BRITAIN PAST AND PRESENT:
HISTORY, LANGUAGE AND INSTITUTIONS

English for Political Science
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Preface

This book is intended for Political Science students at Cagliari University, who are required to learn English at a B1/B2 level (CEF) for their first level degree (Laurea Triennale). It is designed to integrate with and complement the general English integrated skills course which all students are required to attend. So rather than being a language text book as such, it presents students with relevant topics, lexis and language used in the various disciplines (History, Politics, Law, Social Sciences) taught during their university studies.

The four fundamental skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are developed and consolidated through a wide range of activities and tasks which are designed to stimulate and enhance cognitive learning and communicative skills, with the aim of helping students to become more autonomous in their acquisition of English.

Each of the ten units contains invaluable basic information on a range of subjects such as British history, language, institutions and social issues. The reading passages in Britain Past and Present: History, Language and Institutions aim to further students understanding of the structure of texts, unfamiliar lexis and grammar forms they will need to know in order to transfer their skills to other contexts and become independent and confident readers.

The texts are integrated with skimming and scanning activities, comprehension questions, true/false post-reading, matching and chart completion exercises as well as listening activities from authentic spoken texts accompanied by note taking, gap filling, and multiple choice tasks. Writing tasks include sentence transformation, summarising and drafting of short texts, while speaking activities encourage students to ask and answer questions, express opinions, and exchange ideas.

Considerable attention has been given to the creation of exercises on the use of English, pronunciation and phonetics along with dictionary skills and basic elements of translation from and into
English. At the end of the book there is a glossary of useful words to help students acquire new vocabulary and thus increase their word power and vocabulary range. The specific lexis students encounter in this book will serve as a basis for extending their knowledge of specialised discourse in the second level degree courses offered by the faculty.

By improving and developing the four skills through the study of topics related to specific areas of interest, it is to be hoped that our students will be motivated to engage in a more creative approach to learning English which will better prepare them to enter the new European and global reality of today.

We would like to express thanks to colleagues at the University of Cagliari who have been invaluable in discussing ideas and providing critical comment.

We would also like to thank Loredana Farris for her valuable insights, suggestions and patience, Nicola Ambrosini and Manuela Giordano for their encouragement and precious technological support in the realisation of this project.

The authors naturally take full responsibility and apologise for any mistakes or omissions to be found in the book.

*The authors*
Unit 1
Great Britain: what’s in a name?

AIMS

In this unit you will learn about

1.1 The British Isles
1.2 Great Britain
1.3 The United Kingdom
1.4 The counties

You will also learn how to

- read and understand a text
- answer questions
- analyse maps
- pronounce new words
- write simple sentences
- translate into English

Language

- Singular and plural
- Adjectives and adverbs
- Acronyms
- Synonyms

Listening
- Skimming and scanning
- Comprehension questions
- Matching
- True/false
- Writing
- Pronunciation and phonetics
- Using a dictionary
- Translation
Unit 1
Great Britain: what’s in a name?

1.1 The British Isles

The geographical expression ‘The British Isles’ identifies a group of islands including the two large islands of Great Britain and Ireland, and many other smaller islands (more than 6,000). They are in the northern part of the Atlantic Ocean, off the north-west coast of Europe. Great Britain includes England, Wales and Scotland. Ireland is divided into Northern Ireland (or Ulster) and Southern Ireland (or Eire). Great Britain and Northern Ireland form the United Kingdom. Southern Ireland is not part of the United Kingdom and it has been an independent republic since 1922.

People living in the United Kingdom are British. Not all the inhabitants of the British Isles are English: only people from England are called English. People from Wales are Welsh, people from Scotland are Scottish and people from Ireland are Irish.

1.2 Great Britain

Great Britain is the largest island in Europe and the largest island of the British Isles. Britain (the short name for Great Britain) is made up of England, Scotland, and Wales. The capital of England is London, the capital of Scotland is Edinburgh and the capital of Wales is Cardiff. ‘Great Britain’ refers to the island in which England, Wales and Scotland are situated. In everyday speech, the expressions ‘Great Britain’ or ‘Britain’ are generally used to mean the United Kingdom.
1.3 The United Kingdom

‘The United Kingdom’ is a political term which is shortened to ‘the UK’ in everyday English. The official name for the UK, which appears on British passports, is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and its capital is London. The name refers to four separate countries: England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Scotland and Wales have their own Parliament. The adjective of nationality used for people who come from the UK is ‘British’.

