

1. How democratic is Britain?

In the past, Britain was regarded (and not just by the British) as the “cradle* of democracy”, but in recent years many people have begun to examine Britain's political system much more critically. Here are some of the main criticisms.

The voting system

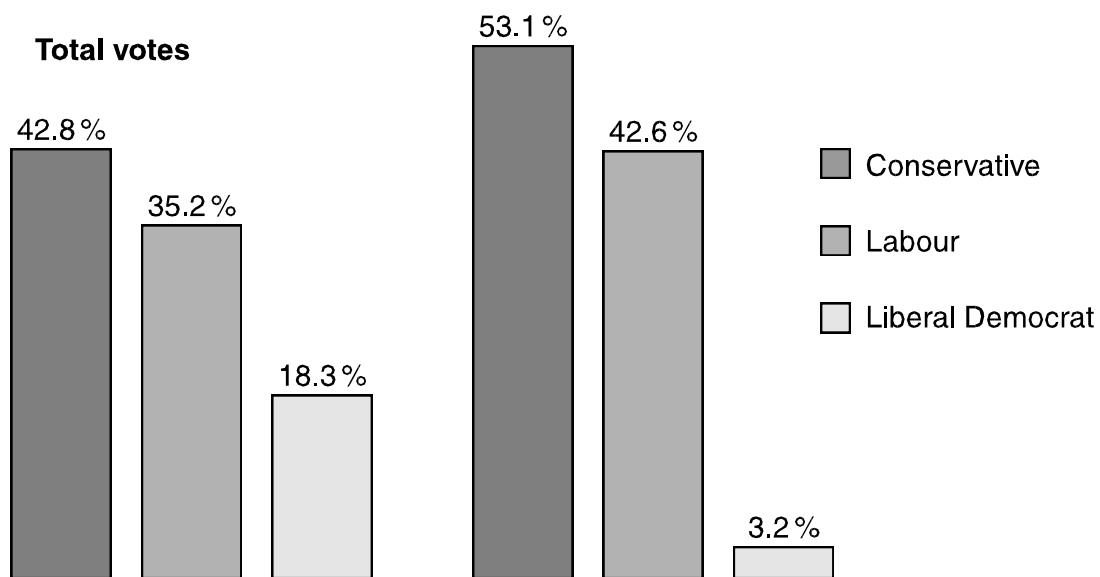
There are 650 constituencies* in the United Kingdom (523 for England, 38 for Wales, 72 for Scotland and 17 for Northern Ireland). In an election, the candidate, i. e. political party that gets the most votes becomes the Member of Parliament (MP) for a constituency or “seat”. The system worked well enough in the past when there were usually only two political parties, but it's unfair when there are three or four parties, as is now often the case in modern elections. It means that very often the opinions of a majority* of voters are not represented at all. Here's an example of how easily this can happen: If you take an average inner-city constituency with 100,000 voters, only about 70 % of them will vote in an election – that's 70,000 votes. Let's say that there are three parties, A, B and C, fighting the election. At the end of the election the results are:

- Party A – 24,000 votes
- Party B – 23,500 votes
- Party C – 22,500 votes

Party A has a small majority and wins the election. This means that the MP for this constituency has been elected by less than a quarter of the voters.

cradle Wiege; constituencies Wahlkreise; majority Mehrheit

Seats in parliament



Ergebnisse der 1992 General Election

The “unwritten constitution”*

Unlike most modern democracies such as Germany or the USA, Britain has no written constitution. However, books and articles on the British political system often refer to an “unwritten” constitution. The problem is that nobody is certain exactly what this is. It is generally regarded as a collection of laws, judges' interpretations of these laws and various traditions about the way Britain is governed. But this collection is so vague that it is really meaningless. Some commentators* of the British political system often try to turn an obvious disadvantage into an advantage by saying that an “unwritten constitution” is much more “flexible”* and therefore superior to a written constitution, which can become “obsolete”. But other political commentators say that this is absolute nonsense and that saying that the unwritten constitution is flexible is just another way of saying that the government can do whatever it wants and will always be right. A British comedian* once said that “... the unwritten constitution isn't worth the paper that it isn't printed on”.

constitution Verfassung; *commentator* Kommentator; *flexible* biegsam, nicht starr; *comedian* Komiker

The dictatorship* of Parliament

Many people in the USA and in Europe don't realize how powerful the British Parliament is compared to their own parliaments. Parliament in Britain means essentially* the House of Commons because the House of Lords is a colourful, but politically powerless debating club. They can delay* laws which have been made by the House of Commons, but they can't stop them. Because Britain has no written constitution there are no checks* on the power of the House of Commons. There is no constitutional court like the one in Karlsruhe which can declare that laws are “illegal”, i. e. “unconstitutional”*, there are no federal states or a president with independent powers that can oppose* Parliament. There's nothing that the House of Commons can't do – whatever it does is always “legal”.

dictatorship Diktatur; *essentially* im Wesentlichen; *delay* verzögern; *check* Kontrolle; *unconstitutional* verfassungswidrig; *oppose* widersprechen, bekämpfen

The freedom of the press

Britain is a very secretive* country. There's no freedom of information law as in the USA. The American people have a legal right to know, but not the British. So it's much harder for reporters to uncover* a government scandal or a misuse* of power. Besides withholding information, the government can also stop the publication of anything which they consider embarrassing by sending the newspaper (or radio or TV station) a “D-Notice” which then makes it illegal to publish the article. (The punishment* for ignoring a D-Notice is severe: the newspaper can be closed down and the reporter or the editor can be sent to prison after a trial “in camera”, i. e. where there are no witnesses.) The government doesn't need to give any reason except that the article “... might be against the national interest.” This is all perfectly legal because the House of Commons passed two laws – the Official Secrets Act and the Anti-Terrorism Act – which say that it is legal.

