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Britain: People and Geography

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Dorothea Flothow - Civilisation of the British Isles

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Leading Questions

- Who are the British?
- What is Britain?
- What are the national symbols / songs / icons?

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Geography and Politics

'Britain'

- Geographical term: The 'British Isles' consist of two islands:
 - Great Britain
 - Ireland
- Political term: 2 states on 'British Isles':
 - The Republic of Ireland, Eire
informally: Ireland, the Republic
poetic: Erin
 - The United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland
also: Great Britain, the United Kingdom
poetic: Albion



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Geography – Insularity

- Geographical Factors
 - Surrounded by Atlantic Ocean, North Sea and Irish Sea
 - No place in the Isles is further than 75 miles from the sea
- Psychological Factors
 - Insularity and British identity
 - Insularity and British history



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Insularity and Identity

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself.
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
[...]
(Shakespeare, *Richard II*, II.1)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNVRS060mr4&feature=related>
(2:20)

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Geography – Britain and Its Neighbours

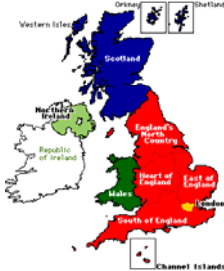
- Britain and the Continent
 - Distance Dover – Calais: 22 miles across the English Channel / the Strait of Dover
 - Successive invasions from Europe
 - 'Splendid Isolation', 'Balance of Power'
- Britain and the US – The 'special relationship'
- Britain and Ireland
 - Attempts at conquering and ruling Ireland
 - Fear of invasion starting from Ireland

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Geography – The Political Divisions

- The United Kingdom: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Special status of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands (self-governing Crown Dependencies, own legislature, tax and legal system, not part of the UK)




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Geography – Further Divisions

- The regional division of England, e.g.
 - The South East ('commuter land', most densely populated area in UK, little heavy industry, dominance of trade)
 - South West / West country (image of rural beauty, popular holiday area, 'English Riviera', famous dairy products)





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Geography – Further Divisions

- The regional division of England, e.g.
 - East Anglia (rural, flat, much arable farming, Fens: reclaimed from sea)
 - the Midlands (heavily industrialised area, large towns, e.g. Birmingham, heavy industries but also potteries)


'The Black Country' (area in the Midlands)

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Geography – Further Divisions

- The regional division of England, e.g.
 - Northern England deposits of coal → Industrial Revolution, large towns, e.g. Manchester (formerly famous for cotton goods), Liverpool (formerly large seaport, big in slave trade), Sheffield (steel), Newcastle (shipping industry); heavy decline in second half 20th c.;
 - away from industrial areas: sparsely populated, e.g. Lake District

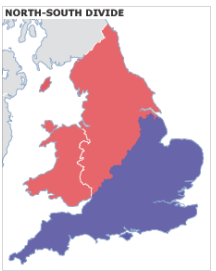


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Geography – The North-South Divide

- Stereotypes and prejudices
 - South as place of rural beauty vs. industrialised North
 - Southerners as 'posh', Northerners as honest, hard-working people
 - Reality of the North-South Divide (*Guardian*, March 6, 2012)
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2012/mar/06/northern-ireland-english-people>




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Geography – Further Divisions

- The counties, e.g.
 - Kent
 - Cornwall
 - Yorkshire
 - Wiltshire



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Impressions of Kent ('the garden of England')

Canterbury
Cathedral





White Cliffs of Dover



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Impressions of Cornwall



Land's End





St Michael's Mount

Rosamund Pilcher Country,
formerly: popular with smugglers

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Impressions of Yorkshire





Setting of *Wuthering Heights*



York Minster

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Impressions of Wiltshire



Stonehenge



Salisbury Cathedral
by John Constable

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Norfolk in East Anglia



Norwich




The Broads

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Geography – the Physical Features

- England (population ca. 50 mill, ca. 130,000 sq km)
 - Mainly flat lowland countryside, dominated by enclosed meadows (esp. south and west) and fields (esp. east)
 - low hills: e.g. North Yorkshire Moors, Cotswolds




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Geography – the Physical Features

- England
 - Highland zones:
 - Western Highlands (Dartmoor, Exmoor),
 - and north-western mountain region: e.g. Northern Highlands (Lake District and Cumbrian Mountains), and Pennines.




