

It's a jigsaw!

In this unit you'll see how we humans have carved up the British Isles.

Building borders



8000 years ago there were no borders in these islands – because hardly anyone lived here.

But over time, different tribes arrived. They fought over things like land, trade and religion.

Eventually these borders were created between different areas. They still cause problems today!

That's just the start!

As the last map above shows, the British Isles is divided into two **countries**: the United Kingdom (UK) and the Republic of Ireland.

The United Kingdom in turn is made up of different **nations**: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

But that's just the start of the jigsaw. For example England and Scotland are divided into the **regions** shown this map.

Each region is in turn divided into smaller pieces. This makes it easier to manage services, such as education and health.

So who's in charge?

The UK is governed from London, its capital city. In Parliament, MPs vote on policies, and pass laws, that affect the whole UK.

Scotland also has a Parliament, in Edinburgh. It can pass laws on matters that affect only Scotland.

Wales has a National Assembly, based in Cardiff. Northern Ireland has one based in Belfast. These can't make laws. But they can make decisions about health services, education and other matters, for their own regions.



Remember!



the British Isles



the United Kingdom



Great Britain (or just Britain)

Some facts about the British Isles

Area (square kilometres)	130 400	244 100	20 800	14 200	70 300
Population (millions)	50.5	5.1	3.0	1.7	4.2

Fact box

1801: Ireland becomes part of 'The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland'.

1922: the Republic of Ireland gains independence.

1536: Henry VIII officially unites England and Wales.

1171: King Henry II of England takes control of Ireland.

1100: England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland are separate countries.

1603: King James VI of Scotland becomes King James I of England, giving the Union of the Crowns.

1276: King Edward I of England takes control of Wales.

1707: England, Scotland and Wales officially become Great Britain.

Today: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are still united as the UK.

Your turn

1 The British Isles is divided like a jigsaw. Arthur lives in all these parts of the jigsaw:



Do the same to show where you live. (But if you live in Fort William, do it for a person living in Land's End. See the map on page 127.) You may need to ask your teacher for help.

2 Compare the map opposite with the one on page 127.

In which region of Scotland is:

- a Dundee?
- b Glasgow?
- c Aberdeen?
- d Edinburgh?

3 In which region of England is:

- a Liverpool?
- b Portsmouth?
- c Brighton?
- d Bradford?
- e Ipswich?
- f Newcastle-upon-tyne?

4 a Make a copy of this table. (Sketch the maps roughly. You can show the Shetlands in their correct place.)

	Great Britain	United Kingdom	British Isles
Population (millions)			
Area (_____)			

b Shade in the correct parts of each map.

c Work out the population and area of the shaded parts, from the table at the top of the page.

d Now give your table a suitable title.

5 Over the centuries, England fought many battles with Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Much blood was shed. The Fact box above shows just some key dates in this history. (No blood on show!)

Draw a timeline for the dates in the Fact box, from 1100 to today.

You could illustrate your timeline with small maps or flags or other symbols. Give it a suitable title.