In a recent discussion in a BBC radio programme about the press, a journalist pointed out that there are no tabloids* of the British kind in countries such as the USA, Germany and the Netherlands because these countries all have an open style of government and freedom of information laws. This makes it unnecessary for journalists to be aggressively investigative and always assume the worst.

But Britain is now a part of Europe and the ties with other European countries and the media in these countries are closer. So British scandals can be uncovered by the European media. A good example of this is “Spycatcher”. This was a book written by a former British secret service agent. In it he revealed*, among other things, that the secret service had broken into buildings, placed illegal “bugs”*, spied on a former prime minister (Mr Wilson), and interfered in elections to the advantage of the Conservative Party. The British government was able to stop the book being published in Britain, but they couldn't stop it being published in other countries in Europe. And they couldn't stop these books from being sold in Britain. The European press also wrote about what was in the book and how the British government was desperately* trying to prevent these scandals from being uncovered. And the British press could then report what newspapers in other countries were saying. **VOCAB** *secrective verschwiegen, heimlichtuerisch; uncover aufdecken; misuse Missbrauch; punishment Bestrafung; tabloid (newspaper) kleinformatige Bildzeitung, Boulevardzeitung; reveal offenbaren; bug “Wanze”, Abhörmikrofon; desperate verzweifelt*

2. What advantages does the British political system have?

There's a much clearer division* in Britain between the people who make the laws and those who administer* them than in other European countries. Civil servants*, police officers and judges (as well as criminals, archbishops, the mentally insane* and members of the Royal Family) can't become a Member of

Parliament. Compare this to Germany, where most members of the Bundestag are state employees and civil servants. Remember too that in Britain police officers, judges and teachers aren't civil servants.

division Trennung; administer verwalten; civil servants Beamte; the mentally insane die Geistesgestörten

3. Why are members of the Conservative Party sometimes called "Tories"?

In eighteenth century Britain there were no political parties in the modern sense, but there were two "factions**" who competed for political power: the Whigs and the Tories. These names were originally terms of abuse – "tory" was the Irish Gaelic word for an outlaw and "whiggamore" was the Scottish Gaelic word for a rebel. In the nineteenth century the Tories and the Whigs evolved into the Conservative and Liberal parties.

faction Fraktion, Interessengruppe; terms of abuse Schimpfwörter

4. What other political parties are there in the United Kingdom?

The two largest parties are the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. In 1988 the Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) joined together to form a new party – the Liberal Democrats. The Liberal Democrats are the only important British party who would like to reform the voting system (which is to their disadvantage) and introduce proportional representation*.

In Northern Ireland the Ulster Unionists and the Ulster Democratic Unionists are allies of the Conservative Party. Their opponents are the SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party) and Provisional Sinn Fein. The SDLP supports the ideal of a united Ireland, but only as the result of a consensus* between the catholic and protestant communities. It's against violence and doesn't support the IRA (Irish Republican Army). In Parliament the SDLP often supports the British Labour Party. The Provisional Sinn Fein (Irish Gaelic for "we ourselves") is more radical. It supports violence and the IRA. In the general elections of 1983 and 1987 a Provisional Sinn Fein candidate, Gerry Adams, won a seat in the British Parliament. Although Mr Adams had been elected as the MP for West Belfast, he refused to go to the House of Commons in London because his party doesn't accept the authority of the British Parliament in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland the Provisional Sinn Fein is very powerful in local government.

There are also two nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales that want independence from Great Britain: the SNP (Scottish National Party) and Plaid Cymru (Welsh for "The party of Wales"). Both parties have been allies in Parliament since 1986.

There are, of course, other small parties. One of the most well-known in Britain was the Monster Raving Looney Party (MRLP) founded by Screaming Lord Sutch, a pop singer. He took part in many general elections but he was never elected and he lost his deposit every time. (A deposit is a sum of money which all the candidates in a general election must pay to show that they are serious candidates. If they win 5% or more of the votes in a constituency, the money is returned. And if they don't, it isn't.) However, the Monster Raving Looney Party has actually won elections in local government.

