

Making sense of the United Kingdom

Introduction: Brainstorm/quiz

Explain to students that this lesson is going to teach them some facts about the UK. Perhaps start by brainstorming things that the students associate with the UK, or by doing a mini quiz to see if students know the capitals of the constituent countries of the UK, the names of its famous historical figures, etc.

Task 1: Vocab

Pre-teach and discuss the following words and phrases.

Untangle	
Exclusion	
Colonial masters and slave drivers	
Rural yokels	
Geographical term vs political term	
Diplomacy vs bloodshed	
All power is vested in god	
Delegate power	
Theocracy	
Independent nation vs autonomous territory	
Oddities	
Autonomy	
Head of state	
Figurehead	

Task 2: What is England? What is Great Britain?? What is the UK???

Explain to the students that they are going to watch a short video about the British Isles (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3HnMLq8m9U> - 00.00 to 02.20). Explain that after watching the video they are going to make a short presentation on what they have learned. Hand out the map of the British Isles (below), and ask you students to use it to help them with their notes. Allow students two viewings of the video clip, before they present their findings.

Depending on class sizes, students can present their information to the teacher, or check/present in pairs or small groups before class feedback.



Extra Task

The second half of the video deals with the commonwealth realm, crown dependencies etc. If the students are interested, a comprehension task could be done with the table below.

	Explanation	Example
Commonwealth Realm		
Crown Dependencies		
British Overseas Territories		

Task 3: The making of Great Britain (Vocab)

Tell the students they are going to learn about the creation of Great Britain. Ask them if they know how long the political entity of Great Britain has existed.

Pre-teach the following vocab: Get students to match the words on the left to the definitions on the right.

<u>To play a formative role</u>	To become poor very quickly
<u>To surrender independence</u>	To join forces with someone
To reimburse	To have an important input into how a project is created/functions
<u>To ally with (someone)</u>	To give up your freedom
<u>Sudden impoverishment</u>	To pay money back
A "wee" bit	Dangerous
To raise capital	Scottish slang for a small amount
Hazardous	To collect enough money to start a business project

Task 4: The Making of Great Britain (Video)

This is the script of the video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3HnMLq8m9U>). It is broken into three sections. Get the students to read section one, and speculate as to what words may go in the gaps. If it is a one-on-one class, the text can be read aloud. Next watch the corresponding section of the video. Students should fill in the missing words as they listen.

(Part 1)

Back in the 1690s there were only two countries on the island of Great Britain: The Kingdom of Scotland and the Kingdom of England.

England and the other great _____ powers were doing rather well for themselves by expanding their empires through the cunning use of flags.

Scotland had no _____ but wanted to join in the game, and thus needed to establish a colony of her very own.

But where to build it?

"Panama!" declared Scotland.

She imagined the colony's _____ would make trade with the far east safer and faster by eliminating the long journey around the **hazardous** Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn where both wind and wave delight in smashing ships against rock and ice.

"Who will lend me money to make this great idea a reality?" asked Scotland.

" _____ " , was the answer.

Repeat the same process as for section one.

(part 2)

Instead of helping, the European empires started trade wars with Scotland to limit the power of their future rival.

So, poor Scotland had to fund the project herself. She gathered up all the money she could, literally put it all in a _____ and, **capital thusly raised**, sent off a colonial ship.

400,000 pounds, 8,000 kilometers and 111 days later, 2,500 Scotsmen landed on the shores of Panama, named it 'New Caledonia' and immediately discovered a few small _____ with their plan:

First, the mountains on the western side of Panama were **a wee bit larger** than expected, making overland trade pretty much impossible. Even if they had thought of building a canal, the technology to do so was still _____ years away.

Second, The woollen goods brought to trade with the locals was useless in the endless heat and humidity.

Third, the Spanish Conquistadors had already planted flags on the sandy beaches and weren't too happy to see the Scots arrive.

And fourth, without adequate supplies, disease such as the perennial tropical favourite, dysentery, spread quickly.

Two years and 2,000 dead Scots later, they _____ the project.

Repeat the process as in part one and two.

(Part 3)

Now, this wasn't the first failed attempt at Scottish empire – early colonies had been tried and abandoned in Nova Scotia, New Jersey and Carolina, but the Panama debacle was particularly _____ to Scotland because she was over-invested.

Remember that money-in-a-box? Turns out it was a fifth of the wealth of the whole country.

Oops.

Scotland's **sudden impoverishment** proved a golden opportunity for The Kingdom of England who was growing increasingly worried that her neighbour to the north would **ally with** an _____.

England offered Scotland a deal that would **reimburse** Scotland for her losses if she voted for union. In 1707 Scotland agreed and the Kingdom of Great Britain was born.

While the **surrender of independence** was _____ in Scotland, her economy improved with access to once English (now British) trade routes and **she played a formative role** in what would soon be the largest empire in human history.

That being said, still more than _____ years later, Scotland has never fully given up her national identity and thoughts of independence.

Task 4: reordering the story

After watching the video and checking understanding of the text, give students the following shortened version of the story. Each sentence can be cut out. Students should put the story in the correct order. After feedback, get students to retell the story without the help of any notes.

2500 Scots take 20% of their whole country's wealth and sail to Panama.

Scotland's economy improves because it now has access to world trading markets, but some scots are disappointed that they have sacrificed their independence.

Scotland and England unite to become the Kingdom of Great Britain.

Without adequate supplies 2000 Scots die of diseases.

No other country wants to help Scotland with its colony idea. They other countries probably see Scotland as a threat to their own trading positions.

Scotland abandons it's colonial project.

2500 Scots arrive in Panama and find that it is not such a good strategic location after all. The high mountains mean that transporting goods overland from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast will be very difficult.

Scotland, having lost 20 % of it's wealth, is now very poor. England worries that Scotland will now ally with an enemy of England, so it offers the Scots a deal: Join a union with us and we will pay your debts.

Scotland sees that England and the other great European powers are doing well for themselves creating empires. Scotland wants to join the 'game'.

Scotland chooses to establish a colony in Panama because it believes this to be a good strategic location for trade.

Task 5: The Monarchy

The following two video can be used to spark discussion of the monarchy. Prepare comprehension questions for the video, or ask students to take notes for and against the monarchy as they watch (the video is overwhelmingly positive!), before discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the system.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhyYgnhhKFw>)

