

English is spoken in many countries, for example England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, The USA, Australia, India, South Africa and many others.

Great Britain consists of England, Scotland and Wales. The United Kingdom consists of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Queen is the queen of all the United Kingdom. Now the Queen is Queen Elizabeth the second. She has been a queen for more than 60 years.

The United Kingdom is on the British Isles.

Southern Ireland is independent; it is not part of the United Kingdom. Great Britain is in the Atlantic Ocean. The highest mountains in Great Britain are Ben Nevis in Scotland, and Snowdon in Wales. The South coast is mild and sunny, and the tourists love it.

England has an area of 244 100 square kilometres. Its population is 57 million. The currency is the Pound Sterling. England is a constitutional monarchy. It means the monarch (the king of queen) is the Head of State but he or she has very little power. Parliament and the Prime Minister have power. The Parliament has two houses: The House of Commons and the House of Lords.

Britain has two big parties: the Conservative party and the Labour party.

British people are a little shy and reserved and don't like questions about their private life.

People in Great Britain drive on the left.

People often say that English people always carry an umbrella, Scottish people hate spending money and drink a lot of whiskey, and Welsh people always play rugby.

In England there are a lot of interesting sights:

- Stratford-on-Avon – the birthplace and burial place of William Shakespeare. The Royal Shakespeare Company plays here at the Festival Theatre.
- Stonehenge (a great circle of standing stones). People think it had religious or astronomical importance.
- Windsor – a town on the River Thames. It has a royal castle.
- Hadrian's Wall. It is named after the Roman Emperor Hadrian. It was finished in the 2nd century. It is a large fortification along the Scottish border.
- Canterbury – the cathedral and the residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is the religious head of the Church of England.
- Oxford and Cambridge – famous (and the oldest) university towns in Britain.

The capital of England is London. It is a financial, cultural, industrial and tourist centre.

Greater London has a population of more than 8 million. Lots of tourists visit London each year. Some famous sights of London are:

- The Tower of London. It is an old fortress. It played an important part in British history. It was a palace and a prison. Now it is a museum. It is guarded by beefeaters.
- The London Eye – It is a giant Ferris wheel on the south bank of the River Thames.
- Buckingham Palace – the queen lives here. The changing of the guard is at 11.30.
- Westminster Abbey – it has tombs of famous British people. Coronations and royal weddings are held there.
- Houses of Parliament – it has a famous clock tower with Big Ben.
- St. Paul's Cathedral – a very big cathedral. It was built by Sir Christopher Wren in the 17th century.
- Trafalgar Square – It is the heart of London. It has fountains and pigeons. Nelson's Column is there. Nelson was an admiral who defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.

- 10 Downing Street –the Prime Minister lives there. It is guarded all day.
- Westminster Bridge – a very beautiful and famous bridge
- Tower Bridge – it is the most famous bridge in London. It is near the Tower of London.
- Famous museums: The British Museum, The New London Museum, Tate Gallery, Victoria and Albert Museum
- Madame Tussaud’s Waxworks in Baker Street. It has wax figures of famous people.

5 million people live in Scotland. Scotland has three large areas: the Highlands, the Lowlands, and the Islands. The capital of Scotland is Edinburgh. Loch Ness is in Scotland, too. There is a monster in Loch Ness, her name is Nessie. She doesn’t like tourists so she doesn’t often come to the surface, and it is very difficult to meet her.

The capital of Wales is Cardiff. Welsh people have their own language. The population of Wales is 2.9 million people.

The capital of Northern Ireland is Belfast. Irish people are friendly. Ireland has very beautiful lakes and rivers.

Festivals in England:

- 14th February (the fourteenth of February): It's St. Valentine's Day; many people send a card to the person they love. People usually don’t sign these cards.
- 31st October (the thirty-first of October): It is the time of Halloween. Halloween is the contraction of All Hallows’ Eve, the day before All Hallows’ Day, 1st November (the first of November). Halloween is connected with witches and ghosts. At parties people dress up in strange costumes and pretend they are witches. They cut horrible faces in potatoes and pumpkins and put a candle inside, which shines through the eyes. Children dressed in white sheets knock on doors and ask if you would like a 'trick' or 'treat'. If you give them something nice (sweets or chocolate), a 'treat', they go away. However, if you don't give them anything, they play a 'trick' on you, for example they make a lot of noise or spill flour on your front doorstep (or worse 😊).
- 5th November (the fifth of November) – Guy Fawkes Day: In 1605 King James the First was on the throne. He was a Protestant. Some Catholics wanted to blow up the Houses of Parliament on 5th November (the fifth of November) of that year, when the King was going to open Parliament. They put gunpowder under the House of Lords and asked Guy Fawkes to explode it. But Guy was caught and the Houses of Parliament were not blown up. Now British people celebrate 5th November. They burn a straw dummy on a bonfire and set off fireworks.