In an election, the candidates who belong to a political party have the best chance of winning a seat in Parliament. But "independent" candidates who don't belong to any political party sometimes win constituency elections. A candidate can also form his or her own party. In an election for the European Parliament in June, 1995, Richard Huggett called himself a "Literal Democrat". He got more than 10,000 votes from people who probably thought that they were voting for the Liberal Democrats. The real Liberal Democrats lost the election by only 700 votes. They were very angry with Mr Huggett and took him to court*, but the High Court judges said that Mr Huggett had the right to call his party any name he liked. They said that British law "... does not prohibit* candidates – out of spite* or a wicked sense of fun – from describing themselves in a confusing way". After this verdict* Alan Cornish, a Liberal Democrat, founded a party which he called the Conversative Party. The new party hasn't taken part in any elections yet. Mr Cornish said that he just wanted to show "... that the law is an ass**".

proportional representation Verhältniswahlssystem; consensus Konsens, Übereinstimmung; take sb. to court gegen jmdn. einen Gerichtsprozess führen; prohibit verbieten; spite Boshaftigkeit, Gehässigkeit; verdict Urteilsspruch; ass Esel

5. What are “Eurosceptics”?

This is a term used to describe people, usually politicians, who are sceptical about some aspects of the European Community. They don't want to take Britain out of the Community, but they're suspicious of* European laws which would apply to* all countries alike without taking the special circumstances* of each individual country into account. They are also opposed to complete integration into Europe, they feel that Britain should retain its national “identity”. There are Eurosceptics in all the countries of the European Community, of course. In Britain most Eurosceptics, but not all, belong to the Conservative Party.

In the past, the British Parliament wasn't subordinate* to any other authority and the Eurosceptics find it difficult (or even impossible) to accept a higher authority such as the European Parliament. A good example of this is the issue of border controls. With the Single European Act the European Parliament intends (over an indefinite period) to abolish* all border controls between member states. In 1985, the British prime minister, Mrs Thatcher, said she would veto the Single European Act unless Britain was allowed to keep its passport checks and control of immigration. The other European countries agreed to let Britain keep its border controls for a certain number of years. This was intended as a postponement* and not an exception. There are now no border controls between most of the older member states of the European Community (France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, the Benelux countries, Italy and Greece). But the British government still refuses to give up border controls. Why? Because, they say, Britain is an island and enjoys an island's natural advantages in the fight against crime, drugs, terrorism and illegal immigration. Why should we give this up? They are also worried that dangerous diseases such as rabies* (which doesn't exist in Britain) will spread to Britain. And it isn't just the British government that thinks like this, Denmark and Ireland also want to keep their border controls and for the same reasons.

be suspicious of misstrauen; *apply to* sich anwenden lassen auf; *circumstances* Umstände; *subordinate* untergeordnet; *abolish* abschaffen; *postponement* Verschiebung; *rabies* Tollwut

6. Is the British government doing its best to solve the problem of Northern Ireland?

Well, opinions are divided on this. Some political commentators have criticized the British government for its dogmatic refusal to negotiate* with the IRA until they give up their weapons. But the IRA are equally dogmatic that they won't give up their weapons before a settlement is reached which they can accept. The IRA also demand the release* from British prisons of what they call "political prisoners". But the British government refuses. These aren't political prisoners, they say, these are terrorists and criminals. Some critics also point out* that a Conservative government needs the support of the Unionist parties in Northern Ireland, especially if they only have a small majority in the House of Commons. Under these circumstances, they say, a Conservative government won't risk offending the Unionists.

What everyone agrees about is that the problem of Northern Ireland is difficult and complicated. But some things have changed for the better and the conditions for peace are now (in 1996) better than they ever were. The British government is prepared to share some of its authority in Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland. The IRA and the protestant terror organisations realize that they won't achieve* their aims with violence and that they must negotiate, and both the protestant and the catholic communities in Northern Ireland want peace.

So if everyone wants peace, where's the problem? Well, there's a constitutional issue – over 50% of the people in Northern Ireland want to remain British. This must be taken into account* in any settlement. Many protestants in Northern Ireland claim that the Republic of Ireland is controlled by the Catholic Church and that it's socially backward* and that protestants would be discriminated against. This is an exaggerated* claim, but in the past there was some truth in it. But it isn't true today. Since it joined the European Community, the Republic of Ireland has changed from a rural, agricultural society to an urban*, industrial one. And the political power of the Catholic Church is no longer as great as it once was. A good example of this was the 1995 referendum in the Republic on whether divorce should be allowed. Although the Catholic Church vehemently opposed it, there was a majority in favour of* changing the law and allowing divorce. It's still illegal in the Republic of Ireland to buy or sell (or even use!) contraceptives*, but there are signs that this will soon change, too.

At the time of writing this text (June, 1996) a peaceful settlement seems in sight, even if the process is moving more slowly than many people would like. The US government is now taking an active part in the peace process and this has been welcomed by all the participants. Perhaps by the time you read this there will no longer be a problem in Northern Ireland.

negotiate verhandeln; release Freilassung; point out hinweisen auf etwas; achieve erreichen; take into account berücksichtigen; claim behaupten; backward rückständig; exaggeration Übertreibung; rural ländlich; urban städtisch; divorce Scheidung; be in favour of für etwas sein; contraceptives Verhütungsmittel

7. How popular is the Royal Family in Britain?

If you read any popular British tabloid newspaper such as *The Sun* or *the Daily Mirror* you'll probably find an article about a member of the Royal Family. Some people think that these newspapers often go too far – they publish stories and photographs that are in bad taste. But not everyone agrees. This isn't just an ordinary family, they say, the public has a right to know what they are doing. They also point out that the Royal Family use the media for their own purposes*, so they can't really complain when newspapers publish stories which they find embarrassing*. As an editor of the American magazine *Newsweek* once said, the British Royal Family has become the world's most popular soap opera. And like the characters in a soap opera their popularity rises and falls depending on the part they are currently playing.

