Fast Facts The United Kingdom

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THE UNITED KINGDOM
Capital city: London

- **National emblems**
  - Leek (Wales)
  - Rose (England)
  - Thistle (Scotland)
  - Shamrock (Northern Ireland)
  - National Anthem: *God Save the Queen*
  - *Rule Britannia* (another patriotic song)
- **Currency: Pound Sterling £**
- **Mottos**
  - *Dieu et mon droit* "God and my right"
  - *Honni soit qui mal y pense* "Evil to him who evil thinks"
- **The British Coat of Arms**
- **Great Britain**
  - England (English)
  - Scotland (Scottish)
  - Wales (Welsh)
- **Northern Ireland or Ulster**
- **The British Flag: the Union Jack**
  - St Patrick's Cross (Ireland)
  - St George's Cross (England)
  - St Andrew's Cross (Scotland)

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BRITISH INSTITUTIONS

- **The Houses of Parliament (Legislative power)**
  - The House of Commons (650 elected members)
  - The House of Lords (92 non-elected members)
- King or Queen. Has mainly a representative role. (a constitutional monarchy)
- **The Cabinet (Executive power)**
  - Prime Minister = Head of the Cabinet
  - The Chancellor of the Exchequer (finance)
  - The Lord Chancellor (justice) = President of the House of Lords
  - The Home Secretary
  - The Foreign Secretary
  - The Defense Secretary
  - + others

Political parties

Labour Party (centre-left)	Liberal Democrats Party (centre, social liberal)	Conservative Party (centre-right conservative)

British history timeline

- **1066:** William, Duke of Normandy, invaded Britain.
- **1509-1547:** during the reign of Henry VIII, the Church of England became independent from the Roman Catholic Church.
- **1642-1660:** Civil War: Oliver Cromwell became head of a self-proclaimed Republic.
- **1837-1901:** Queen Victoria's reign saw the expansion and prosperity of the British Empire.
- **1936:** King Edward VIII abdicated without having been crowned. He married an American divorcee, Mrs Simpson.
- **1952:** Elizabeth II's coronation
- **1993:** The UK ratified the Maastricht Treaty but decided to remain out of the Economic and Monetary Union.
- **2011:** Prince William, heir to the British Crown, married Kate Middleton.

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LANDMARKS

- **Iconic places**
  - Big Ben Clock
  - Stonehenge
  - Tower Bridge
  - Stratford upon Avon Shakespeare's birthplace
  - Trafalgar Square
- **Arts**
  - Tate Modern Gallery (Museum of Modern Art)
  - British Museum
  - National Gallery
- **Places of power**
  - **Government and institutions**
    - 10, Downing Street (Residence of the Prime Minister)
    - Westminster (building of the British Parliament)
    - Buckingham Palace
    - Scotland Yard
- **Education**
  - Public schools: Eton, Rugby...
  - University of Oxford
  - University of Cambridge
- **Economy**
  - Oxford Street is the heart of London luxury shopping.
  - The City of London (historical centre of London: banks and the Stock Exchange)

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BRITISH MEDIA

- **The press (Fleet Street)**
  - **Quality papers (broadsheets)**
    - Daily papers
      - The Daily Telegraph — (Conservative views) read by the middle classes
      - theguardian — (Liberal views) famous for its commercial information, its foreign section and its book reviews
      - The Independent — (politically left-leaning but pro-market on economic issues)
      - The Times — (Conservative views) known for its special weekly supplements, read by the educated classes
    - Sunday papers
      - The Observer
      - The Sunday Telegraph
      - The Sunday Times
  - **Popular press / tabloid (gutter press)**
    - Daily papers
      - Daily Express
      - Daily Mail
      - Daily Mirror
      - The Sun
    - Sunday papers
      - Sunday Mirror
      - Sunday People
- **Radio broadcasting**
  - BBC Four
  - BBC Radio 1
- **Television**
  - itv
  - sky
  - Channel 4 Television
- BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) broadcasts radio and television programmes.