



Lesson 1

What is the UK? One country or four?

Exercise A MAIN READING



audio-1

Listen to the essay being read. Circle any words that you do not know. Next, re-read the essay using a dictionary to help you.



Many people translate 「イギリス」 as “England”. This may be acceptable in some contexts, but it is not correct. The official name is the “United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland”. Great Britain is the collective name given to the countries of England, Scotland and Wales. In other words, England is

only one of the four countries that make up the United Kingdom (the UK). That’s why the Scottish, the Welsh and the people of Northern Ireland insist, “We are not English!”

Each of the four countries has its own culture, language and a certain amount of political independence. Scotland in particular retains its own education and legal system, as well as political independence through the Scottish Parliament. A small percentage of the population (around 1%) speaks the traditional Gaelic language, but most Scottish people speak English, while some speak both English and Scots (a variety of ancient English). For example, if someone asks you, “Hou’s aw wi ye?” they are asking how you are in Scots.

The most distinctive feature of Wales is its language. The Welsh language, which is spoken by over 20% of the population, is completely different from English. For example, “good mornig” is “bore da”. Wales also has a distinctive culture, and is often referred to as the “land of song”, because of its strong tradition of music. The most popular sport in Wales is rugby. In spite of its small population, Wales does very well in international competitions.

Northern Ireland also has its own culture and Irish language, but is best known for its history of violence between the various extremist groups who want Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK, and those who want it to be part of the Republic of Ireland. However, the majority of people in Northern Ireland, who are entitled to both British and Irish citizenship, just want peace, and this was achieved through the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

Each of the four countries in the UK has its own patron saint, and this is represented in the national flag. The flag, called the Union Jack, dates from the union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1801. The red cross of Saint George (the patron saint of England) is combined with the diagonal red cross of Saint Patrick (the patron saint of Ireland) and the diagonal blue cross of Saint Andrew (the patron saint of Scotland). Saint David, the patron saint of Wales, is not represented in the flag. The Union Jack is often seen at international sports competitions or events attended by members of the Royal Family, but it is not used in school ceremonies and is very rarely flown by individual members of the public.

Exercise B SHORT ANSWERS

Refer to the essay and answer the following questions.

1. What is the official name in English of the nation called 「イギリス」?

2. What countries collectively make up Great Britain?

3. In addition to English, what other languages are spoken in Scotland?

4. For what sport is Wales best known?

5. Who is the patron saint of Ireland?

Exercise C KEYWORDS

Choose the best word(s) from the box to complete each sentence below.

contexts	collective	independence	retains	distinctive
extremist	entitled	achieved	patron saint	diagonal

1. At the meeting of world leaders, the [] of the small island was officially recognized.
2. James speaks with a [] accent. He uses broad Scots at home with his family and standard Scottish English in the office.
3. Saint Honoré is the [] of bakers and confectioners.
4. The man felt [] to a huge settlement in the court case because he had been severely injured.
5. Scots is the [] term for the Northern, Central and Southern Scots dialects.

▶ Listening Practice ◀

Exercise D GUEST CORNER audio-2

Read the questions and then listen to Maya and Alex talk about national sports teams. Circle the correct answers.

1. Maya seems to:
 - a) be confused about the national teams of the UK.
 - b) have no interest in the national teams of the UK.
 - c) be an expert on the national teams of the UK.
2. Why is there no national UK football team?
 - a) Football is not played in all of the four countries of the UK.
 - b) Each of the four countries has an independent football league.
 - c) Most British people prefer to play basketball rather than football.
3. According to Alex, which country do the participants represent in the Olympics?
 - a) England
 - b) United Kingdom
 - c) Great Britain

Exercise E VIEW FROM JAPAN



audio-3

Read the questions and then listen to Noriko talk about her research project. Circle the correct answers.

1. Who attempted to destroy the Welsh language?
 - a) various groups of Viking settlers
 - b) various university academics
 - c) the UK central government
2. Until what age is Welsh compulsory in schools?
 - a) fourteen
 - b) sixteen
 - c) eighteen
3. How many fluent speakers of Ainu remain in Japan?
 - a) hundreds
 - b) thousands
 - c) millions

Exercise F OVER TO YOU

Please answer the following questions and then discuss your answers with a partner.

1. What are your impressions of the various countries that make up the United Kingdom? Explain.

2. Which country—England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland—would you like to visit and why?

3. What are some of the regional differences between the main areas in Japan (Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto, Kansai, Shikoku, Kyushu, etc)?