A few years ago, Princess Anne and Mark Philipps, her husband at that time, were the major characters in a marriage scandal. There were articles in the press about loud arguments, her husband's love affairs and their separation* and divorce. Princess Anne later married again, but there are now very few stories in the press about her – she has been “written out” of the soap opera.

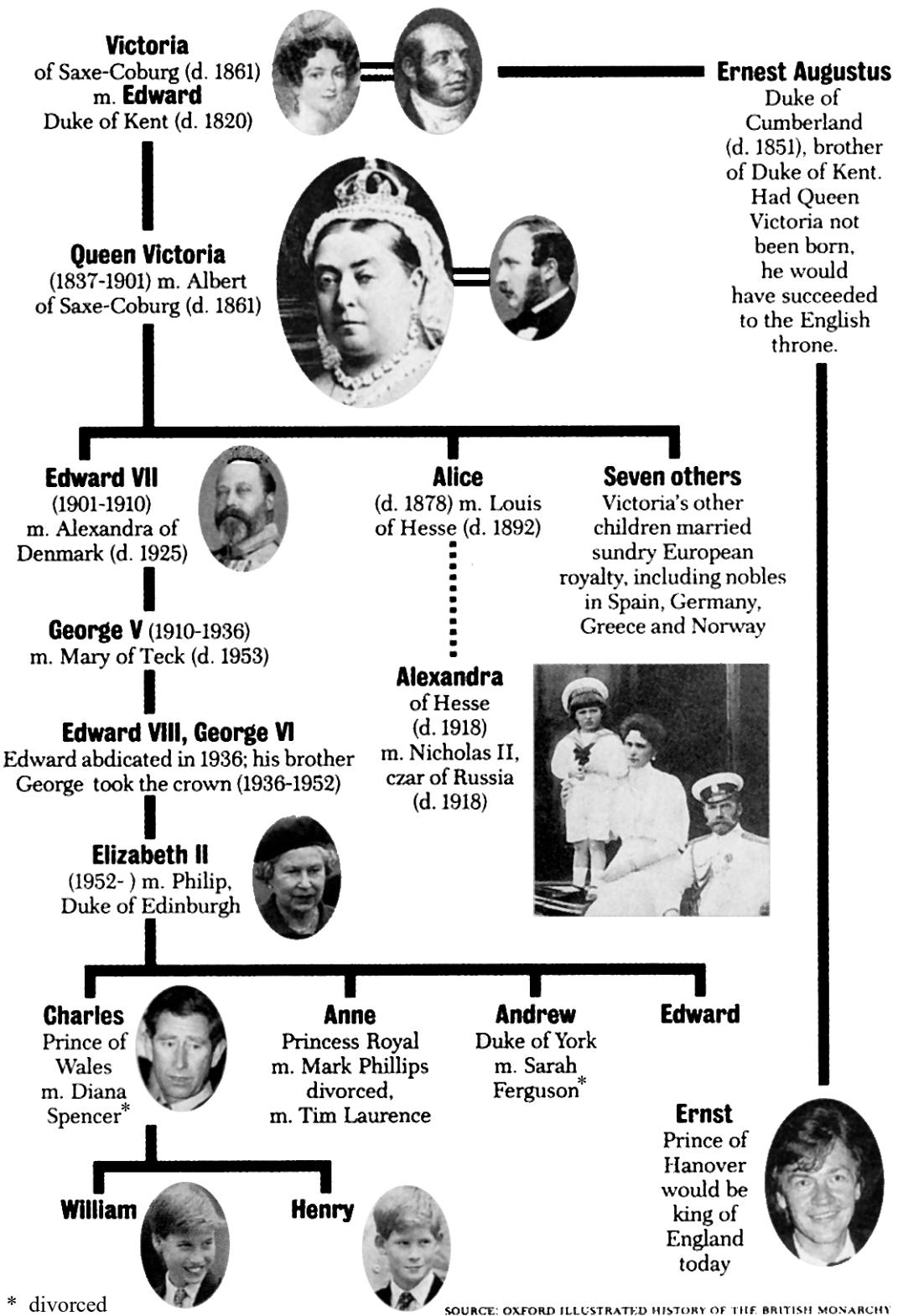
Her place has been taken by the drama between Prince Charles and his wife, Princess Diana. The breakdown* of their marriage is an even more interesting story because it's about a man who could be the next King of England. Both Charles and Diana have used the media to tell their side of the story. In a television interview, Prince Charles admitted that he had been unfaithful* to Diana with Camilla Parker Bowles. In this interview and in a later book he implied* that his wife was empty-headed and psychologically disturbed*. Many people sympathized with him and Princess Diana's popularity fell. She got her revenge in November, 1995, when she gave a live interview on BBC television. She was very frank*. She talked about the “agony” of a loveless marriage, her illness (she had bulimia, a very serious eating disorder*), the uncaring and heartless attitude of her husband and the intrigues of his friends and other members of the Royal Family. She admitted that she had also been unfaithful to her husband. The interview was watched by about 200 million people in over 100 countries. It was a great success for Princess Diana. Most people admired her honesty and bravery – her popularity went up, Prince Charles' popularity went down. But why are Prince Charles and Princess Diana using the media to reveal such embarrassing details of their private lives? Most journalists think that there is more to it than just revenge. What they are really doing is asking the British public to decide who should be the next king. Prince Charles wants to be king, but Princess Diana doesn't think that he would be a good king. She wants their eldest son to be the next king and she wants the public to make the decision and not the Royal Family.

