

# The United Kingdom

## Unit Plan

Approximate teaching time, 16 hours

**KEY IDEAS:** The United Kingdom is one of the world's most developed countries. It has its own distinct physical and human characteristics. Within the country there are several different and contrasting regions. Development has brought benefits but has also caused problems in the UK.

| PoS                   | Key questions                                | Pupils' book page | Suggested activities/methods   |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| 3c, 7b                | What are the UK's main features?             | 110, 111          | Find UK on world map. Describe location. Discuss difference between UK, British Isles, etc. Quizword/crossword on features.  |
| 4a, 6a, 7b            | What are the UK's main physical features?    | 112, 113          | Define terms. Identify features from photos. Contrast landforms of north and west with south and east. Compile physical features map.                                  |
| 4a, 6d, 7b            | What is the UK's climate?                    | 114, 115          | Identify climatic regions and describe features using maps. Describe and explain link between rainfall and relief.   |
| 4a, 4b, 6f.ii, 7b     | What are the origins of people in the UK?    | 116, 117          | Identify ethnic origins from poster. Identify reasons for migrations into UK. Discuss problems and benefits of multicultural society.                                  |
| 3c, 4a, 7b            | What are the UK's attractive features?       | 118, 119          | Describe UK holiday from travel brochure. Make scrapbook of trip. Use table to measure distances. Star diagram of London attractions.                                  |
| 3c, 6a.i, 6g.iv, 7b   | What is London like?                         | 120, 121          | Revise OS map skills. Identify map/photo features. Complete distance Quizword and walk. Describe area using map/photo.   |
| 3c, 3d, 4a, 4b, 6a    | What is it like living in London?            | 122, 123          | Compare outer suburbs with inner city. List advantages and disadvantages. Describe and assess impact of change.  |
| 4a, 4c, 7b            | What are South West England's main features? | 124, 125          | Describe tourist attractions. Sort into physical and human. Prepare holiday itinerary and information leaflet. Access secondary data through travel agent or Internet. |
| 3c, 4a, 4b, 6a.i, 7b  | What is South West England like?             | 126, 127          | Extend mapskills – link map, sketch, photo. Prepare holiday brochure. Describe local walk using OS map.  |
| 4b, 5b, 6k.ii, 6k.iii | What is sustainable development?             | 128, 129          | Define terms. Describe causes and effects of acid rain. Complete process diagram. Outline solutions to problem. Debate for/against.                                    |
| 3b, 3e, 6l.iii        | How interdependent is the UK?                | 130, 131          | Define terms. Brainstorm needs for interdependence. Describe main features of EU. Debate benefits/problems of membership.  |
| 6a.ii, 6l, 7b         | How developed is the UK?                     | 132, 133          | Recap definitions. Describe methods of measurement. Interpret data to determine UK's level of development. Investigate local variations.                               |

| PoS | Skills                 |
|-----|------------------------|
| 1   | Enquiry skills         |
| 2a  | Use geographical terms |
| 2c  | Use maps               |
| 2d  | Use secondary sources  |
| 2e  | Make maps              |
| 2f  | Use ICT                |

| Vocabulary and geographical terms<br>(See Glossary in pupils' book) |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| ● Landscape   | ● Acid rain               |
| ● Erosion   | ● Sustainable development |
| ● Deposition  | ● Interdependence         |
| ● Climate   | ● Trade                   |
| ● Migration   | ● Standard of living      |
| ● Multicultural society   | ● Development             |
| ● Densely populated   | ● Immigrant               |
| ● Redeveloped   |                           |

# Unit commentary

The National Curriculum Orders for Geography were first published in March 1991. The original document was long, and extremely detailed and prescriptive. Subsequent revisions in 1995 and 2000 reduced the amount of content and improved flexibility of use.

For example, as far as places are concerned there is no longer a prescribed list of countries to study. The wording is now simply 'Pupils should investigate **two countries** in significantly different states of economic development from one another'. That broadens the choice of country but it also means that the UK can be chosen as one of the countries. This unit, then, looks at the UK as a more economically developed country. The page headings are similar to those used for the other countries in *Places* so that comparisons may be made.

There are three distinct, though interrelated, parts to the unit. In the first, the 'physical and human features which give rise to the country's distinctive character of places' (PoS 3c, 4a and 4b) are described and briefly explained. The second part fulfils the requirement for pupils to learn 'what regional differences exist within the country and their causes and consequences' (PoS 6a.i). Here we look at London, the country's capital and largest city, and compare it with South West England, a relatively sparsely populated and rural part of Britain. The more complex issues of sustainable development (PoS 5b and 6k), interdependence (PoS 3e and 6i.iii) and levels of social and economic development (PoS 6a and 6i) are covered in the last section of the unit.

