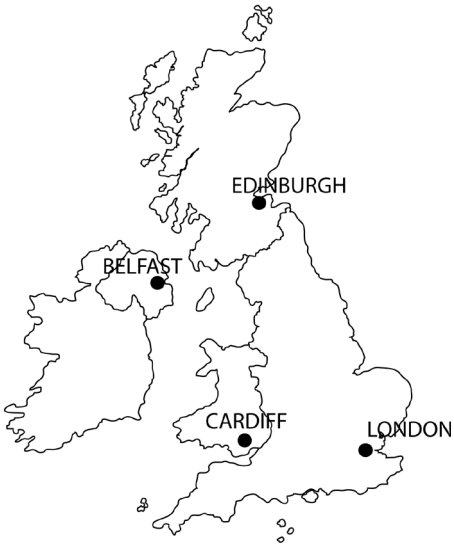
The United Kingdom



1 The United Kingdom is also called the UK and it is made up of four different **countries**: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Southern Ireland is a different country. Each of the countries in the UK has many of its own **laws**, made by its own **parliament**, but they also share some of their laws.

7 *Capital cities*
Each of the four countries has its own capital **city** which is where its **parliament** is. London is the capital city in England, Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland, Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland and Cardiff is the Welsh capital city. London is the capital city for the UK because that is where the UK parliament makes the shared laws as well as the English laws.

15 *Language*
The English language is spoken throughout the UK and all of the laws in each of the countries are written in English. However, even in England, not everyone speaks English. Many people in Cornwall, in the south-west of England, speak an old language called Cornish. Some people in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland also speak a language that was spoken in those countries before English became the main language. Many people in Wales speak the Welsh language, and it is taught in Welsh schools for those who only speak English. Away from the big cities, in the north of Scotland and in the mountains and the islands, people often speak the old Scottish language called Gaelic. Scottish Gaelic is different from the Irish Gaelic which is still spoken in parts of Northern Ireland, although more people in Northern Ireland speak Irish.

25 *Countryside*
Although there are cities in all of the countries in the UK, there is also a lot of countryside. All the countries have areas with hills and mountains, they all have **forests**, farming land, rivers and **coasts**. They all have areas of countryside which are very beautiful.

29 *Weather*
All of the countries in the UK have the same four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter but the countries have slightly different weather. Scotland is further north than England, so it is usually a bit colder and the Scottish cities and mountains have more snow in winter than the English, Welsh and Northern Irish cities and mountains. Wales and Northern Ireland are in the west of the UK and those places usually have more rain than places in the east of the UK.

35 *Islands*
All of the countries of the UK have some smaller **islands** which are separated from the mainland by a short distance of sea. People go to the islands for holidays because most islands are peaceful and they have good beaches that people enjoy exploring.

Glossary

City- a place with a lot of buildings where people live and work.
Coast- where the land and sea meet.
Country- cities, towns and countryside which share laws and a government.
Laws- the rules for a country that people have to obey.
Parliament- the place where laws are made.

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