

The United Kingdom – key facts

- The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** is in northern Europe. It is just 34 km (21 miles) across the **English Channel** from France. The UK is its shorter name.
- The United Kingdom is made up of four smaller countries: **England, Scotland, Wales** and **Northern Ireland**. They each have their own football teams, flags and governments. The UK's Prime Minister is the person in charge. The Queen is the Head of State.
- Major cities in the UK are: **London, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool, Newcastle, Sheffield, Belfast, Bristol, Cardiff**.
- There are **15 national parks** in the UK.
- England (capital – **London**) is mountainous in the north, flat in the east and has low hills throughout most of the remaining territory. Major UK rivers – **Thames, Humber** and **Severn** (the longest river in the UK) – are in England. **South Downs** with its white cliffs and the **Lake District** are famous physical features (features formed by nature) in England.
- Scotland (capital – **Edinburgh**) is very mountainous, apart from a narrow flat area in the middle. The highest mountain in the UK, **Ben Nevis – 1,345 metres**, is in Scotland. **Scottish Highlands** are a popular tourist destination. There are hundreds of islands along the western and northern coasts.
- Wales (capital – **Cardiff**) is also very mountainous, especially in the north and centre, with several large valleys in the south. **Snowdonia** is a famous national park in Wales.
- All the above countries are on the island of Great Britain.
- Northern Ireland (capital – **Belfast**) is separated from the rest of the UK and is situated on the island of Ireland. It is the smallest part of the UK. It is mostly hilly and has the largest lake in the UK – **Lough Neagh**.
- There are many types of wild animals in the UK. **Bats, badgers, foxes, rabbits** and **river otters** can all be found in England. In Scotland lives the **red deer**, it is a large mammal with huge antlers.
- There are more than **500 different types of birds** to spot in the UK. The robin, blackbird and magpie are all common birds. There are even wild, green parrots in South London and Surrey.
- There are **over 63 million people** in the UK, with great **majority living in England**. Most people live in cities and towns, especially in the **south-east, centre and north-east of England, central lowlands of Scotland** and **south of Wales**.
- Most economic activity in the UK is in the **services sector**. It includes education (e.g. universities), hospitals, banks, television and films, advertising, hotels, amusements parks and shops (including shopping centres).
- Major products manufactured in the UK are **cars, parts for aeroplanes** and **medicines**.
- British farms produce mostly **milk** and **eggs, wheat, barley, potatoes** and many vegetables and fruits. They also rear **sheep, cattle** and **poultry**.
- Most of the **energy** in the UK comes from **oil, gas, coal** and **nuclear**. A big part of the energy is produced from **renewable sources**, like **wind, solar** and **biofuels** (gas from sewage and landfill).



Counties of the UK



England is divided into **48 counties**. We live in a county of **Bedfordshire**.

England is also divided into **9 regions**: North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, London, South East and South West. Luton lies in **East of England**.

1. What county is Luton in?
a) London b) England c) Bedfordshire d) Buckinghamshire

2. What is the capital of Wales?
a) Edinburgh b) Cardiff c) Belfast d) Snowdon

3. Where is Ben Nevis?
a) in Scotland b) in England c) in Wales d) in Northern Ireland

4. How many counties is England divided into?
a) 9 b) 15 c) 48 d) 63

5. What separates England from France?
a) Atlantic Ocean b) North Sea c) French Sea d) English Channel

6. What region is Bedfordshire in?
a) East Midlands b) East of England c) South East d) South West

7. How many people live in England
a) 200 thousand b) 200 million c) over 48 million d) over 63 million

8. What is the longest river in the UK called?
a) river Severn b) river Thames c) river Humber d) river Lea

9. What does the UK mainly produces?
a) books b) hats c) cars d) computers

10. To go to Wales from Luton you would need to go...
a) north b) east c) south d) west