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Geography – the Physical Features

- England
 - Concentration of population: London (1/5 of UK population) and south-east, West Midlands (Birmingham), Yorkshire cities (Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield); north-western industrial area (Liverpool and Manchester)




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Geography – the Physical Features

- Wales (population ca. 3 mill, ca. 20,000 sq km)
 - Mainly highland country with moorland plateau, hills, and mountains with deep valleys highest mountain: Snowdon (1,085 m)
 - Small lowland coastal belt and low river valleys in south Wales are also chief areas of settlement (Cardiff, Swansea, Newport).
 - Capital: Cardiff



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Impressions of Wales






Penrhyn Castle

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Geography – the Physical Features

- Scotland (ca. 77,000 sq km, population ca. 5 mill)
 - Largely mountainous country (90%)
 - Southern Uplands, border country
 - Central Lowlands: the Midland Valley contains ¾ of Scottish population, including Edinburgh (capital) and Glasgow
 - Northern Highlands, highest mountain: Ben Nevis (1343 m), famous lake: Loch Ness
 - Islands: Hebrides, Shetlands and Orkneys



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Impressions of Scotland





Ben Nevis


Loch Ness

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Geography – the Physical Features

- Northern Ireland (population ca. 1.7 mill, ca. 13,500 sq km)
 - Smallest distance to Scottish coast: 21 km → migration
 - South: central fertile plain
 - Mountainous areas in west, north-east, south-east
 - Dominantly rural country; largest city and capital: Belfast





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Britain – The Climate

- Mainly temperate climate (influence of Gulf stream) → influence of clothing and houses
- West: oceanic climate, North: cooler; East: drier
- little frost or snow
- Weather as a national institution: rain and the British weather

Palm tree and St. Michael's Mount

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Britain – Farming and Forestry

- Only 10% of Britain is woodlands; the few extensive forest areas include the New Forest in Hampshire and Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire
- Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, Northern and South-West England: dominance of dairy farming, beef cattle and sheep herds
- Southern and Eastern England and Eastern Scotland: arable crops

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Britain: The People

- 'Englishness' vs. 'Britishness' – terms and uses
- Historical dominance of 'Englishness'
 - Wales: conquest by England since 13th c.; 1284 Statute of Wales → under control of English monarchy
 - Scotland: Union of the Crowns since 1603; 1707 Act of Union
 - (Northern) Ireland: beginning of English dominance in 12th c.; Ulster Plantations start 1607; after prolonged struggle: independence of Irish Republic in 1922; Northern Ireland remained with United Kingdom
- Devolution: Parliament in Edinburgh (1998), Assemblies in Belfast (2007) and Cardiff (1998)

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The English

- Flag: St George's Cross
- National Plant: rose
- Emblem: lion
- Patron Saint: St George (23rd April)












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The Welsh

- Languages spoken: English and Welsh (19%)
- Flag: Dragon of Cadwallader
- National Plant: leek / daffodil
- Emblem: dragon
- National Saint: St David
- 'Typical' Welsh names: Lloyd, Jones

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Wales – National Anthem

Land of my Fathers
 The land of my fathers is dear unto me,
 Old land where the minstrels are honoured and free:
 Its warring defenders, so gallant and brave,
 For freedom their life's blood they gave.
 Land, Land, true am I to my Land,
 While seas secure this land so pure,
 O may our old language endure

Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau
 Mae hen wlad fy nhadau yn annwyl i mi,
 Gwlad beirdd a chantorion, enwogion o fri;
 Ei gwrol ryfelwyr, gwladgarwyr tra mad,
 Tros ryddid collasant eu gwaed.
 Gwlad, gwlad, pleidiol wyf i'm gwlad,
 Tra mor yn fur i'r bur hoffbau,
 O bydded i'r heniath barhau.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kUnCwV3AYE>

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The Scottish

- Languages spoken: English, Scots (ca. 30%), Scottish Gaelic (1%)
- Flag: St Andrew's Cross
- National Plant: thistle
- Emblem: unicorn
- National Saint: St Andrew
- 'Typical' names: 'Mc-', 'Mac-'






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Scotland – The National Anthem

Flower of Scotland
 O Flower of Scotland,
 When will we see
 Your like again,
 That fought and died for,
 Your wee bit Hill and Glen,
 And stood against him,
 Proud Edward's army,
 And sent him homeward,
 Tae think again.
 The hills are bare now,
 And autumn leaves
 lie thick and still,
 O'er land that is lost now,
 Which those so dearly held,
 That stood against him,
 Proud Edward's Army,
 And sent him homeward,
 Tae think again.

Those days are past now,
 And in the past
 they must remain,
 But we can still rise now,
 And be the nation again,
 That stood against him,
 Proud Edward's Army,
 And sent him homeward,
 Tae think again.
 O Flower of Scotland,
 When will we see
 your like again,
 That fought and died for,
 Your wee bit Hill and Glen,
 And stood against him,
 Proud Edward's Army,
 And sent him homeward,
 Tae think again.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-rplOisb8q&feature=related>

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The Irish

- Languages Spoken: English, Irish Gaelic (ca 3% native speakers in Republic)
- Flag (formerly!): St Patrick's Cross, today: tricolour
- National Plant: Shamrock
- National Saint: St Patrick (17th March)
- 'Typical' names: 'O'-






<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugqehfblFPs>

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Great Britain – the Flag and the Royal Coat of Arms




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Great Britain – National Anthem

God save our gracious Queen!
 Long live our noble Queen!
 God save the Queen!
 Send her victorious,
 Happy and glorious,
 Long to reign over us,
 God save the Queen.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tN9EC3Gv6Nk>

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What is the English National Anthem?

Land of Hope and Glory

Land of Hope and Glory
 Mother of the Free
 How shall we extol thee
 Who are born of thee?
 Wider still and wider
 Shall thy bounds be set
 God, who made thee mighty
 Make thee mightier yet.
 God, who made thee mighty
 Make thee mightier yet.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THYqeETrkPs>

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What is the English National Anthem?

Jerusalem

And did those feet in ancient time
 Walk upon England's mountains green?
 And was the Holy Lamb of God
 On England's pleasant pastures seen?
 And did the Countenance divine
 Shine forth upon those clouded hills?
 And was Jerusalem builded here,
 Among those dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold,
 Bring me my arrows of desire;
 Bring me my spear! O, clouds unfold!
 Bring me my chariot of fire!
 I will not cease from mental fight,
 Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
 Till we have built Jerusalem
 In England's green and pleasant land.
 (William Blake)

Rule Britannia

When Britain first, at Heaven's command
 Arose from out the azure main,
 Arose from, arose from out the azure main;
 This was the charter, the charter of the
 Land
 And Guardian Angels sang this strain:

Rule Britannia, Britannia rule the waves!
 Britons never, ever, ever shall be slaves!
 Rule Britannia, Britannia rule the waves!
 Britons never, ever, ever shall be slaves.

...
 (James Thomson)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yIWBO_7nio&feature=fvwr (0:25)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sqd9nYqVz2s>

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Last Night of the Proms

- Last in a series of summer concerts
- Takes place at Royal Albert Hall
- Starts with popular classics followed by patriotic music



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Summary

- Geography and its influence
- Regional varieties and identities
- Symbols of different countries
- Problems of Englishness

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