**The UK**

***Read and translate the text.***

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| The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the UK) occupies most of the territory of the British Isles. It consists of four main parts which are: **England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland**. Their capitals are **London, Edinburgh, Cardiff** and **Belfast**.  Great Britain consists of England, Scotland, Wales and does not include Northern Ireland. But in everyday speech “Great Britain” is used to mean The United Kingdom. The capital of the UK is London. |
| The UK is one of the world’s small countries (it is twice smaller than France or Spain), with an area of some 244,100 square kilometers. The British Isles are separated from the European continent by **the North Sea, the English Channel** and **the Strait of Dover**. The western coast of Great Britain is washed by **the Atlantic Ocean** and **the Irish Sea**.  The surface of the British Isles varies very much. The north of Scotland is mountainous and is called **the Highlands**, while the south, which has beautiful valleys and plains, is called **the Lowlands**. The north and west of England are mountainous, but all the rest – east, centre and south-east – is a vast plain. The mountains are not very high. **Ben Nevis** in Scotland is the highest mountain (1343m).  There are a lot of rivers in Great Britain, but they are not very long. **The Severn** is the longest river, while **the Thames** is the deepest and the most important one.  The mountains, **the Atlantic Ocean** and the warm waters of **Gulf Stream** influence the climate of the British Isles. It is mild the whole year round.  The population of the UK is over 57 million people. About 80% of the population is urban.  The UK is a highly developed industrial country. It is known as one of the world’s largest producers and exporters of machinery, electronics, textile, aircraft and navigation equipment. One of the chief industries of the country is shipbuilding.  The UK is a constitutional monarchy. In law, the Head of State is the Queen. In Practice, the Queen reigns, but does not rule. The country is ruled by the elected government with the Prime Minister at the head The British Parliament consists of two chambers: the House of Lords and the House of Commons.  There are three main political parties in Great Britain: the Labour, the Conservative and the Liberal parties. |