Nowadays* not even dead monarchs are safe from scandal. In their book “Queen Victoria's Gene” two British academics, Malcolm Potts and his brother William, claim that Queen Victoria was illegitimate. Her male descendants* suffered from haemophilia*. Her husband, Prince Albert, didn't have it, so the gene for this disease had to come from Victoria. But none of her ancestors* had haemophilia, so where did it come from? The only answer, say the Potts brothers, is that Victoria wasn't the daughter of the Duke of Kent. Her mother must have had an affair with another man and Victoria was the result. If the Potts brothers are right, Prince Ernst of Hanover should be on the throne and not Elizabeth II.

purpose Zweck; embarrassing peinlich; separation Trennung; breakdown Zerrüttung; unfaithful untreu; imply andeuten, durchblicken lassen; disturbed gestört; revenge Rache; frank offen, aufrichtig; eating disorder Essstörung; nowadays heutzutage; descendants Nachkommen; haemophilia Bluterkrankheit; ancestors Vorfahren

England's Royal Tree

Queen Victoria was the mother of modern European royalty. Had she been illegitimate, as a new study charges, power would have passed through the Duke of Cumberland.



Family tree of the Royal Family – © Newsweek, July 24, 1995, Newsweek, Inc.
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8. What are the differences between Scotland and England?

England and Scotland have been united since the Act of Union in 1707, but Scotland has kept its old traditions and its identity and there are some major differences between England and Scotland.

Language

Scottish-Gaelic is still spoken in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, but only about 82,000 people have Gaelic as their mother-tongue*, the rest speak English. But if you visit Scotland, you'll notice that the Scots speak English with a Scottish accent. (People in Scotland are Scottish or Scots, but never Scotch – only things are Scotch: Scotch whisky, Scotch tape, Scotch terriers etc.)

The Scottish accent varies a lot between the south of Scotland (the Low- lands) and the north of Scotland (the Highlands) and between big cities such as Edinburgh and Glasgow. Many English people think that the Scottish accent is because of Scotland's Gaelic history, but it's really an old dialect of English – the kind of English that was once spoken in Northern England.

About a thousand years ago "England" included most of the Lowlands of Scotland. William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy, defeated Harald Godwinson, the last Saxon King of England, in 1066 and became the new king. But the North of England resisted* the invaders and it took the Normans 80 years of hard fighting to reach Newcastle in Northumberland. They tried to go further, but after several defeats* they gave up and "England" ended at the River Tweed. The old Saxon part of England on the other side of the river became Scotland. There was no exact border between Norman England and Scotland and this area – the Borders – was fought over for many centuries until the present border was agreed on in 1603.

mother-tongue Muttersprache; resist Widerstand leisten; defeats Niederlagen

Administration*

The Secretary of State for Scotland is a member of the British government and his or her office is in London. But there is a separate government department for Scotland called the Scottish Office. This is the Scottish civil service and its headquarters* is in Edinburgh. There are special departments responsible* for agriculture and fisheries, education, environment, home affairs, health, and industry.

administration Verwaltung; headquarters Hauptquartier; responsible verantwortlich

Money

In England and Wales only the Bank of England can issue* banknotes, but in Scotland several banks have this right. So although the currency* (£ = pound sterling) is the same, Scottish banknotes look different to English ones. If you travel through Scotland, it's fun to see how many different kinds of banknotes you can collect. Scotland also has its own £1 coin. But be careful, many shops in England won't accept Scottish money, although all British banks will.

issue in Umlauf setzen; currency Währung

Education

The Scots are rightly proud of the long tradition of education in Scotland. They have had a national system of primary schools* (for pupils from 5 to 10 years) since 1560. (A national system of primary education wasn't established in England until 1870.)

As in England and Wales, almost all Scottish secondary schools* (for pupils from 11 to 16 years) are comprehensive schools*. However, they have their own curriculum* and are administered by the Scottish Office and not by the Ministry of Education in London.

