**The United Kingdom**

The United Kingdom of G.B. and Northern Ireland is situated on the British Isles. The British Isles consists of two large islands, G.B. and Ireland, and about five thousand small islands. Their total area is over 244,000 square kilometers.

The UK is made up of four countries: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. GB consists of England, Scotland and Wales and doesn't include Northern Ireland. The capital of the UK is London.

The British Isles are separated from European continent by the North Sea and the English Channel. The western coast of GB is washed by the Atlantic Ocean and the Irish Sea.

The surface of the British Isles varies very much. The north of Scotland is mountainous and is called the Highlands, while the south with its beautiful valleys and plains is called the Lowlands.

There are a lot of rivers in GB, but they are not very long. The Severn is the longest river, while the Thames is the deepest and the most important one.
The mountains, the Atlantic Ocean and the warm waters of the Gulf Stream influence the climate of the British Isles. The weather in GB is very changeable. A fine morning can change into a wet afternoon and evening and vice versa. The English people say: "Other countries have a climate; in England we have weather." The English also say that they have three variants of weather: when it rains in the morning, when it rains in the afternoon or when it rains all day long.

The weather is the favorite conversational topic in GB. After they greet each other they start talking about the weather.
The best time of the year in GB is spring (of course, it rains in spring too). The two worst months in Britain are January and February. They are cold, damp and unpleasant. The best place in the world then is at home by the big fire. Summer months are rather cold and there can be a lot of rainy days. So most people who look forward to summer holidays, plan to go abroad for the summer.

The most unpleasant aspect of English weather is fog and smog. This is extremely bad in big cities especially in London. The fog spreads everywhere so cars move along slowly and people can't see each other. They try not to be run over by a car but still accidents are frequent in the fog.

**Wales**

Wales is a part of the United Kingdom. The country borders on England in the east and is washed by the Atlantic Ocean and the Irish Sea in the west. Wales is not a very big country with a population of about three million people. There are two official languages in Wales – Welsh and English, both of which are taught in schools.

Much of Wales’s landscape is mountainous, especially in the north and central regions. The highest mountain is Snowdon. There are also a lot of beautiful lakes in the country. These are Wales’s picturesque landscapes that attract tourists from all over the world.

Wales is primarily an agricultural country. There aren’t many big cities in Wales. The capital of the country is Cardiff, which is considered to be the largest media centre in the UK outside of London. There is a Roman castle and a modern shopping centre in the city as well as a cathedral and university. Cardiff is also an industrial city.

Wales has its own interesting culture including language, customs, holidays and music. The country is represented by the symbol of the red Welsh Dragon, which is depicted on the national flag. The flag of Wales, brought to Britain by Romans, is one of the oldest in the world. Other symbols of the country are leeks and daffodils. These are usually worn on St. David’s Day, which is celebrated on the 1st of March. St. David is the patron saint of Wales. The country has its own national game called rugby.

One can visit a number of beautiful places in Wales. There are three national parks: Snowdonia, Brecon and Pembrokeshire Coast. Wales has also four Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

So, Wales is a really nice country to visit.

**Northern Ireland**

Northern Ireland is one of the four countries of the United Kingdom. It is situated in the northeastern part of the island of Ireland including Rathlin Island and several smaller offshore islands. The country is washed by the North Channel and by the Irish Sea. The population of Northern Ireland is about 1.7 million people.

Northern Ireland consists of 26 districts and 6 counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone. They are also known as Ulster, though the territory does not include the entire ancient province of Ulster.

Northern Ireland has a temperate maritime climate. It’s wetter in the west than in the east of the country, although cloud cover is persistent across the region. Most of the land of Northern Ireland is covered in rich green grass, which is a result of damp climate and extensive deforestation in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Belfast is the capital and largest city of Northern Ireland. Among other major cities we can mention Armagh, Derry, Lisburn and Newry.

Northern Ireland has always had an industrial economy with shipbuilding, rope manufacture and textiles being the main industries. However heavy industry has been replaced by services. Tourism also plays an important role in the local economy. In recent time the economy has benefited from major investment by lots of multi-national corporations into high tech industry.

Northern Ireland has developed its own culture. There are lots of theatres and cinemas in the country. There are two national museums: the Ulster Museum in Belfast, which houses a collection of Irish antiquities and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. The Ulster Symphony Orchestra is among the leading orchestras of Britain.