The UK is part of Europe and it has been a member of the European Union (EU) since 1973. In 2008 Gordon Brown, who became Prime Minister after Tony Blair’s resignation, declared “The European Union is essential to the success of Britain and a Britain fully engaged in Europe is essential to the success of the European Union”.

The British flag is called the ‘Union Jack’ and it is a combination of the three superimposed flags of Scotland, Ireland and England, known as Saint Andrew’s cross, Saint Patrick’s cross and Saint George’s cross.

Task 1. Skimming: give a quick look at the three texts and answer the following questions. Discuss with your classmates.

1. What is text 1.1 about?
2. What is text 1.2 about?
3. What is text 1.3 about?
4. What did you already know about Great Britain and the United Kingdom before reading the texts?
Task 2. Scanning: read the texts again and look at the maps to search for the following information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>London</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Task 3. Look at the map and answer the questions below.

| What is 1? | ___________________________ |
| What is 2? | ___________________________ |
| What is 3? | ___________________________ |
| What is 1+2+3? | ___________________________ |
| What is 4? | ___________________________ |
| What is 1+2+3+4? | ___________________________ |
| What is 5? | ___________________________ |
| What is 1+2+3+4+5? | ___________________________ |

1.4 The counties 🏴

Great Britain is divided into small regions called counties, which are territorial divisions with their own local government. The word county, from French comté, came into use after 1066 when the
Great Britain: what’s in a name?

Normans invaded Britain. Before that, the old name for county was shire. A shire was an administrative division of an Anglo-Saxon kingdom usually named after its administrative centre. Many county names still contain the word shire, e.g. Yorkshire or Oxfordshire, because, up to Medieval times, they were controlled on behalf of the sovereign by a ‘Shire Reeve’ or ‘Sheriff’ (the most famous of whom was the ‘Sheriff of Nottingham’ in the Tales of Robin Hood). Local authorities or county councils in the UK are responsible for running education, emergency services, social services, town planning, transport, and waste disposal.

Task 4. Reread the four texts and answer the questions below.

1. How many islands are there in the British Isles?

2. Are ‘the British Isles’ and ‘Great Britain’ political or geographical expressions?

3. What does Great Britain include?

4. Which countries make up the United Kingdom?

5. Which people can be considered English?

6. Is Southern Ireland part of the United Kingdom?

7. What is a county?
8. What does the word *shire* mean?

9. When was the word ‘county’ first used?

10. Who was the ‘Shire Reeve’ or ‘Sheriff’?

11. What are some of the functions of county councils?

**Task 5. Grammar: complete the table with the plural forms.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>county council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inhabitant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nationality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Task 6. Word formation: fill in the table with the correct adverbs.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>usual</td>
<td>+ -ly</td>
<td><em>usually</em></td>
<td>local</td>
<td>+ -ly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>official</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>recent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>political</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>current</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geographical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>general</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Task 7. Vocabulary: match the acronyms and abbreviations with their meaning.**

- PM: European Union
- EU: United Kingdom
- GB: exempli gratia
- a.k.a.: Great Britain
- UK: Prime Minister
- e.g.: also known as
Great Britain: what’s in a name?

Task 8. Decide if the statements are true or false.

1. Great Britain and Ireland are two islands in the British Isles. ☐ ☐
2. Great Britain is the smallest island in the British Isles. ☐ ☐
3. The United Kingdom is a geographical expression. ☐ ☐
4. People from Wales are Welsh. ☐ ☐
5. Great Britain is the same as Britain. ☐ ☐
6. Great Britain includes Northern Ireland. ☐ ☐
7. The official name for the UK is the ‘United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’. ☐ ☐
8. The UK has been part of the EU since the 1960s. ☐ ☐
9. The British flag is called ‘The Union Jack’. ☐ ☐
10. Scotland and Wales have their own parliament. ☐ ☐
11. A person from Northern Ireland is British. ☐ ☐
12. A county is an area with its own local government. ☐ ☐
13. A ‘sheriff’ controlled a county in Medieval times. ☐ ☐
14. County councils are responsible for such things as town planning, education, and waste disposal. ☐ ☐


be responsible for  split up into  manage  abbreviate  utilize

1. Britain is divided into counties.

2. County councils look after schools, roads and libraries.

3. County councils run things such as education and transport.

4. ‘The United Kingdom’ is shortened to ‘the UK’ in everyday English.