In recent years there have been some tensions* between the British government and the department of the Scottish Office responsible for education. Secondary schools in England and Wales can "opt out" – if a majority of parents wish it, the school can be controlled directly by the Ministry of Education instead of the local education authority (LEA). This obviously reduces the power of local government and increases the power of the central government. The British government would also like Scottish schools to opt out, but the Scottish Office is resisting this. They are also resisting a common national curriculum for the whole of Britain. The Scots see this as an attempt by the Conservative-controlled government to sabotage their schools and reduce Scottish independence.

primary school Grundschule; secondary school eine Schule der Sekundarstufe I; comprehensive school Gesamtschule; curriculum Lehrplan; tensions Spannungen

Law

Scotland has a different tradition of law than England. Scotland's law tradition is closer to European law. In England the verdict* of a court* must be either "guilty" or "not guilty", but Scottish courts have a third option: "not proven*". This is the verdict when the judge and the jury (in Scotland 15 people, in England 12) think that there isn't enough evidence* to say that a person is guilty, but they aren't sure that they're not guilty, either.

verdict Urteilsspruch; *court* Gericht; *not proven* nicht bewiesen; *evidence* Beweismaterial

Special days

The Scots have two special days: St Andrew's Day on November 30th and Burns Night on January 25th. St Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland and the St Andrew's Cross is the Scottish flag – it forms the white, X-shaped part of the Union Jack.

Robert Burns (1759 – 96) is Scotland's greatest and most popular poet. On Burns Night it's a tradition to eat a special meal and read his poems aloud. For most English people, Burns' poems are difficult to understand:

A prince can make a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon* his might,
Gude faith he mauna* fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

aboon above; *mauna* must not

Here's a typical Burns Night menu:

Cocktail:	Atholl Brose
Soup:	Cock-a-Leekie
Main course:	Haggis
Dessert:	Topsy Laird

Haggis is a very complicated dish, but the others aren't too difficult. If you'd like to try them, here are the recipes:

Atholl Brose

3 heaped tablespoons oatmeal*

4 tablespoons heather honey

whisky

Mix the oatmeal with some water – just enough to make a thin paste. Leave this to stand for an hour and then strain the paste through a sieve*. Add the honey. Pour the liquid into a large bottle (at least one litre) and fill up with whisky. Cool for two hours. Shake well before serving.

oatmeal Hafermehl; *sieve* Sieb

Cock-a-Leekie soup

1 chicken

1 bay leaf*

500 g leeks, cleaned and cut into 2 cm pieces

2 litres of stock*

2 tablespoons of long-grain rice

Put the chicken into a large pan with the bay leaf, the leeks and the stock. Bring to the boil and then skim* the surface. Reduce the heat, cover the pan and simmer* for about 3 hours. Remove the chicken (use it for something else) and the bay leaf and skim off any fat from the surface of the soup. Now add the rice and simmer the soup for another 30 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste.

bay leaf Lorbeerblatt; *stock* Brühe; *skim* abschöpfen; *simmer* köcheln

Topsy Laird

6 sponge cakes*

250 g raspberry jam*

the grated rind of a lemon

about 60 g ratafia biscuits*

150 ml sweet sherry (or fruit juice)

2 tablespoons Drambuie

4 egg yolks*

600 ml milk

2 tablespoons sugar

a dash* vanilla essence

150 g double cream

flaked browned almonds*, glacé cherries and angelica*

Cut the sponge cakes into halves and spread each half with raspberry jam. Place them in a glass dish. Crush the biscuits and scatter them over the sponges with the lemon rind. Mix the sherry and the Drambuie together and pour over the sponges.

Beat the egg yolks and the sugar together. Warm the milk and stir it into the eggs. Put the liquid back into the milk pan and stir it over a very low heat until it thickens*. Pour it over the sponges in the dish and put the dish into the fridge and leave overnight.

Next day whip* the double cream and add a little Drambuie. Cover the sponge with the whipped cream and decorate it with the almonds, cherries and angelica.

sponge cake Sandkuchen, Rührkuchen; *raspberry jam* Himbeerkonfitüre; *ratafia biscuits* Löffelbiskuit; *egg yolk* Eigelb; *dash* Spritzer; *flaked browned almonds* Mandelblättchen; *angelica* kandierte Engelwurz; *thicken* andicken, sämig werden lassen; *whip* schlagen

9. What's the difference between the whisky made in Scotland and that made in other countries?

Only whisky is made in Scotland, if it's made in another country it's spelled with an "e": whiskey.

Scotland produces two types of whisky: whisky made from grain (mostly maize, but wheat and oats can also be used) and whisky made from malted barley*. When a whisky is made only from malted barley and comes from only one distillery it's called a "single malt" whisky. If malt whiskies from more than one distillery are used, it's a "malt" whisky. Many distilleries produce malt whisky and they all have a different flavour*.

Whisky made from grain has a more neutral flavour. It's also easier to produce than malt whisky and cheaper. Although single malt whisky is becoming more popular, most of it is used to mix with grain whisky. This process is called "blending" and whisky made this way is called "blended" whisky. In a blended whisky there may be as many as 30 or even 40 different malt whiskies and six or seven different grain whiskies. Blended whisky is the most popular type of whisky because it has a "lighter" flavour than most single malts and the blending process guarantees that it always tastes the same. A good quality blend can contain about 50% malt whisky, a cheaper blend perhaps as little as 20%.

Before it can be sold, whisky must be "matured" or "aged". The raw whisky is put into oak barrels* and stored* for at least three years, sometimes much longer. This gives the whisky colour and improves the flavour. But whisky isn't like wine – once it's bottled it doesn't mature further.

