

# England



England was once the most powerful country in the world. It covers more than half of a rocky island that lies off the coast of continental Europe. England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland together are known as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Without Northern Ireland, they are called Great Britain. Some people say the British Isles or just Britain.

The rocky coasts of Britain have protected it from attack. It has been nearly 1,000 years since enemy soldiers landed there. Because they lived on an island, the English people had to travel first by boat whenever they wanted to go anywhere outside their own country. The English people have been good sailors for a very long time; since the days when they first built their own ships and sailed all over the world. This enabled England to build the greatest empire the world has ever known. In the late 1800s England ruled nearly one-fourth of the world's land area and one-fifth of its people. It ruled large parts of Asia, Africa and North America. It ruled Australia, New Zealand, Canada and most of India. It rules places in South and Central America and more than 1,000 islands. England became very rich from its trade with the empire countries. English ships brought home products and

materials from these countries and carried back things made in English factories.

But one day the people in the American colonies decided they wanted to run their own government and did not want to pay taxes any longer to England. So they rebelled and finally won their freedom. Since then other empire countries have also become free and independent. As these countries became free, most of them wanted to stay friends with England. So they formed a kind of huge club called the Commonwealth of Nations. Each nation in the Commonwealth is free to rule itself, but the heads of these nations meet with the queen and prime minister often to talk over their problems and try to advise and help each other.

Many of the world's finest writers, artists, and scientists are British. There are also many businessmen in Britain, which is one of the greatest manufacturing countries in the world. Much iron and coal is mined there. Steel is made there and shipbuilding is a big business. In 1956 Britain opened the world's first large-scale nuclear power station. It was the first country to make large amounts of electricity from nuclear energy.

To many people the British seem to be reserved at first; that is, they do not tell much about themselves until they know a person very well. They change their habits slowly. They don't like to change things just to be changing. Tea is a favorite with the British. Many like it in the morning and with sandwiches and cakes in the afternoon. After dinner they may raise their glasses and drink a toast to the queen's health. Some Englishmen like to spend time in their clubs, where they play cards, read newspapers, and

sometimes have lunch or dinner. There are men's clubs like this throughout England. There are also pubs which are neighborhood places where people go to drink beer, meet other people, have friendly talks and play darts.

English people like to walk, even in the rain. Many don't like furnace heat in their homes. They find it too hot and dry. There are many English accents: the way words are pronounced, and they rarely change. One Englishman often can tell what neighborhood another lives in just by his accent. The English have introduced a lot of new things to the world. Their music and singing groups have changed the style of music in many countries. Their capital city, London, is not only a center of government and business but also a center for new ways of thinking. The English love the old and familiar, but they are not afraid of the new.

***Answer the following questions using complete sentences.***

1. Why has it been difficult for the enemies of England to attack it ?
2. What is it about England that makes its people good sailors ?
3. What made it possible for England to build the greatest empire the world had ever known ?
4. How did England benefit from its empire countries ?
5. Which empire country set the trend to break free from England.
6. Which countries are eligible for membership to the Commonwealth of Nations ?
7. Why isn't England the greatest empire anymore ?

8. What significant achievement did England make in nuclear technology ?
9. In what way is the British people considered reserved ?
10. How does the author show us the English people really like walking ?