The aims of **pages 110 and 111** are twofold. The first is to identify and distinguish the British Isles, Great Britain, Ireland, the UK and the Republic of Ireland. A discussion on 'Where do we live?' might be a good starter here. Follow that with atlas work and the drawing of maps to show the different constituent parts of the British Isles. The second aim is simply to make pupils aware of the main features of the UK. An atlas-type map is provided for this on page 111. A Quickquiz on physical and human features could be organised and the crossword completed. Activity Sheet 6.1 includes a copy of the crossword and some further map-based questions.

**Pages 112 and 113** concentrate on physical geography. Pupils might like to make their own map showing features that they are aware of. Alternatively you could hold a brainstorming session, with features added to a wall map for pupils to share. Activity 1 acts as something of a revision exercise. Most of these terms were introduced in Unit 1 of *Connections*, which looked at weathering, rivers and coasts. The double page in *Places* simplifies UK landforms into three main areas. The first is

the north and west, which is largely highland, shaped over millions of years by the erosive action of water and ice. The second is the lowland areas of the south and east, which is a landscape of hills, valleys and rolling plains formed mainly by deposition processes. The third area is the coast, an area that is affected by both erosion and deposition processes. Youngsters should be encouraged to identify their own location on the map and describe and perhaps explain the landforms of their own local area.

Surely no study of the UK would be complete without a look at weather and climate. **Pages 114 and 115** to some extent revisit the work in Unit 1 of *Foundations*, which covers the National Curriculum requirements of weather and climate. The spread here first defines the UK's climate as temperate, and then identifies different climatic regions within the country. A starting point might be to describe the climate of your local area using the maps. Descriptions of the other regions may then be completed using data comparisons and written descriptions. Activity 4 shows how an understanding of climate can affect decision-making. Both *Foundations* and *Basics* include similar investigations.

**Pages 116 and 117** are concerned with the people of the UK – who they are, where they come from and what they are like. This is probably an appropriate time in the course to introduce ethnic issues, since the UK is made up of people from many different countries and with many different beliefs and traditions. Perhaps a starting point might be to ask pupils about their origins: where they were born, where their parents and relatives come from. Plot the information on a world map and emphasise the cultural diversity of their backgrounds. The overall theme is that most of the ethnic population were either invited to Britain or were actually born here. This has produced a multicultural society that has added variety and interest to the UK but has also caused some problems.

**Pages 118 and 119** provide a summary of Britain's main features. 'The best of Britain' is adapted from a Californian holiday brochure, and takes visitors on a whistle-stop tour of the UK. Pupils might be encouraged to compile a scrapbook of an imaginary trip and send postcards home from a variety of locations. Alternatively, youngsters might like to collect their own holiday brochures and plan their very own UK holiday. Some might choose to plan a historic trip, whilst others may prefer to visit the principal physical features of the country. They could produce a brochure, make a poster or even write a script for a TV holiday programme. For those who have access to the Internet, website addresses are readily available from most travel agents. The Thomas Cook website, for example, is: [www.thomascook.co.uk](http://www.thomascook.co.uk).

**Pages 120 to 127** form the second part of the unit. They compare busy and congested London with the mainly rural and peaceful South West region. The study and comparison of these two locations meet the requirement of PoS 6a.i which asks about 'the regional differences that exist within the country and their causes and consequences'.

**Pages 120 and 121** begin with a look at London's East End, using a 1:25 000 OS map and aerial photograph. The double page may be used to revise OS mapskills and introduce youngsters, perhaps for the first time, to the 1:25 000 map. The activities concentrate on features of the area. We have tried to emphasise how crowded and congested London is: tightly packed streets, complicated road systems, different forms of transport, little open space. Also note the developments. This is the London Docklands, a huge redevelopment area that includes Canary Wharf and the Millennium Dome. This provides a good opportunity to discuss urban change: new industries, improved housing, the impact of change on communities – all great geography!

The aim of **pages 122 and 123** is to show what it is like to live in London. These two pages are written in the first person and attempt to show both the good points and the bad points about the city from the point of view of young teenagers. Of course, London is one of the world's great cities, and it would be quite possible to fill a whole book about the place. Here, as always in the Key Geography series, we have tried to be practical and have endeavoured to provide the main facts about the city in a clear but interesting way but also in a form that can be taught in a realistic length of time. The double-page spread compares life in the outskirts with that of the inner city. Having identified the good and bad points about these areas, it would be helpful to develop debate about which would be the preferred place to live. The point could be emphasised that in geography there is not always a right or wrong answer to a question.

