

what's in a name? The United Kingdom information sheet

The full name for the United Kingdom (UK) is 'The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'.

The UK is comprised of four countries: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The British Isles refers to the islands of Ireland and Great Britain, and their many coastal islands.

Great Britain, or Britain, is comprised of the countries of England, Scotland and Wales.

In the Middle Ages, the part of northern France (now known as Brittany) was also called Britain, so people called the island 'Great Britain'. In 1707, when the island's rival kingdoms of England and Scotland were united, it became known as the Kingdom of Great Britain.

The Isle of Man and the Channel Islands (consisting of Jersey and Guernsey) are all independent.

Capitals, cities and physical features

London is the capital of the UK. The capitals of the constituent jurisdictions are Belfast (Northern Ireland), Edinburgh (Scotland), Cardiff (Wales) and London (England)

Major cities in the UK include Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Canterbury, Dundee, Exeter, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Lisburn, Londonderry, Manchester, Newcastle, Newport, Norwich, Sheffield, Southampton, Swansea and York.

Physical features include rivers (e.g. the Clyde, Lagan, Severn, Thames), mountains (e.g. the Cairngorms, Cambrians, Mourne, Pennines, Snowdonia) and lakes (e.g. Bala, Loch Lomond, Loch Neagh, Loch Ness, Ullswater, Windermere).