

Making Most of the Map

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In every English classroom you can find a map of Great Britain. The word "map" is always associated with geography and used by teachers to show the parts of Great Britain and their capitals. But at the same time the map is a great source of activities challenging and appealing to the students. I tried some of them in different groups of students from elementary level up to upper-intermediate.

Activity 1

The aim of this activity is to enable students to find the isles on which The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is situated.

The students look at the map and the teacher gives the key sentence:

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is situated on the British Isles... What other isles can you find? All of them belong to the UK.

For further practice you can choose one or two islands to find more information.

You can also attract your students attention to the pronunciation, transcription and the use of articles with geographical names.

Activity 2

You can choose one for further practice, for example the Isle of Man.

I tried "gap filling exercise", it's a pair work. Students ask questions to find information about the Isle of Man.

■ Student A

Country name: Isle of Man.

Government type: parliamentary democracy.

Administrative divisions: 24 local authorities, each with its own elections.

Constitution: unwritten.

Suffrage: 18 years of age, universal.

Head of Government: Chief Minister Richard Corkill.

Elections: The monarch is hereditary. The Lieutenant Governor is appointed by the monarch for a five-year term. The Chief Minister is elected by the Tynwald. The last elections were held on 6 December 2001.

Legislative branch: The Parliament called Tynwald is the oldest legislature in the world. It has two branches: the House of Keys and the legislative Council.

Judicial branch: High Court of Justice.

Military: none.

Student B

■ *Dependency status:* British Crown dependency.

Capital: Douglas.

National holiday: Tynwald Day 5, July.

Legal system: English common law and Manx statute.

Executive branch – chief of state: Her Majesty the Queen as lord of Mann is the Head of State.

Cabinet: Council of Ministers.

Election results: Richard Corkill is elected Chief Minister.

Elections: The last elections of the House of Keys were held in November 2001.

Military: none.

Flag description: red with the Three Legs of Man emblem (Trinacria) in the centre,

the three legs are joined at the thigh and bent at the knee. In order to have the toes pointing clockwise on both sides of the flag a two-sided emblem is used.

By asking questions the students compose rather long, interesting and educational story.

You can also attract your students attention to the pronunciation of geographical names by matching the words and the transcription.



Activity 3

Teachers can also introduce different cultural things through the map:

- Emblems, saints and flags:
England-red rose, St George, flag (red cross on a white field);
Scotland-thistle, St Andrew, flag (white diagonal cross on a blue field);
Wales-daffodil or leek, St David, flag (red dragon on a red and white field)
Northern Ireland- shamrock, St Patrick, flag (red diagonal cross on a white field).
- Different language skills may be practised through the map.

For example: the degrees of comparison of adjectives:

Largest/smallest city
Highest/lowest mountain
Largest/smallest/deepest lake
Longest/shortest river
The most famous lake (Loch Ness)

Choose one and organize discussion.

For example: Loch Ness.

Give the students information about the lake and compare with other lakes in Britain and in the world.

Loch Ness is a long, narrow and deep lake in the northern Highlands of Scotland. It is famous for the Loch Ness Monster, also known as Nessie.

The largest lake in Britain is Loch Lomond and the deepest is Loch Morar and in the world – the Caspian Sea and Lake Baikal.

Practising different types of questions:

Look at the map, ask the students to choose a place, work in pairs and ask your partner:

Would you like? Where? When? How? How long? Why?

Give facts to the students and ask them how these facts are connected with Great Britain:

- 58 million
- 1344 meters
- 8 million
- 338km
- 3,147 miles from this place to New York
- 1,848 miles from this place to Moscow

Answer:

- The population of Great Britain is 58 million people.
- The highest mountain in Great Britain is Ben Nevis – 1344 m.
- The population of London is about 8 million people.
- The river Thames is 338 km long.
- Land's End
- Land's End.

While presenting the map to the students try to be personal. If you visited Britain or you have exciting information about the country or any part of it, make most of it to motivate students and to involve them in the process of learning.

I have already mentioned Land's End in the article, I was there in 1999 and there are two things I'd like to share:

1. It is beautiful, dramatic, exciting. Land's End is a unique magical place; a place of legend and mystery with stunning natural beauty. It is a priceless part of Britain's Heritage. Everyone who visits this place receives a certificate.

