Opening Talk English

Terminology of The British Isles

People often use terms as Great Britain or UK in the wrong way, I did so too. So I looked up the geography of the British Isles and I would like to share my knowledge so that we can all use the correct terminology.

First I’m going back in time, the origin of this terminology.

The earliest known names for the islands come from ancient Greek writings. Ireland was referred to as *Ierne* and Britain as *Albion*. The British Isles were *Prettanic* or *Brettanic Islands*. In Latin the term for Ireland became *Iwernia,* and *Albion* was no longer the favored term for Great Britain, which changed to *Britannia*.

So there were *the Kingdom of England* (927-1707), *Wales* (1283-1536), *the Kingdom of Scotland* (843-1707) and *the Lordship of Ireland* (1171-1541). In 1536 Wales was added to the Kingdom of England. In 1707 the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland became *the Kingdom of Great Britain* (1707-1801). In 1541 the Lordship of Ireland became *the Kingdom of Ireland* (1541-1801).

In 1801 Ireland was brought under British government control by the Act of Union creating the *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*. Ireland started a war for independence and in 1922 it became *the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,* while Ireland became the *Republic of Ireland* in 1949.

Now back to the present. The terminology explained.

*The United Kingdom (UK),* this is not a country but it consists of countries. *England, Scotland, Wales* and *Northern Ireland*. Each of these populations mostly likes to be called by their country, English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish but because they all have the same passports they are all British citizens of *the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*.

Great Britain, this is a geographical term. It is the biggest island of the British Islands. It is also commonly used as the name for England, Scotland and Wales without Northern Ireland. But this term is not right to use because all three countries have islands that are not part of great Britain.

Ireland, this is the second biggest island of the British Islands but it is not a country. It is a geographical term for the two countries *Northern Ireland* and *the Republic of Ireland.*

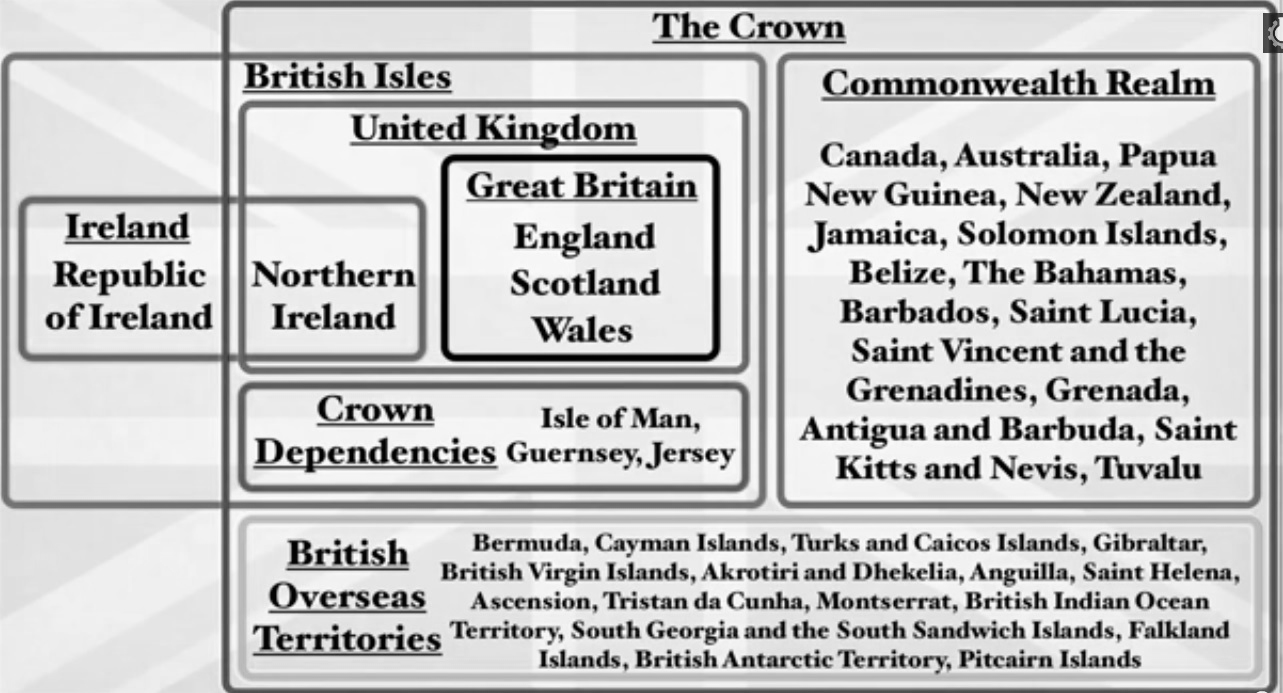
Both the *Republic of Ireland* and the *UK* are part of the European Union.

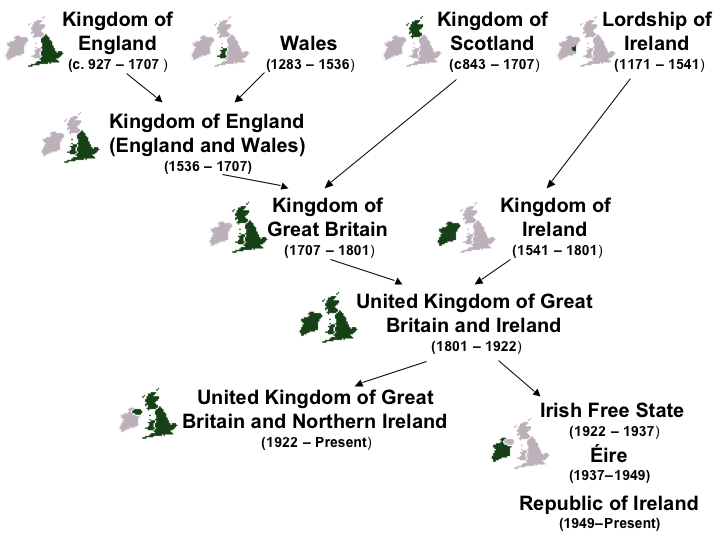
*The United Kingdom* is ruled by ‘the crown’ which is the ruling monarch (king or queen). England used to have a lot of colonies.

The ones that gained their independence by diplomacy but continue to recognize the authority of the crown are known as *the Commonwealth Realm.* This consists of too many countries to name but the best known are *Canada* and *Australia*.

*The Crown Dependencies* arenot independent nations but are granted local autonomy (permission to rule itself) the crown dependencies are *the Isle of Man, Guernsey* and *Jersey*.

The other *‘Crown Colonies’* are now called *British Overseas Territories* and are still property of Britain under the rule of the crown.



[](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/14/Nations_of_the_UK.png)