If you order a whisky in a Scottish pub, it will be served at room temperature. There are always jugs of water on the bar and on the tables so that customers can add a dash* of water if they wish. The American custom of drinking whisky with lots of ice is regarded as barbaric. Worldwide, the most popular brand of Scottish whisky (often called Scotch) is Johnnie Walker. The original Johnnie Walker (1805 – 1859) owned a grocery store in Kilmarnock. He also sold whisky and he was one of the first people to mix different kinds of whiskies together and make a blended whisky. His blended whisky was a big success and "Johnnie Walker" is still blended and bottled in Kilmarnock.

The whiskies made in Ireland, the USA and Canada have a very different flavour. The whisky is made by a different process and mostly (or entirely) from maize. Sometimes a little rye* is added to the maize. Americans often call the whiskey made in the USA "Bourbon". The name comes from Bourbon county in Kentucky where the maize used in the whiskey was (and still is) grown. The thing that puzzles most Scots is that there are no distilleries in Bourbon county and although it isn't illegal to make whisky in Kentucky, it is illegal to buy, sell or drink it in most of Kentucky's counties.

The whiskey which comes closest to Scotch is made in Japan. Japanese whiskey has a very good reputation and this isn't surprising as the first whisky-makers were trained in Scotland and the first Japanese distilleries were built by Scottish firms. The Japanese use the same process as in Scotland. They produce malt whiskies made from malted barley which are sold either as malt whiskies or blended with grain whiskies.

The Japanese whisky firms are very proud of their links with Scotland. The first man in Japan to make whiskey was Masataka Taketsuru. He went to Scotland as a young man in 1916 and studied chemistry at Glasgow University. He fell in love with Scotland, whisky and a local girl. In 1918 he became an apprentice* at The Glenlivet distillery. In 1921 he returned to Japan with his Scottish wife and started the first Japanese whiskey distillery. The first Japanese whiskey from this distillery, Suntory, was sold in 1926

and was a big success in Japan. There are now several distilleries in Japan and they still send young people to Scotland to be trained.

malted barley Malzgerste; *flavour* Geschmack; *oak barrels* Eichenfässer; *stored* gelagert; *dash* Spritzer; *rye* Roggen; *apprentice* Lehrling, Azubi

10. Might Scotland leave the United Kingdom?

There is now more tension between Scotland and the British government than in the recent past. Most political commentators agree that this is the fault* of the Conservative government, who has reduced the powers of local authorities in Britain. In Scotland this is seen as an attack on their traditional independence. A poll* in October 1995 showed that 30% of the Scottish people would vote for the Scottish National Party (SNP), who want independence from the United Kingdom. Only 13% of Scots would vote for the Conservatives and 44% for the Labour Party. The Labour Party is very worried because previous polls had given them almost 60% of the votes.

Why the sudden change? One reason is the American film "Braveheart" which started in Scottish cinemas on September 3rd, 1995. The film is about a famous Scottish hero and rebel, William Wallace (1270 – 1305) and his fight against the English.

Not surprisingly, this film has been a great success in Scotland and has stirred national passions. The SNP has taken advantage of this. "All people live off the myths of history", says SNP leader Alex Salmond. The SNP hands out* leaflets at cinema exits which say: "You've seen the film. Now face the reality." After only three weeks of this campaign more people became members of the SNP than in all of 1994.

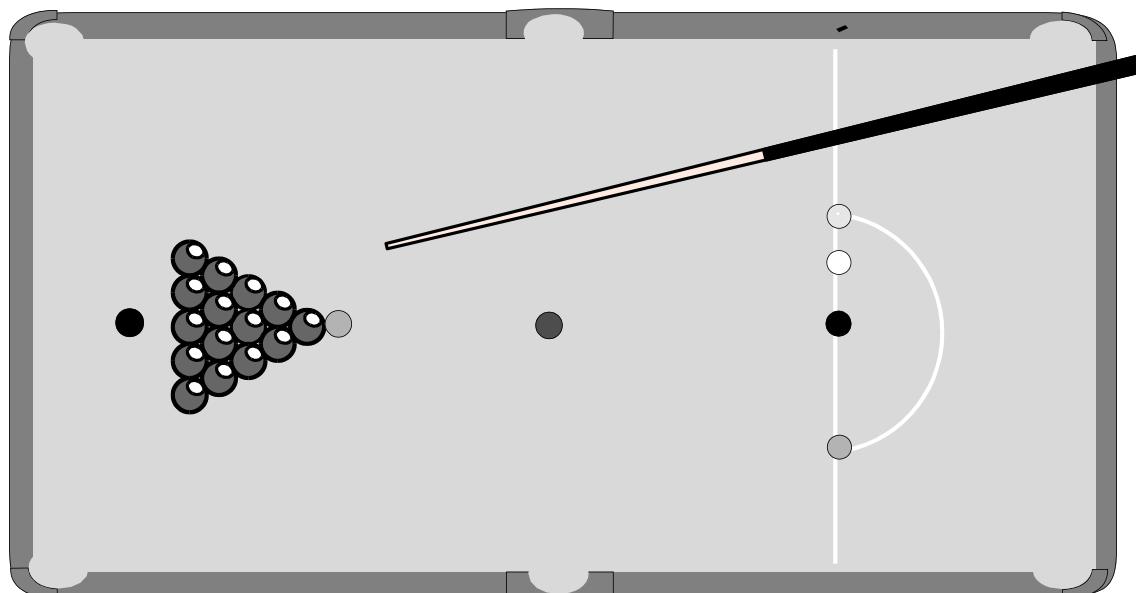
British politicians now take the idea of Scottish independence much more seriously than in the past. Now only the Conservative Party rejects* the idea of an elected regional parliament for Scotland. If the Labour Party wins Britain's next election, they have promised to establish a Scottish Parliament. The SNP (and the Conservatives, of course) see this as just another step towards full independence.

