

## The United Kingdom v Great Britain

Link: <https://virtually-fluent.com/the-united-kingdom-v-great-britain/>

For being such a small island, England is quite complicated when it comes to the name. They have the United Kingdom (UK), Great Britain (GB), and the British Isles. But to understand what each of these mean, we first need to know about four individual countries.

Below we will learn about each country:

### **1. England**

England is a small country bordered by Scotland and Wales and surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the Irish Sea, the English Channel and the North Sea. With a population of 68 million people.

The capital of England is London, which is the most populated city by far, almost 10 million people. To provide more perspective, the second-largest city is Birmingham, with just 2 million people.

The country is ruled by the UK government, but each of the 48 regions (called “counties”) have some local responsibilities, such as council tax, education, local transport, libraries and waste disposal amongst other things. There is a most notable rivalry between counties, the “North-South divide”.

**5 best things to have come out of England:** the Industrial Revolution, the pencil, Tim Berners-Lee (who invented the world wide web), the smallpox vaccine, Sir Isaac Newton and the steam locomotive

### **2. Wales**

Wales is perhaps the most different country in the kingdom. Although English is still the main language, around 20% of the population still speak Welsh as the primary language and 75% can understand, speak or write Welsh.

Wales only has six cities: the capital city is Cardiff, then there is Bangor, St David's, St Asaph, Swansea and Newport. Wales has beautiful landscapes, parks and castles, but the main industries are mining and manufacturing.

**5 best things to have come out of Wales:** the microphone, the breathalyser, Bill Frost (who first patented the aeroplane), the equals sign and radar.

### **3. Scotland**

Scotland is the modern English for Scotia (in Latin) meaning land of the Scots. Scotland is to the north of England and counts for around one third of the land on our island.

Scotland has a small population of 5.5 million people and the capital city is Edinburgh. Other populated cities include Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee. This country is known for its beautiful landscapes, castles and lakes. There are many small Scottish islands, such as Skye, Mull and Lewis & Harris with beautiful views of the sea.

The main language is English, but Scotland also has a history of Scottish Gaelic and Scots language, but these are spoken by very few people.

**5 best things to have come out of Scotland:** the Loch Ness monster, the telephone, the bicycle, the invention of television and the discovery of penicillin.

### **4. Northern Ireland**

Northern Ireland has a long history of invasions given its location as an island on the west of England, Scotland and Wales. The capital city is Belfast, but Derry is another important city. The population in Northern Ireland is about 1.8 million, so it is the smallest country in the kingdom.

The main language in Northern Ireland is also English, but Irish Gaelic was the dominant language before the 17th century. The accent of the Northern Irish people is very different to England too.

There has been a long-standing rivalry between the two main religious groups in Northern Ireland- the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. Religion is also related to politics. Roman Catholics are often nationalists. Protestants are often unionists. This rivalry became extremely intense in the early 1900's.

**5 best things to have come out of Northern Ireland:** milk chocolate, the modern tractor, streetcars, the electric tramway and the ejector seat in an aeroplane.

**Great Britain** is the word to represent England, Scotland and Wales together. It was formed in 1707 by the Acts of Union. This term is used in the Olympics and in other global sports.

**The United Kingdom** (UK) is the word to represent England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales together. It was formed in 1800 in an Act of Union and involved all of Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales, but in 1922, the Republic of Ireland gained independence, so this left only Northern Ireland as part of the UK. Nowadays, the official name is “The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland”. This is used by the government, on our passports and for official documents.

**The British Isles** represents all of Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, the Isle of Man, Shetland, Orkney and many smaller islands too.

***Although generally working together as one united kingdom, when it comes to sport (rugby and football) it is each country to its own!***

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- 1) Summarise your article.
- 2) Did you know much about the UK before?
- 3) Have you visited the UK?
- 4) Did you know about the inventions that have come out of the country?
- 5) Talk about your country:
  - a) Population
  - b) Capital city
  - c) Biggest cities
  - d) The language
- 6) What is the biggest invention to have come out of your country?