

Britain
 ['brɪtn] = *Great Britain*

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 8th Ed.

Britain
Brit·ain 7 [Britain Great Britain] *BrE* ['brɪtn] ^m *NAmE* ['brɪtn] ^m **noun singular**

the island containing England, Scotland and Wales

see also ↑Great Britain, ↑United Kingdom

Word Origin:

Old English Breoton, from Latin *Brittones* '**Britons**', superseded in Middle English by forms from Old French *Bretaigne* (from Latin *Brit(t)annia*). It became a largely historical term until revived in the mid 16th cent., as the possible union of England and Scotland became a subject of political concern.

Culture:

Britain and the US

The relationship between Britain and the US has always been a close one. Like all close relationships it has had difficult times. The US was first a British **colony**, but between 1775 and 1783 the US fought a war to become independent. The US fought the British again in the ↑**War of 1812**.

In general, however, the two countries have felt closer to each other than to any other country, and their foreign policies have shown this. During ↑**World War I** and ↑**World War II**, and more recently in the ↑**Gulf War** and the Iraq War, Britain and the US supported each other. When the US looks for foreign support, Britain is usually the first country to come forward and it is sometimes called 'the 51st state of the union'.

But the **special relationship** that developed after 1945 is not explained only by shared political interests. An important reason for the friendship is that the people of the two countries are very similar. They share the same language and enjoy each other's literature, films and television. Many Americans have British ancestors, or relatives still living in Britain. The US government and political system is based on Britain's, and there are many Anglo-American businesses operating on both sides of the Atlantic. In Britain some people are worried about the extent of US influence, and there is some **jealousy** of its current power.

The special relationship was strong in the early 1980s when Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister in Britain and Ronald **Reagan** was President of the US. Since ↑**September 11** the support given by Britain under Tony Blair for US actions in Afghanistan and Iraq has led to problems at home and with Britain's partners in the ↑**European Union**.

Culture:

Great Britain

Great Britain is, strictly, a **geographical** area consisting of the large island which is divided into England, Wales and Scotland. It is often called **Britain**. The name *Great Britain* was first used in a political sense after the ↑**Act of Union** of Scotland with England and Wales in 1707.

The British Isles describes the **geographical** area of Great Britain, all of Ireland (including the independent Republic of Ireland), and all the many smaller **offshore** islands, including the ↑**Orkney Islands** and the ↑**Scilly Isles**. It has a total area of 121 544 square miles/314 798 square kilometres.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, called for short **the United Kingdom** or **the UK**, refers to the political state that includes the countries of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It does not include the ↑**Isle of Man** or the ↑**Channel Islands**, which are **Crown dependencies**. The United Kingdom was formed in 1801 when the Irish parliament was joined with the parliament for England, Wales and Scotland in London, and the whole of the British Isles became a single state. However, in 1922 the south of Ireland became the Irish Free State and, in 1949, a completely independent republic.

The names *Great Britain* and *United Kingdom* are now often used informally to mean the same thing. There are older names for parts of the United Kingdom, but these are found mostly in literature. ↑**Britannia** is the name the Romans gave to their **province** which covered most of England. ↑**Albion** was the original Roman name for England, **Caledonia** their name for Scotland, **Cambria** for Wales and **Hibernia** for Ireland.

The people of the United Kingdom are **British** and have British **nationality**. As a group they are usually referred to as **the British**, rather than as **Britons**, though this name is used in the media. **Ancient Britons** were the people who lived in Britain before the Romans came. Only people who come from England can be called **English**. People from Ireland are **Irish**, people from Wales **Welsh**, and people from Scotland **Scots** or **Scottish**, and they do not like being called English. The term **the Brits** is only used informally, often humorously. Many people from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have stronger feelings of loyalty towards their own country than they do to the United Kingdom. British people who have come originally from Asia, Africa or the West Indies may also feel two sets of loyalties.

Britain

Longman DOCE 5th Ed. (En-En)

Brit·ain /'brɪtn/ *BrE* ^m *AmE* ^m

Great Britain or the UK

⇒ ↑**Battle of Britain**