

Fiche

1. Basic facts

<b>Capital city</b>	London
<b>Countries</b>	Great Britain: England, Scotland, Wales Northern Ireland (Ulster)
<b>Currency</b>	Pound sterling (£)
<b>The national flag</b>	The Union Jack composed of 3 crosses: St George's (England); St Andrew's (Scotland); St Patrick's (Ireland)
<b>The national anthem</b>	<i>God Save the Queen</i>
<b>National emblems</b>	rose (England) leek (Wales) thistle (Scotland) shamrock (Ireland)
<b>National motto</b>	<i>bonni soit qui mal y pense</i> (shamed be he who thinks ill of it)

2. British institutions

<b>The Government</b>	<b>Executive power</b>	The Prime Minister: Head of the Cabinet The Cabinet (Chancellor of the Exchequer (finance); the Lord Chancellor (justice); the Home Secretary; the Foreign Secretary; the Defence Secretary ...)
	<b>Legislative power</b>	The Houses of Parliament: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the House of Commons (650 elected members);</li> <li>• the House of Lords (92 non-elected members).</li> </ul>
<b>The monarch</b>	Queen (or King): represents the nation → a constitutional monarchy	
<b>The Commonwealth</b>	The Commonwealth of Nations → an intergovernmental organization of 54 independent member states. (All except Mozambique and Rwanda used to be part of the British Empire) The Commonwealth was created in 1926: Britain and its dominions agreed that they were ' <i>equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs</i> '. The member states share common values including the promotion of democracy and human rights. The Head of the Commonwealth → Queen Elizabeth II.	

3. Key dates

<b>1066</b>	William the Conqueror (Duke of Normandy) invaded Britain → the Battle of Hastings.
<b>1509-1547</b>	The reign of Henry VIII (monarch with 6 wives) → he caused the Reformation: the Church of England left the Roman Catholic Church to become independent.
<b>1642-</b>	

<b>1660</b>	The Civil War: Oliver Cromwell became head of the 'republic'.
<b>1833</b>	The abolition of slavery in the British Empire. The British Empire developed the slave trade during the 18 <sup>th</sup> century to increase its economic prosperity by forcing slaves from Africa to work on its plantations in the West Indies. The British slave trade was ceased in 1807 and slaves in the British Empire emancipated in 1834.
<b>1837-1901</b>	The reign of Queen Victoria: the British Empire was at its height in terms of expansion and prosperity.
<b>1936</b>	King Edward VIII abdicated to marry an American divorcee Wallis Simpson. Elizabeth II's father George VI became King.
<b>1952</b>	Coronation of Elizabeth II.
<b>2011</b>	Prince William, heir to the throne, married Kate Middleton.

#### 4. Places of power

<b>10 Downing Street</b>	Official residence of the Prime Minister
<b>Westminster</b>	Site of the Houses of Parliament (and Big Ben)
<b>Buckingham Palace</b>	The Queen's official residence in London
<b>The City</b>	The historical centre of London, home to the Stock Exchange and the major banks
<b>Oxford and Cambridge</b>	The two oldest and most prestigious British universities