fault Schuld, Verschulden; *poll* Meinungsumfrage; *hand out* verteilen; *reject* ablehnen

11. I've seen snooker on television. What are the rules?

There's a story that snooker was invented in India in 1875 by a very bored group of army officers in a very lonely outpost*. The game became quite popular in clubs throughout Britain, Australia and Canada, but it only became a mass spectator* sport in the mid-1970s when television companies discovered that people enjoyed watching it. Snooker is now the most popular TV sport in Britain – more people now watch snooker than any other sport, including soccer.

In the last ten years or so, snooker has become an international sport and is also becoming popular in Germany, especially among young people. It's exciting to watch and play because it combines hand-and-eye skill with tactical skill. It's also a game that women can play just as well as men, if not better! Nearly 60% of new players in Europe are young girls between 11 and 18.



But like every other game, you must understand the rules in order to play it or enjoy watching it. Before we explain the rules, let's see how the balls are set up* at the beginning of a game and the values of the various colours:

- To start, the first player places the white cue ball anywhere in the “baulk” – this is the D-shaped area on the baulk line. He or she must hit the white ball with a cue so that it hits one of the reds at the top of the table.
- If one of the reds falls into a pocket, the player can continue with one of the “higher” colours (yellow, green, brown, blue, pink, black) and try to knock it into a pocket with the cue ball. If the coloured ball falls into a pocket, it's returned to its spot on the table (the reds stay in the pockets) and the player continues with a red ball ... and so on. This is called a “break” and the player receives the value of the balls that he or she has “potted” (= knocked into a pocket).
- A break ends when a ball, either red or one of the other colours, doesn't fall into a pocket. Then it's the turn of the other player, but the white cue ball stays where the previous player left it.
- Unlike pool billiard, mistakes in snooker are punished* – the break is over and the other player is given at least 4 points. Here are some common* mistakes:
 - the cue ball misses all the balls (– 4 points).
 - Instead of a red ball, it hits a colour (– 4 points for yellow, green and brown, – 5 points for blue, – 6 points for pink and – 7 points for black).
 - After hitting a ball, the cue ball falls into a pocket (– 4 points if the last ball it touched was red, yellow, green or brown, – 5 points for blue, – 6 points for pink and – 7 points for black).
 - The cue ball hits the wrong “higher” colour (– 4 points for yellow, green and brown, – 5 points for blue. ... – you've probably got the idea by now!)
 - The wrong ball falls into a pocket (– 4 points for ... etc.).
- If a break ends because the cue ball has fallen into a pocket, the next player starts by taking it out of the pocket and placing it anywhere in the baulk.
- The game goes on like this until there are no more reds left on the table. The remaining balls must be potted in the order of their value: yellow (2), green (3), brown (4), blue (5), pink (6), and black (7).
- A tie-break: If both players have the same score at the end of the game, the black ball is put back on its spot and the players take turns in trying to pot it from baulk.

Tactics are very important in snooker and you must think ahead. Which ball should you choose? How should you hit it? Where will the cue ball go then and is this good or bad? If you listen to the commentator during a game of snooker, you'll probably hear the terms “safety-play” and “snooker”. These are the two most important tactics. The aim of safety-play is to make things as difficult as possible for the player who must follow you. For example, if you don't think you can pot a ball, you can play so that the cue ball finishes on a cushion or in front of another ball and as far away as possible from the nearest red ball that could possibly be potted.

A snooker is the ultimate safety-play. This is where the cue ball finishes behind one of the higher colours, so that the next player hasn't got a direct line to a red ball and must try to hit a red ball by playing the white ball off one or more cushions. Of course, it's also possible to “snooker” yourself: you pot a red ball, but the white ball goes behind one or more of the remaining red balls and you can't see any of the higher colours. What happens now? You must “nominate” a ball – you must say which colour you intend to hit, blue for example. You must then try and hit the blue ball with the cue ball by playing off one or more cushions. If you miss ... yes, that's right, your break is over and the next player gets 5 points. Yes, snooker can also be a very frustrating game. Always remember that snooker is a game for gentlemen and gentlewomen. If you're feeling frustrated, you mustn't jump up and down, throw the balls around, break the cue (especially not over your opponent's head), scream, shout or swear. But putting your cue down quietly and calmly leaving the room and screaming outside is allowed.

outpost Vorposten, Stützpunkt; spectator Zuschauer; set up aufstellen; are punished werden bestraft; common häufig