

England

England is the biggest of the four countries in the United Kingdom. Together with Scotland and Wales, these three countries are the island of Great Britain. The English Channel is in the south between England and France. People travel to France by ferry across the English Channel or by train through the Channel Tunnel which goes under the sea.



Over 50 million people live in England and that's around 80 per cent of the total UK population. It is a multicultural country where more than 250 languages are spoken in the capital city, London. The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy, which means that there is a queen or king but they don't make the laws of the country. Laws and political decisions in England are made by the Parliament of the United Kingdom. The Houses of Parliament are in central London next to the River Thames and the most famous part is the clock tower, Big Ben.

Other large cities in England are Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Bristol. Outside cities, England is a very green country and has many rural areas of natural beauty such as the Lake District, an area with lots of lakes in the north, and the New Forest, a big area of forest in the south of the country.

Language The official language of England is English, which is spoken today by millions of people all over the world. Many students go to England from other countries to study the language and learn about the culture. Although everyone speaks English, there are many different accents around the country. French was the official language in England between 1066 and 1362, which is why there are many French words and expressions in English such as 'bon voyage' for 'have a good trip' or 'bouquet' for 'a bunch of flowers'.

Music English people love music. In the summer you can go to music festivals all over the country like those at Glastonbury, Leeds or Reading. Glastonbury is a five-day festival of music, dance, comedy, theatre and circus and around 175,000 people go. Many people stay at the festivals for a few days and camp in tents. People listen to all types of music, especially pop and rock. England has produced many international groups and singers like the Beatles, Amy Winehouse, Coldplay, Ed Sheeran and Adele.

Sport The most popular sports in England are football, rugby and cricket and most towns have a sports ground where teams can play. English football teams like Manchester United, Chelsea and Liverpool are world-famous and English football players include David Beckham, Wayne Rooney and Harry Kane. Women's football is also popular and teams play in leagues and competitions all over the country. Every year, the English rugby union team play in the Six Nations Championship against Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France and Italy. Cricket is a traditional sport played with a bat and ball which began in England and is now played all over the world. People like to watch all these sports on television, as well as other sports like horse racing, tennis, snooker (a type of billiards) and motor racing.

Food England is a very multicultural country and this has a big influence on the food people eat. Indian, Chinese and Italian cuisines are popular alternatives to traditional English food like fish and chips, roast beef or sausage and mash (mashed potatoes). Many English people drink several cups of tea every day, usually with milk. However, coffee and herbal teas are also popular.

Symbols The national flag of England is white with a red cross. It is called the St George's Cross and Saint George is the patron saint of England. St George's Day is on 23 April, but it's not a public holiday. The rose is the national flower of England and the lion is the national animal. The lion is a symbol of many English sports teams.

EXERCISES

1) Match the names with what they are and write a–j next to the numbers 1–10.

| | | | |
|---------|------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1..... | English Channel | a. | clock |
| 2..... | Big Ben | b. | city |
| 3..... | Bristol | c. | sport |
| 4..... | The New Forest | d. | rugby competition |
| 5..... | Glastonbury | e. | traditional food |
| 6..... | Ed Sheeran | f. | sea |
| 7..... | Harry Kane | g. | singer |
| 8..... | Six Nations | h. | rural area |
| 9..... | snooker | i. | footballer |
| 10..... | sausage and mash | j. | music festival |

2) Choose the best answer to these questions.

- Great Britain is England, ...
 - Scotland and Northern Ireland.
 - Scotland and Wales.
 - Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The sea to the south of England is the ...
 - Irish Sea.
 - Celtic Sea.
 - English Channel.
- There are ...
 - 50 million people living in England.
 - 80 million people living in England.
 - 250 million people living in England.
- Political decisions in England are made by ...
 - the queen or king.
 - the Parliament of the United Kingdom.
 - the Government of England.
- The Lake District is ...
 - near London.
 - in the south of England.
 - in the north of England.
- There are lots of words and expressions in English that are ...
 - French.
 - Welsh.
 - Chinese.
- Reading is the name of ...
 - a music festival.
 - an English music group.
 - a type of music.
- Manchester United, Chelsea and Liverpool ...
 - are all from London..
 - play against the national teams of Wales, Scotland and Ireland every year.
 - are known all over the world.
- In the Six Nations Championship, England doesn't play against ...
 - France.
 - Spain.
 - Italy

10. People in England ...

- a. prefer traditional food.
- b. enjoy the variety of different cuisines.
- c. don't drink much tea.

3) Complete the sentences with a word from the box.

| | | | |
|------------|---------|---------|-------|
| all over | across | through | to |
| between x2 | next to | about | in x2 |

1. The English Channel is in the south, _____ England and France.
2. People travel to France by ferry _____ the English Channel or by train _____ the Channel Tunnel.
3. The Houses of Parliament are in central London _____ the River Thames.
4. Many students go to England from other countries _____ study the language and learn _____ the culture.
5. French was the official language _____ England _____ 1066 and 1362.
6. Women's football teams play _____ leagues and competitions _____ the country.