The United States of America consists of fifty states. Its capital is Washington D.C., and its biggest city is New York. Three hundred and twenty million people live in the USA. About 3.5 per cent of them are LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender). The USA has been independent since 1783. Before that, it was a colony of Britain. There are many nationalities in the USA. A lot of people go to live there. The geography and climate are very diverse. There are also very many different kinds of plants and animals in America.

Politically, the USA is a constitutional republic and representative democracy. There are two big political parties, the Republicans (they are conservative) and the Democrats (they are liberal). The US Constitution is the most important American legal document. Instead of a Parliament, the USA has a Congress with representatives. The president is the highest military leader, too. The US military is very strong, perhaps the strongest in the world. Very

many people have guns in the USA because it is easy to have a gun there. The USA is one of the few countries that still have capital punishment (halálbüntetés).

The USA has a lot of natural resources. The people are rich.

Hollywood is in Los Angeles. A lot of films are made in Hollywood. The Academy Awards, (Oscars) are held every year and the Oscar winners get a little statue of a man.

Americans love American football. It is very different from European football. In America European football is called soccer.

People don't use public transport much, everybody travels by car. Fuel is cheap and the roads are good and wide. Americans love big cars.

Thanksgiving is a very important holiday in America. It is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. At Thanksgiving, everybody has Thanksgiving dinner, which is roast turkey.

Poor turkeys! They probably hate Thanksgiving!

Some nice tourist attractions in the USA:

- The White House is the official home of the president of America. It is in Washington D.C. US presidents have been living there since 1800. It has been rebuilt and extended several times since 1800.
- Las Vegas is a world famous resort city. It is famous for gambling, shopping, fine dining and nightlife.
- Niagara Falls is perhaps the most famous waterfall in the world. It is actually three waterfalls on the border of Canada and the USA: the Horseshoe Falls, the American Falls and the Bridal Veil Falls. The Niagara Falls are on the Niagara River. The Niagara Falls are not very high but they carry the most water of all waterfalls.
- The Golden Gate Bridge is a very famous bridge over the Golden Gate Strait. The bridge is 1.6 kilometres long.
- Yellowstone National Park is a national park in Wyoming. It was established in 1872. The Old Faithful Geyser is a very famous geyser in Yellowstone Park. Yogi Bear (Maci Laci) lives in Yellowstone Park, too.
- Manhattan is the most well-known part of New York City. It has the Statue of Liberty, Broadway, the Empire State Building, Central Park and 5th Avenue.
- Broadway is very famous. It is in New York and there are a lot of good theatres there.
- The Grand Canyon is in North Arizona and is a very popular tourist attraction. The Canyon is more than 400 kilometres long and more than 1 kilometre deep.

Australia is a big island in the southern hemisphere. The British came to Australia in the late 18th century. Before that, the Aborigines lived there. Many Aborigines still live there. At first the British used Australia as a big prison for British prisoners. The population grew and new colonies were formed. The six Australian colonies united in 1901 and formed the Commonwealth of Australia. Australia now has six states. Australia has a liberal democratic political system. Politically it is a federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy. The population of Australia is 24 million. Australia is rich and developed. It is very popular with tourists and many people want to go and live in Australia because it is rich and sunny. However, Australia is very dangerous. It is full of dangerous snakes, spiders and other deadly animals. The capital of Australia is Canberra. The biggest and most famous city in Australia is Sydney. About 4.4 million people live in Sydney. The middle of Australia is a desert. There are no towns there.

Australia is beautiful and you can visit many interesting places there:

- The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef system. It has more than 2900 reefs and 900 islands and it is more than 2900 kilometres long. It is near Queensland, Australia.
- The Sydney Opera House is an extraordinary building in Sydney. It is world famous. It was finished in 1973.
- Sydney Harbour Bridge is a beautiful bridge across Sydney Harbour. Trains, cars, bicycles and pedestrians can travel on it. It is near the Sydney Opera House.
- Melbourne is a very big city in Australia and has many beautiful sights, such as the Shrine of Remembrance, the Royal Exhibition Building, Finders Street Station and many others.

The European Union was formed with the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. The European Union consists of 27 member states. 448 million people live in the EU. There is an internal single market in the EU with the free movement of people, goods, services and capital. The currency of the EU is the Euro but it is not used in every EU country. Hungary has been a member of the EU since 2004. There are many laws in the EU which apply to all member states. The leader of the EU is the European Commission. 21 EU member states are members of NATO, too. The EU gives a lot of humanitarian aid to developing countries.