

Cool Britannia

A Very Short History of England

Ex.1 Speaking

Get into groups of 3 or 4 and see how much you already know about:

- the Anglo-Saxons
- the Vikings
- the Norman Conquest
- the Civil War
- Religion in England
- Industrial Revolution
- Queen Victoria
- the origin of the English Language
- England during World War I and II
- England in the 60s, 70s, 80s

Ex.2.: Reading

Read the text.

Get together with a partner and see if you understand the text. Help each other. Use a dictionary if needed.

Ex. 3.: Writing

Get into 2 teams of 5-6 or 7 and write 10 questions based on the text.

Ex. 6.: Quiz Time

Competition! We have two teams, each team has 10 questions. Teams take turns to ask questions and the opponents answer them scoring points, or not!

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A VERY SHORT HISTORY OF ENGLAND

In the 5th and 6th Centuries, after the Roman departure of England, **the Anglo Saxons began to invade**, and settle, in England. They came from the North of Germany and Southern Sweden, and this saw the beginning of our language forming! Old English links strongly to German.

The beginning of the Viking invasions were from roughly 700 AD! The Vikings were the scariest of warmongers, with big longships with scary, gothic animals carved from wood displayed on them. Their weapons were gruesome, and their arrival on the isle of England showed them destroy houses, Churches, and kill people! They were pagans, and therefore did not worry about stealing from Churches. They settled in north and east England, where they ruled under their own law, called "Dane Law". **The Vikings were a scary bunch**, but their language filtered through, and contributed to the melting pot that is the English language...

In September 1066, began **the Norman Conquest of England**. William the Conqueror succeeded over King Harold II of England in the Battle of Hastings, and then began to rule in England. The Normans were from France, and thus the beginning of their rule entirely changed society, as the aristocracy, law and monarchy all became of the French language. This transformed the English Language!

In the 16th Century, **a grumpy old King called Henry VIII** wanted to get an annulment on his marriage. But this was disallowed by the Catholic Church. Henceforth, Henry began a tirade that would change the religion of England, and a lot of Europe, for centuries to come. He began the breaking away of the Church of England from Rome and the Catholic Church, reinstating and separating Protestantism from Catholicism. **At the same time as this, the printing press had been invented**. Sounds like a minor factor, yes? No! This meant a wider circulation of the Bible, and other books...which meant documents were more readily available and ideas could be shared on a much larger scale! The Reformation marks the increase of scientific discovery, along with the separating of religion. Speaking of Henry VIII, although this didn't affect the formation of England, or mark anything special in history, he is the most famous monarch in history, due to his wayward ways. He married 6 times, having beheaded two of his wives, and there are lots of stories and films made about him and his wives, because of his sordid life!

The Civil War began in 1642 during the reign of Charles I. Charles believed that the monarchy should have power over the Parliament, even though Parliament often passed laws and bills. Only Parliament were allowed to give money for war, however Charles I ignored this, and made a series of mistakes that resulted in leading the country into war. **Oliver Cromwell ordered Charles I to his death** following the Civil War, and thus he was famously executed. There's been lots of films made about him! Following this, the parliament decided to make sure this didn't happen again, reducing the power of monarchs over England. This began a move towards greater democracy!

1837 marked **Queen Victoria's coming to the throne**. Her strong leadership, along with the Industrial Revolution (see below), saw a marked prosperity in the British Empire. She was such a famous Queen she had the era named after her- the Victorian Age! Health, science, literature and arts flourished under her reign. She was also the Queen to very famously say **"We are not amused!"**

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Between the 18th and 19th Century, came **the Industrial Revolution**. Understandably, it doesn't sound exciting, and there weren't any gruesome wars or executions, but it definitely was very important! The industrial revolution wasn't just in England, but over the most of Europe and America, and saw changes in agriculture, technology, transport...everything! Steam trains set into motion, trade with other countries for certain products increased and glimpses of a modern Britain began to form....

In the 20th Century, came two of the most devastating wars in recent history, **World War I and II**. Following these tragic outbreaks, Britain worked hard with other major world powers to form the United Nations. Through this, peace was born, the British Empire lost and the workings of a beautiful European friendship was created!

And that brings us to now, more or less! Following the great wars political reform has taken place in many forms, science has, once again, pressed fast forward, and music has taken hold of Britain. The 60s, 70s, and 80s all had specific genres of music, and specific cultures, bringing us to the present day, where our current music styles are **extremely eclectic**!

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Teacher's Notes

The text can be used in a number of ways. You may of course follow the exercises. However, depending on time and availability of scissors you may prepare several sets of the cut up text and ask the students to put the paragraphs in the correct order. For homework students may be asked to write a very short history of Poland.

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