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1.Geographical position of Great Britain



Situated in north-western Europe, lying to the north of France and west of the Netherlands and Denmark, the United Kingdom, known popularly as Great Britain, is 244,786 sq. km (94,512 sq. miles).

It is situated on the British Isles. There are 5,500 islands. The two main islands are Great Britain and Ireland.

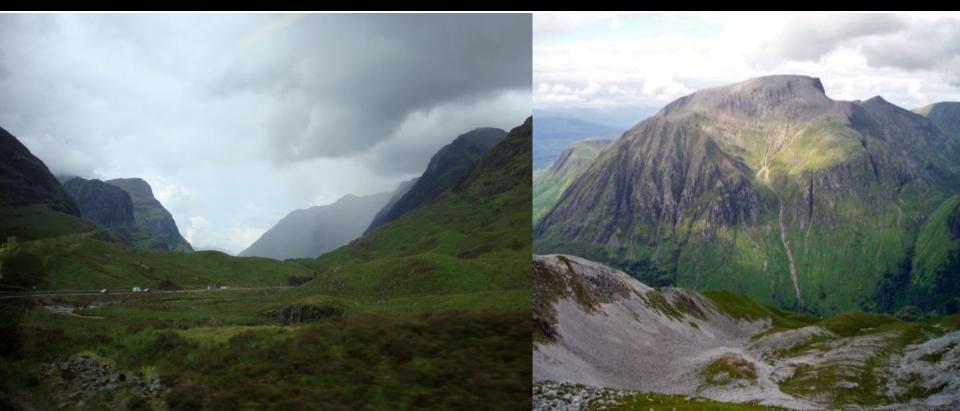
The British Isles are separated from Europe by the Strait of Dover and the English Channel. The British Isles are washed by the North Sea in the East and the Atlantic Ocean in the West.

Territory of Great Britain is divided into Lowland Britain and Highland Britain. Low-land Britain comprises Southern and Eastern England. Highland Britain includes Scotland.. Wales, the Pennines and the Lake District.

As well the territory of Great Britain is divided into four parts: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. England is in the southern and central part of Great Britain. Scotland is in the north of the island. Wales is in the west. Northern Ireland is situated in the north-eastern part of Ireland.

England is the richest, the most fertile and most populated part in the country. The main territory is a vast plain. In the north-western part of it there are many beautiful lakes. This part is called Lake District, which is an isolated compact mountain group to the west of the Pennines.

Scotland is a land of mountains. The Highlands of Scotland are among the oldest mountains in the world. The chain of mountains in Scotland is called the Grampians. Its highest peak is Ben Nevis. In England there is the Pennine Chain. In Wales there are the Cumbrian Mountains.





The British Isles have many rivers but they are not very long. The longest of them is the Severn . It flows into the Irish Sea. The most important river in Scotland is the Clyde. Glasgow stands on it. The Thames is the widest river in Great Britain. It is over 200 miles long. It flows through the rich agricultural and industrial areas of the country. London, the capital of Great Britain, is situated on it.

Climate



It rains very often in all seasons in Great Britain. Autumn and winter are the wettest. The sky is usually grey and cold winds blow. On the average, Britain has more than 200 rainy days a year. The English say that they have 3 variants of weather: when it rains in the morning, when it rains in the afternoon, and when it rains all day long. Sometimes it rains so heavily, that they say «It's raining cats and dogs».

Britain is known all over the world for its fogs. Sometimes fogs are so thick that it's impossible to see anything within a few meters. The winter fogs of London are, indeed, awful; they surpass all imagination. In a dense fog all traffic is stopped, no vehicle can move from fear of dreadful accidents. So, we may say that the British climate has three main features: it is mild, humid and very changeable.

The British Isles which are surrounded by the ocean have an insular climate.

There are 3 things that chiefly determine the climate of the United Kingdom: the position of the islands in the temperate belt; the fact that the prevailing winds blow from the west and south-west and the warm current — the Gulf Stream that flows from the Gulf of Mexico along the western shores of England. All these features make the climate more moderate, without striking difference between seasons. It is not very cold in winter and never very hot in summer. So, the British ports are ice-free and its rivers are not frozen throughout the year. The weather on the British Isles has a bad reputation. It is very changeable and fickle. The British say that there is a climate in other countries, but we have just weather. If you don't like the weather in England, just wait a few minutes.



Government



The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a constitutional monarchy. It means that the sovereign reigns but does not rule. Britain does not have a written constitution, but a set of laws. Parliament is the most important authority in Britain. Technically Parliament is made up of three parts: the Monarch, the House of Lords; and the House of Commons. In reality the House of Commons is the only one of the three which has true power.

The monarch serves formally as head of state. But the monarch is expected to be politically neutral and should not make political decisions. But after two rejections they are obliged to accept it. And finally a bill goes to the monarch to be signed. Only then it becomes law.



