

UK ADMINISTRATIVE SUBDIVISION

Task 1. Fill in the gaps

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland consists _____ four geographic and historical parts: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Wales and England were united politically, administratively, and legally _____ the acts of union of 1536 and 1542. In 1707 Scotland joined England and Wales in forming a single parliament for Great Britain, although the three countries had previously shared a monarch.

England is a predominant constituent unit of the United Kingdom. _____ the political, economic, and cultural legacy that has secured the perpetuation of its name, England no longer officially exists _____ a country. Unlike Scotland and Wales, which have their own departments of state and Cabinet ministers, and Northern Ireland, which has self-government in domestic affairs, England enjoys no separate political status _____ the United Kingdom.

In Great Britain the county, or shire, _____ the principal subdivision of the country for administrative, judicial and other purposes. Counties _____ used England and Wales but have been replaced _____ other administrative units in Scotland and Northern Ireland. A British county provides police and fire services, education, social welfare services, public transport, traffic regulation, consumer protection, libraries, and some highways and parks.

Task 2. Read the text and answer the questions

ENGLAND.

England is the largest and richest country of Great Britain. The capital of England is London, but there are other very interesting and famous cities are York, Chester, Oxford and Cambridge. Stonehenge is one of the most famous prehistoric sites in the world. This ancient circle of stones stands in Southwest England. It was built between 3,000 and 1,500 B.C. and it measures 30 meters across. It is made with massive blocks of stone up to 4 meters high. Why it was built is a mystery. Some people think it was used for pagan religious ceremonies.

Oxford is the home of the oldest university in England. Most of the oldest colleges are situated just a short walk from each other in the centre of town.

Cambridge is the home of Britain's second oldest University. It is situated on the river Cam.

York was the capital of Northern England. It is one of the best preserved medieval cities in Europe. It was built by the Romans, conquered by the AngloSaxons and ruled by the Vikings.

The Lake District is a lovely region of lakes and mountains in Northwest England. The Romantic poets Wordsworth and De Quincey lived here and were called the Lake Poets.

1. What is the capital of England?

2. What are other interesting cities of England?
3. When was Stonehenge built?
4. What was it used for?
5. Which is the oldest university in England?
6. Which city is the medieval one?
7. What is Lake District?

Task 3. Make up questions on the texts.

SCOTLAND

Scotland is the country in the north of Great Britain, beyond Hadrian's Wall. The capital of Scotland is Edinburgh, well known for its castle and for the Edinburgh International Festival which is held every August. The typical products of Scotland are timber, whisky, salmon, bagpipes and tartans. Golf is the Scottish national sport. Scotland is also the land of myths and mysteries; every castle has its ghost and everybody has heard of the Loch Ness Monster.

WALES

Wales, or Cymru in Welsh, is a country in the west of Great Britain. Cardiff, a large city in the south, on the Bristol Channel, was chosen as capital of Wales in 1955. Since 1536, Wales has been governed by England and the heir to the throne of England has the title of Prince of Wales, but Welsh people have a strong sense of identity: there is a Welsh Nationalist party which wants independence from the UK and the Welsh language is still used in certain parts of the country.

THE WELSH LANGUAGE

Welsh is an ancient Celtic language similar to Breton, spoken in Brittany, France. In the '60s Welsh was given equal status with English as an official language and is used in the law courts. Road signs are bilingual, it is taught in schools and some TV programmes are broadcast in Welsh. However, only about 20 % of the population speaks Welsh, mainly in the rural north and west.

Task 4. Say what the origin of the Irish British conflict is.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland, also known as Ulster, is still a part of the UK. One third of the population lives in and around the capital, Belfast, which is also the most important port and industrial and commercial centre.

THE IRISH QUESTION

In Ulster the population is divided into two groups: the Protestants and the Catholics. The Protestants are of British origin being the descendants of British settlers who came to Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Catholics are mostly natives of Ireland. In 1922 the thirty two counties of Ireland were divided into two countries: Eire, an independent Irish state, (26 counties) and Ulster (six northern counties) with its own government, but constitutionally still a part of the UK. In Ulster the Protestants were the majority and dominated the Catholics with strong discrimination. In 1968 the Catholics began to demonstrate for equal civil rights. There were street riots and the British Army was sent to Northern Ireland supposedly to protect the Catholics from Protestant attacks.

Since the arrival of the British Army in 1968, more than 2,000 people have died and more than 20,000 have been injured in political conflicts. Many people are convinced that the only solution is for the British troops to leave and Ulster to unite with Eire.