings out the judgmental in us.'

'English culture is generally quite anti-establishment – there's a big tradition in our arts that attempts to question and challenge authority. Even in the language, there's a playful attitude – puns, irony, sarcasm. We like one thing to mean a lot. Musically, it's where a lot of innovation happens – new forms, experiments. Social life is similar. There's an attitude to drinking etc. that isn't very healthy – going against common sense – binge drinking and talking about binge drinking.'

'Culture is all pervasive and almost impossibly diverse in England. There are thousands of forms of cultural pursuit, many of which we pursue to globally recognised levels. For me, the most important elements are film and television, music, sport and architecture.'

'Creative society, multi cultural with much new creativity stemming from the meeting of different cultures, particularly in music, literature and enterprise.'

Text: The culture of Wales**If you're asked about the culture of Wales what kinds of things do you say?**

When we asked this we were immediately told about sport, music and food!

'Sport (rugby), singing, pub culture'

'Rugby (or rugbi in Welsh) is the national sport, passion and religion – games against the English are particularly savoured! Music and song – both popular, Stereophonics etc, and more classical, Bryn Terfyl and Katherine Jenkins.'

'Rugby mad people – the mood of the nation can depend on the Wales team's results. In recent years Wales has produced several good bands (Manic Street preachers, Catatonia, Stereophonics) which has moved away from the stereotypical Tom Jones label (although we still like Tom Jones).'

Friendly, welcoming people. Modern vibrant society yet still retaining much of the Welsh tradition'

'Food – lava bread (seaweed), welsh cakes, bara brith (tea Bread), welsh lamb and beef. A very popular and trendy restaurant in Cardiff is the Armless Dragon serving Welsh dishes'

Text: The culture of Scotland
If you're asked about the culture of Scotland what kinds of things do you say?

Everyone who answered this question seemed enthusiastic about the shopping opportunities to be had in Scotland two biggest cities - not to mention the social life!

'It seems to have improved greatly in recent years within Scotland and also how it is perceived by others. It is very varied with the main cities Glasgow and Edinburgh becoming more attractive and welcoming with bars, café culture... and club music scene. On the other hand the highlands and islands have not changed greatly...'

'Scotland is a country which only has two really good cities for going out in and shopping in my opinion! - Edinburgh and Glasgow. The shopping in Glasgow is excellent and there are plenty of pubs and clubs to choose from. Edinburgh is becoming a better shopping city with the likes of Harvey Nics being added. Edinburgh has loads going on with music, film and literature, especially when the festival is on.'

'I enjoy living in Scotland as it only takes half an hour to get to the country from where I live. However, I do think that a lot of Scots are quite narrow minded and are very much 'home birds'. Because the climate is quite depressing, a lot of people live for the weekend and drink a lot - I think this is significant throughout the UK though. On the whole, Scots are very friendly and generous people.....it is a myth that we are scroungers.'

'I think big companies that used to only locate in London and the South are also realising that Scotland is on a par with such areas now. Edinburgh has Harvey Nichols and Glasgow is getting Selfridges!!!!'

People also identified with creativity and the economy in how they saw the culture of Scotland.

'I think Scotland is a leader in areas such as art and design. In Glasgow for example the city is built around the designs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Also we have Glasgow School of Art, one of the best in the country. There is also the scenery that surrounds Scotland, Loch Lomond only about 30 minutes from Glasgow.... I feel these enrich the country and by seeing places such as Edinburgh and Stirling Castle and finding out the history of Scotland makes me feel proud to be Scottish!!!! We are great sport fans especially rugby! The Scottish people are friendly and generally quite happy despite all the rain!!'

'Trying hard to appear international and outward looking, but attitudes are still very parochial. Job market is stale and extremely hard to break into... few creative opportunities outside financial services and IT.'

'I think it's important for a country with a cultural identity to look outward to other nations with confidence – as they say, Scotland's best export is its people!'

Role cards

You are a professional couple, or friends, who want to emigrate to the UK.
You haven't decided where you want to live.

Think about what you are looking for. You should consider:

- Job opportunities
- Culture – the arts, sport etc.
- People and attitudes
- Quality of life
- Anything else that is important to you in deciding where to live

Think of some questions to ask the representatives of each country.

You represent **England**. You have to persuade a professional couple to come and live in England instead of one of the other UK countries. In your group, prepare your arguments. Think about:

- Job opportunities
- Culture – the arts, sport etc.
- People and attitudes
- Quality of life
- Anything else that might persuade the couple to come to your country.

Be ready to give a presentation about England and answer the couple's questions

You represent **Scotland**. You have to persuade a professional couple to come and live in Scotland instead of one of the other UK countries. In your group, prepare your arguments. Think about:

- Job opportunities
- Culture – the arts, sport etc.
- People and attitudes
- Quality of life
- Anything else that might persuade the couple to come to your country.

Be ready to give a presentation about Scotland and answer the couple's questions

You represent **Wales**. You have to persuade a professional couple to come and live in Wales instead of one of the other UK countries. In your group, prepare your arguments. Think about:

- Job opportunities
- Culture – the arts, sport etc.
- People and attitudes
- Quality of life
- Anything else that might persuade the couple to come to your country.

Be ready to give a presentation about Wales and answer the couple's questions

You represent **Northern Ireland**. You have to persuade a professional couple to come and live in Northern Ireland instead of one of the other UK countries. In your group, prepare your arguments. Think about:

- Job opportunities
- Culture – the arts, sport etc.
- People and attitudes
- Quality of life
- Anything else that might persuade the couple to come to your country.

Be ready to give a presentation about Northern Ireland and answer the couple's questions