As a comparison with London, pupils then study South West England. **Pages 124 and 125** briefly describe the area, largely through its tourist attractions. After London, the South West is the most popular holiday area for British tourists. The region accounts for a sixth of all tourist spending in the England, although only 13% of all tourists are overseas visitors. The reasons for the area's popularity are mainly to do with the fine scenery, attractive villages and better than average weather. The South West is also accessible to the UK's more highly populated areas of the South East and the Midlands. Activity 3 asks pupils to plan a holiday in the South West. This may be done using the resources provided, but pupils might be encouraged 'to select and use secondary sources of evidence' as required in PoS 2d, and to use ICT (PoS 2e). Further information, including the document 'A Tourist Strategy',

is available from the West Country Tourist Board, 60 St David's Hill, Exeter EX4 4SY. For those with access to the Internet, the website address is: [www.westpart.wctb.co.uk](http://www.westpart.wctb.co.uk).

**Pages 126 and 127** use an oblique aerial photograph and 1:25 000 OS map to show what a typical part of South West England is like. The aim of these two pages is to help pupils to learn about the area and to extend their ability to interpret maps and photos. The Activities provide a starter. No doubt teachers will be able to devise further tasks that are appropriate to the needs and expertise of their pupils.

**Pages 128 to 133** form the last part of the unit. They look at three important topics: sustainable development, interdependence, and development. The content of this section is noticeably more difficult than the first two sections of the unit. We have tried to produce material that is accessible to all abilities, and have left it to the teacher to adapt these to the needs of the individual pupils.

**Pages 128 and 129** look at the issue of sustainable development through a study of acid rain. This fulfils the requirement for pupils to learn about countries' interdependence, environmental issues and sustainable development (PoS 3e, 5a and 5b). Sustainable development can be difficult to explain to Key Stage 3 pupils. Acid rain was selected here because it is suggested in the National Curriculum as a case study; it is an important side-effect of the UK's development; and the effects are serious and wide-ranging. Pupils should not be led into believing that development is all bad. The point of studying sustainable development is to enable pupils to understand the need to make progress but at the same time to recognise that in the long term, wasting resources and damaging the environment is not a sensible way of going about it.

**Pages 130 and 131** are about the UK's interdependence. The National Curriculum requires that pupils should be able to 'describe the global context of places studied' and explain how places are interdependent (PoS 3b and 3e); they should also be taught 'about factors, including the interdependence of countries, which affect development' (PoS 12c). As explained earlier in *Places* (Unit 1 Development), interdependence is a large and quite complicated topic in geography. As usual, there is an attempt here to keep things simple, and there is a concentration on links with the European Union (EU). Page 130 emphasises the trade benefits of links with the EU, whilst page 131 considers some of the social issues associated with membership. Activity 4 encourages pupils to think hard about the advantages and disadvantages of EU membership. A structured and rational debate on the topic could be set up.

Finally, **pages 132 and 133** look at 'ways in which the country may be judged to be more or less developed' (PoS 6.i). Page 132 applies a variety of development measures to the UK. Page 133 then goes on to show that whatever methods are used to measure development, the UK invariably scores highly and can be considered as one of the world's most developed countries. Pupils with Internet access might like to make comparisons with other countries using the websites at: [www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus](http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus) and [www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook), the latter being particularly good for up-to-date statistics. It is important to recognise, however, that not everyone in the UK is well off and living the good life. For the more able pupils, an enquiry might be set up to contrast standards of living in different parts of a local town. Statistics for such a study are normally readily available from the local council offices either direct by post or through their website.

## Differentiation

To help less able pupils even further, a variety of teaching methods can be used. Some are included in the unit's activities, others are included on the Activity Sheets. Others, such as word searches, jumbled letters, matched pairs, true or false exercises, sorted lists, crosswords and quizzes, could be developed by the teacher to suit their own needs and the needs of their pupils. For the more able, the UK still remains an exciting and challenging country to study. Almost every page suggests extension work in some form or another. In particular, the last section of the unit looks at relatively complex geographical issues which lend themselves to enquiry work and debate. With such a wealth of visual material and factual information readily available, setting up interesting and worthwhile extension work should be no problem.