5. In everyday speech, the expressions ‘Great Britain’ or ‘Britain’ are generally used to mean the United Kingdom.
Task 10. Pronunciation: how do you pronounce these words? Match the correct phonetic transcription in each column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>London</th>
<th>ad'ministrətɪv</th>
<th>ocean</th>
<th>'ɔːdən</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inhabitant</td>
<td>ɔ:'θərətɪ</td>
<td>island</td>
<td>'nɔ:ðən</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>'lændən</td>
<td>southern</td>
<td>'arələnd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authority</td>
<td>'ɡəvnənt</td>
<td>isle</td>
<td>'əuʃən</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government</td>
<td>in'hæbɪtənt</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>'arələnd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>administrative</td>
<td>'ɛdɪnbərə</td>
<td>northern</td>
<td>əil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Parliament  | 'sɒvərin       | Wales      | 'Kəntri |  |
| united      | 'θauznɔd       | country    | ɹɪən  |  |
| sovereign   | 'pə:ləmənt     | this       | werlz   |  |
| north       | ju:'nætɪd      | these      | 'kaʊntɪ |  |
| shire       | 'ʌlstə(r)      | Eire       | ɹɪəs   |  |
| thousand    | 'ʃaɪə* ʃɪə* | county     | 'eərə   |  |
| Ulster      | ʊəθɪər          | reeve      | ɹɪəs   |  |

Task 11. Writing: look in your dictionary and find an example sentence for each verb below. Work in pairs.

**e.g.** to be split up into  Britain is split up into counties.

1) to consist of


2) to be part of


3) to form


Great Britain: what’s in a name?

4) to include

5) to comprise

6) to be divided into

7) to be made up of

8) to look after

Task 12. Vocabulary: translate into Italian.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>county council</th>
<th>cross</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>engaged</td>
<td>inhabitant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kingdom</td>
<td>manage (v.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean (v.)</td>
<td>on behalf of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shire reeve</td>
<td>run (v.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shorten (v.)</td>
<td>social services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sovereign</td>
<td>split up (v.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superimposed</td>
<td>tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>town planning</td>
<td>waste disposal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Task 13. Translate the following sentences into English. Use a bilingual dictionary to find the words you do not know.

1. Nelle Isole Britanniche ci sono circa 6000 isole.

2. Il termine ‘Britain’ è l’abbreviazione di ‘Great Britain’.

3. Ogni regione in Gran Bretagna ha una sua capitale.

4. La bandiera del Regno Unito è una combinazione delle tre bandiere dell’Inghilterra, della Scozia e dell’Irlanda.

5. Il Galles e la Scozia hanno il loro parlamento.

6. Il Regno Unito è un paese membro dell’Unione Europea.

7. Le contee britanniche sono suddivisioni territoriali.

8. Ogni contea ha un suo governo locale.


10. Prima che i Normanni invadessero la Gran Bretagna le contee si chiamavano shires.

11. Nel Medioevo le contee erano amministrate da un ‘Shire Reeve’.

12. I governi locali si occupano dello smaltimento dei rifiuti del trasporto pubblico, dell’istruzione e dei servizi sociali.

13. L’espressione Gran Bretagna è usata per dire Regno Unito.
Unit 2
A history of invasion and migration

AIMS

In this unit you will learn about

2.1 The Celtic tribes
2.2 The Roman invasion
2.3 Anglo-Saxon Britain
2.4 The Norman invasion

You will also learn how to

- listen and complete a text
- read and understand a text
- take notes
- answer questions
- pronounce new words
- write sentences in the past tense
- write a summary

Language
The past tense
Numbers
Dates
Irregular verbs

Tasks
Listening comprehension
Gap filling
Skimming and scanning
Comprehension questions
Matching
True/false
Taking notes
Writing a summary
Pronunciation and phonetics
Pair work