

RESOURCE LIBRARY
LESSON

Languages and Religions of the United Kingdom and Ireland

Students explore how language and religion have affected the borders in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

GRADES

6 - 8

SUBJECTS

English Language Arts, Geography, Human Geography, Social Studies, World History

CONTENTS

2 Activities

ACTIVITY 1: CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND | 1 HR

DIRECTIONS

1. Discuss the physical features of the United Kingdom and Ireland and students' impressions of language and religion in those countries.

Project the maps Physical Map of Europe and Country Borders in Europe for students, or overlay the two map transparencies if available. Ask students to find the United Kingdom and Ireland. Have students discuss, as a class, the physical features of the two islands. Ask: *Do you expect that an island would only contain one country? Why or why not? What might cause an island to split into several countries?* Next, ask students to think about the languages and religions they learned about in Lesson 6: Languages and Religions of Europe. Ask: *Were the United Kingdom and Ireland identified as possible trouble spots during that lesson? What are your impressions of language and religion in the United Kingdom and Ireland? Explain.*

2. Have partners read a passage.

Divide students into pairs. Distribute a copy of the handout Languages and Religions of The U.K. and Ireland to each pair. Read aloud the passage a first time as students follow along, pointing out any difficult pronunciations. Then have students re-read the passage with their partners.

3. Have partners use the reading and maps to complete the worksheet.

Distribute a copy of the following to each pair: worksheet Mapping Languages and Religions of the U.K. and Ireland; map The United Kingdom and Ireland; map Dominant Languages in the United Kingdom and Ireland; and map Dominant Religions in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Have students work together to complete Part 1 of the worksheet on their maps. Rotate around the room and provide support, as needed. As a class, share and discuss students' completed maps.

4. Have small groups examine languages and religions of the U.K. and Ireland.

Combine pairs to form four small groups. Assign each group only one of the questions in Part 2 of the worksheet. Tell students that they will present their answers to Part 2 in the next activity. Provide students with ample time to discuss and write the answer to their assigned question. Encourage them to identify parts of the reading or maps they used to answer their question and to prepare for questioning by their classmates.

Modification

Have students use the Cornell Note Taking method with the reading passage. [Click here](#) to find and download a blank Cornell Note Taking worksheet.

Modification

Students may have difficulty understanding the concept of armed conflict over religious differences. If needed, read aloud the handout in Step 2 to students, guiding them to recognize the main idea of the interrelated nature of language and religion in many places.

Informal Assessment

Check for student understanding by observing their whole-class, partner, and small-group discussion contributions, and checking their answers to Part 1 of the worksheet.

Extending the Learning

Emphasize to students that it often takes a very long time for change to take place regarding conflicts over language or religion in any part of the world. Have students do additional research on the religious and language conflicts in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Encourage students to find newspaper articles or web pages that describe the troubles in northern Ireland and how the different groups worked together to resolve the conflict.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

- English Language Arts

Geography

- Human Geography

Social Studies

- World History

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- identify languages spoken and religion practiced in the United Kingdom and Ireland
- work with maps to identify regions where languages, religions, and country borders do not correspond

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Cooperative learning
- Discussions

- Reading
- Visual instruction

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
 - Learning and Innovation Skills
 - Communication and Collaboration
- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Analyzing
 - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
 - Acquiring Geographic Information
 - Analyzing Geographic Information
 - Answering Geographic Questions

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

IRA/NCTE STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- **Standard 9:**

Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- **Theme 1:**

Culture

- **Theme 5:**

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- **Standard 1:**

How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

- **Standard 10:**

The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics

- **Standard 13:**

How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface

- **Standard 4:**

The physical and human characteristics of places

Preparation

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Ireland is also known as the Republic of Ireland. The United Kingdom includes England, Wales, Scotland, and northern Ireland. People in Ireland and the United Kingdom share similar landscapes and histories. But language and religious differences have led to fierce conflicts between the two close countries for hundreds of years. English kings and queens tried to conquer their Celtic-speaking neighbors, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, for almost a thousand years. Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, along with Brittany in northwestern France, and the Isle of Man, managed to retain their ancient languages and way of life. These areas were able to do so, even when conquered by the Romans and other invaders. Examples of Celtic languages include Gaelic, Cornish, and Welsh. Today, English is spoken virtually everywhere in the British Isles. Gaelic is used by only about one percent of Scots. The Welsh language persists in the place names of Wales. In Wales, laws were passed making all signs bilingual—both in Welsh and English. Still, only a fraction of people residing in Wales are monoglot, meaning they speak only Welsh.