The Land's End visitor's certificate:

This is to certify that _____
(name of a person)

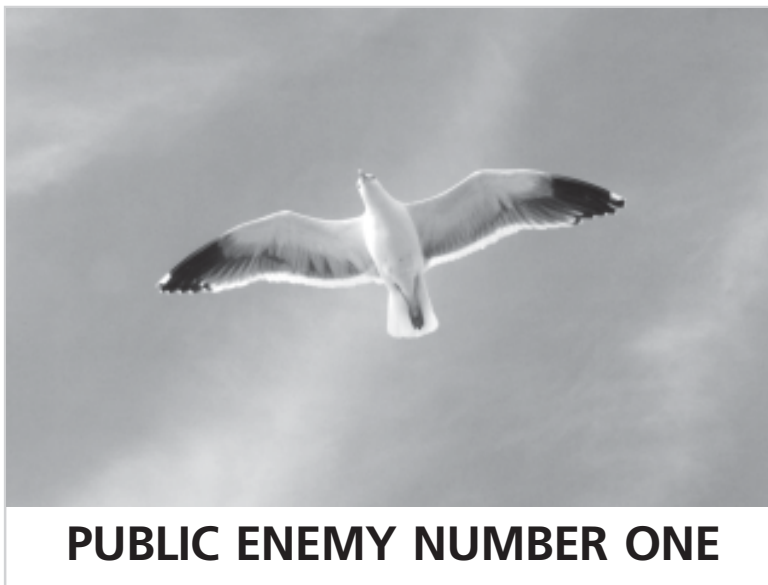
today set foot upon legendary Land's End where since time began the winds and mighty seas of the Atlantic Ocean have gradually and relentlessly carved their way into the high granite cliffs of the Penwith peninsula. During the visit the above named also participated in the general holiday atmosphere of the new and exciting Land's End complex.

Date of visit.

Show the students this place on the map and give some information. I think it'll be one more chance to exploit the map.

2. There are a lot of seagulls in this place. I saw a very strange inscription on the table of an open-air café "Be aware of seagulls". My interest was soon satisfied. When I was sitting looking at the waves of the Atlantic Ocean, someone took the sandwich off my hands. Who could it be?

It was a seagull! Seagulls were flying over the tables having nice dinner. After that in the local bookshop I bought a postcard of a seagull with an inscription: Public enemy number one.



Activity 4

Holiday time.

You have one-week holiday in Great Britain and your plane tickets give stopover in two or three places. Plan your trip. Where will you go and why? What will you need to take (suntan cream, walking boots, camera, sunglasses, guide book etc.)?

Activity 5

You can even connect studying the map and teaching literature. Many cities and towns are closely connected with the names of famous writers and poets.

Example:

Stratford-upon-Avon – William Shakespeare;

Dublin – Oscar Wilde; George Bernard Shaw;

Daresbury – Lewis Carroll;

Limerick – Edward Lear

Stevenson – Jane Austin.

Let's take one of the facts, for example, *Limerick*.

The name "Limerick" includes both a city and a county.

Location: the county of Limerick is located on Ireland's south – west coast between Clare and Kerry.

County capital: Newcastle West.

Limerick city is set in the north – east of County Limerick on the mouth of the Shannon estuary.

Land area: 7.9 sq. miles.

Total population: 52,039 people.

Limerick is closely connected with poetry and the name of Edward Lear.

Edward Lear (1812–1888) – British artist, humorist and traveller, the author of the famous *Book of Nonsense* (1846).

Limerick is a type of a short funny poem.

Limerick writing:

- a) a limerick is a humorous poem with five lines
- b) the second line usually begins with "who" or "whose"
- c) the rhyming schemes
 - a
 - a
 - b
 - b
 - a
- d) the main character is first mentioned in the first line
- e) the action is described in the third and fourth lines
- f) the result is shown in the fifth line
- g) it is always written in the past tense

For example:

There once was an old man of Esser,

Whose knowledge grew lesser and lesser,

It at last grew so small

He knew nothing at all,

And now he is a college professor.

My students successfully wrote a lot of limericks.

If you want to know more about different places in Britain, you can go to the following web sites:

<http://www.liguapress.com>

<http://www.carepress.co.uk>

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/studies>

<http://visitbritain.com>

<http://planet-britain.org>

<http://www.uk-click.uk>

<http://elt.britcoun.org.pl>