

1. The United Kingdom

This week's lesson is based upon a collection of facts about the United Kingdom.

Level

Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level A2-B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Brainstorm on the subject of the United Kingdom.

2. Divide the students into pairs and give each pair a copy of Worksheet A. Give them a few minutes to read the sentences, looking up any new vocabulary, then ask them to fill the gaps with the correct words from the box. This exercise introduces some of the vocabulary that appears on Worksheets B and C. Make it clear that there is only one possible word to fill each gap, and that there are sixteen words in the box but only fourteen gaps in the text, meaning that two of the words should not be used.

3. Check answers in open class.

4. Keeping the students in their pairs, hand out copies of Worksheet B in which students have to match the numbers in the first column of the table with the items in the middle column. Although Worksheet A provides a little help, in some cases students will probably have to take a guess. Note that some of the figures are only approximate.

5. Check answers in open class.

6. Keeping students in their pairs, tell them that for the final exercise they are going to look at some statements about the United Kingdom and decide if they are true or false. They are then going to have to 'bet' anything from 10 to 50 points on their guesses.

7. Give each pair a copy of Worksheet C, and ask them to read and discuss the statements. In the first column after the statement they should write T (true) or F (false). In the second column they have to write the number of points they are willing to bet on their answer (10 points if they are forced to guess, going up to 50 if they are very confident about the answer).

8. After the pairs have given their answers, it's time to score. Each pair calls out their answer and how many points they have bet. If they have answered correctly, students enter their points in the final column (points won). If they have answered incorrectly, they should enter their points in the third column (points lost). At the end, students subtract the total of the third column from the total of the fourth column to give the total number of points they have won. The pair with the most points wins.

Answers

1. Wales 2. population 3. capital 4. third 5. Queen 6. sport 7. London
8. longest 9. size 10. connection 11. car 12. animals 13. kilometre 14. United States

Words that should not be used: bigger, one

Exercise 2

A: 51,000,000 B: 80,000 C: 354 D: 65 E: 1926 F: 75 G: 61 H: 1 I: 250,000
J: 70,000,000 K: 3,000,000 L: 0

Exercise 3

- 1. False.** The next World Cup, in 2010, will take place in South Africa. England is hoping to host the 2018 World Cup.
- 2. False.** The United Kingdom is home to three species of wild snake: the grass snake, the adder (the only poisonous species) and the extremely rare smooth snake.
- 3. False.** The length of the Thames is 346 kilometres – only slightly shorter than the Severn.
- 4. False.** The most popular spectator sports after football are rugby and cricket.
- 5. True.** The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II was in 1953.
- 6. True.** The latest statistics suggest around 90% of British households own a CD player.
- 7. False.** According to most sources Spain is the most popular foreign destination with British tourists, followed by France.
- 8. True.** The UK's population density is far higher than that of the US – about 250 people square kilometre compared with only about 30.
- 9. True.** According to the recent official figures, around 25% of households own two cars and around 5% own three or more.
- 10. True.** It is often estimated that around 50,000 of Britain's 250,000 foxes live in urban areas, and London has its fair share – around 10,000 according to most estimates.

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom

The United Kingdom entry in *Simple English Wikipedia*. Challenging for pre-intermediate level.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1038758.stm

United Kingdom country profile from the BBC website. Intermediate level and above.

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/glance/>

Facts and figures about the United Kingdom from the Office of National Statistics.