King Henry VIII rejected Catholicism and turned England toward Protestantism in the 1530s. Afterward, the English battled Catholic enemies France and Spain for territories around the world. Ireland remained a loyal Catholic country. It rebelled repeatedly when Henry VIII and his daughter, Queen Elizabeth I, brought the country under English rule. Scottish and English Protestants colonized northern Ireland in the early 1600s. At the same time, England was

competing with Spain and France to colonize North America. But the Irish natives resisted change. They retained their Catholic religion and native Celtic language and customs. However, the English were firmly in control of Ireland by the late 1600s. And Protestants were in the most powerful positions in the Catholic country. In 1801, the English empire was at the height of its power and declared that all of England, Scotland, and Wales were a "United Kingdom." But the Irish disagreed. In the mid-1800s, Ireland began a new movement for political independence, or "home rule." By 1922, the southern, more Celtic part of the island became independent. Eventually it was named the Republic of Ireland. But fighting and bloodshed between Catholics and Protestants continued in northern Ireland. The majority of people there maintained strong cultural, religious, and family ties to England. A peace settlement was finally reached in 1998. Now Protestants and Catholics share power in the government of northern Ireland.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- None

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
border	<i>noun</i>	natural or artificial line separating two pieces of land.
colonization	<i>noun</i>	spreading of a species into a new habitat or ecosystem, and establishing a healthy population there.
conflict	<i>noun</i>	a disagreement or fight, usually over ideas or procedures.
country	<i>noun</i>	geographic territory with a distinct name, flag, population, boundaries, and government.
culture	<i>noun</i>	learned behavior of people, including their languages, belief systems, social structures, institutions, and material goods.
island	<i>noun</i>	body of land surrounded by water.
language	<i>noun</i>	set of sounds, gestures, or symbols that allows people to communicate.
physical features	<i>noun</i>	naturally occurring geographic characteristics.
plain	<i>noun</i>	flat, smooth area at a low elevation.

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
population	noun	total number of people or organisms in a particular area.
religion	noun	a system of spiritual or supernatural belief.
river	noun	large stream of flowing fresh water.
territory	noun	land an animal, human, or government protects from intruders.

ACTIVITY 2: COOPERATION AND CONFLICT IN THE U.K. AND IRELAND | 1 HR

DIRECTIONS

1. Have students present their work to the class.

Divide students into the same small groups from Lesson 7, Activity 1. Then invite each group to the front of the class to present their assigned question from Part 2 of the worksheet Mapping Languages and Religions of the U.K. and Ireland and the answer they arrived at. Encourage students to ask questions as groups make their presentations. Ask presenters to refer to the parts of the reading or maps that they used to answer their question.

2. Revisit questions about groups with new understandings.

Have a whole-class discussion in which students revisit some of the questions about what a group is from Lesson 6, Activity 1, with their new knowledge of religion and language groups in Europe. Ask:

- *What types of groups need to have their own region to live in? Why?*
- *Which groups can or should be mixed together? Explain.*

3. Discuss religious and language groups and country borders.

Then discuss why some language or religious groups might want their own country instead of being mixed with other groups. Ask:

- *Think about what you have learned from the readings and maps in Lesson 7. Have your ideas changed about how religious and language groups can cooperate within a country?*

How?

- *Should country borders be based on language and religion? Why or why not?*

Informal Assessment

Assess students based on their presentations of their answers to the questions after the reading.

Extending the Learning

Ask students to think about religious and language conflicts in their own state or area of the country. Have students list the different languages spoken, or religions practiced, and consider:

- *Where is each language group located in your state?*
- *Historically, where were the language groups located? Why have the groups moved or not moved?*
- *Have any languages disappeared from your state? Why?*
- *Why do some language groups maintain their language, while others are lost?*
- *Have different languages caused conflict in your state? Describe the conflicts and how they were resolved.*

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

- Human Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- explore how religion and language can impact country borders by uniting and/or dividing populations of people

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Reflection

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

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National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- Theme 1:

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- Theme 5:

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change. They retained their Catholic religion and native Celtic language and customs. However, the English were firmly in control of Ireland by the late 1600s. And Protestants were in the most powerful positions in the Catholic country. In 1801, the English empire was at the height of its power and declared that all of England, Scotland, and Wales were a "United Kingdom." But the Irish disagreed. In the mid-1800s, Ireland began a new movement for political independence, or "home rule." By 1922, the southern, more Celtic part of the island became independent. Eventually it was named the Republic of Ireland. But fighting and bloodshed between Catholics and Protestants continued in northern Ireland. The majority of people there maintained strong cultural, religious, and family ties to England. A peace settlement was finally reached in 1998. Now Protestants and Catholics share power in the government of northern Ireland.

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country	<i>noun</i>	geographic territory with a distinct name, flag, population, boundaries, and government.
language	<i>noun</i>	set of sounds, gestures, or symbols that allows people to communicate.
region	<i>noun</i>	any area on Earth with one or more common characteristics. Regions are the basic units of geography.
religion	<i>noun</i>	a system of spiritual or supernatural belief.

