

Vocabulary for Describing British Life

Without looking below for now, listen to your teacher until you are fairly sure which topic you think all the words are about, then guess the topic.

Label the sections below with their topics, using the mixed list of topics if you need.

Check your answers as a class, asking about two or three words in each section as you do so if you like (there are too many to ask about absolutely everything).

Useful phrases for checking/ clarifying

What does... **mean**?/ Does...**mean**...?

What **exactly** is...?

What's the **difference** between... and...?

What does... **stand** for?

Is... the **same** as...?

Can you **explain**...?

I'm afraid I don't **understand**...

Can you give me an **example** of...?

How would you **translate**...?

What's the literal **translation** of...?/ What's the word by word **translation** of...?

What's the normal **translation** of...?

Take turns asking each other about the meaning of the language, using phrases like those above. You can use the key words for checking/ clarifying phrases at the bottom to help if you need to.

Play the same guessing categories game in pairs or small groups.

Useful phrases for correcting someone (politely)

"I can see why you might think that, but..."

"It could also be that, but..."

"I could have been that if I'd said..., but what I actually said was..."

Use similar language to that above to talk about things specific to other cultures.

1066, The Normans, The Tudors, Victoria, Waterloo, Victorian, Georgian, The Blitz

bank holiday (Monday), Boxing Day, May Day, Good Friday, city break, long weekend/ three day weekend/ Bank Holiday weekend, glamping, caravan, campervan, half term, Good Friday, Easter Monday

B&B, bungalow, council estate, semi-(detached), detached (house), terraced house, ex-council, mortgage, two up two down, studio, second home/ holiday home, (thatched) cottage, granny flat, landlord/ landlady, central heating, double glazing, YHA, Travelodge, Premier Inn

Bonfire Night/ Guy Fawkes Night, Remembrance Day/ Poppy Day, Notting Hill Carnival, Lord Mayor's Parade, hen night, stag night, Pancake Day/ Shrove Tuesday, Easter

BST, daylight saving time, GMT, 9 to 5, 24/7

BT, socket, three-pin plug, 240 volts, 0800, 0845, 0898, pay as you go, mobile, text someone

cockney, scouse, Brummie, Gaelic, Welsh, Queen's English/ Oxford English/ RP, Estuary English, Geordie

C of E/ Anglican, agnostic, atheist, New Age, (Hindu) shrine, mosque, Westminster Abbey, (St Paul's/ Westminster) cathedral, vicar, (parish/ Protestant/ Catholic) church, Evangelicals, Jehovah's Witnesses, priest, bishop

double decker, black cab, Jag, Land Rover, Bentley, Uber, Rover, MG, Triumph, the M25, the Tube, the underground, radio cab, Oyster Card, season ticket, travel card, Boris bikes, National Express, Eurostar/ Eurotunnel/ Channel Tunnel, Stanstead, EasyJet, BA, Heathrow, Gatwick, off peak (fare), single, Victoria coach station, park & ride, (double) yellow line, clamping, traffic warden, dual carriageway, motorway, A road, B road, first class carriage, Luton, Virgin Atlantic, speed bump/ sleeping policeman, 70mph, AA, RAC

drizzle, bucketing it down/ raining buckets, fog, mist, a hundred degrees, April showers, white Xmas, frost, black ice, Indian summer, gales

a fiver, ten p, ten quid (note)/ a tenner, loaded, skint, cash machine, cheque (book), Sterling, debit card, store card, (loose) change, tips jar, service charge, buy to rent, Inland Revenue, Chancellor of the Exchequer

GBH, pickpocketing, mugging, cops/ Bobbies/ The Bill/ The Pigs/ The Feds/ The Filth, 999

GCSEs, A levels, post-grad, fresher, BA, BSc, OU, secondary (school), primary (school), playschool, (private) tutor, league tables, academy, 6th form, Oxbridge, Eton, MBA, MA, MSc, PhD

Threadneedle Street, hot desking, PLC, Ltd, partnership, The FTSE, The City/ The Square Mile, the stockmarket, office party, office romance, workmates/ colleagues, Dyson, freelancer

housemate/ flatmate, ex, partner, female friend, mate/ chum, workmates/ colleagues, in-laws

housewarming, clubbing, all-nighter, pub garden, house party, warehouse party,

Laser Quest, paintball, karting, gardening

Marmite, (bacon) sarnie/ (bacon) butty, vegan, halal, stout, black pudding, gravy, Sunday roast, cream tea, white tea, Nando's, doner (kebab), builder's tea, korma, poppadum, Madras, tandoori chicken sandwich, vindaloo, steak and kidney pie, shepherd's pie, fisherman's pie, jacket potato, haggis, apple crumble, bangers and mash, stilton, (cheese and onion) crisps, shortbread, After Eights, baked beans, brown sauce/ Daddy's Sauce/ HP sauce, Christmas pudding, *cranberry sauce*, *digestive*, lemon curd, porridge, rhubarb crumble, sweet pickle/ Branston pickle, Weetabix, Yorkshire pudding, gastropub, lemon curd, roast lamb, (Cornish) pasty, Red Leicester, mature cheddar, caf/ greasy spoon, jellied eels, cod and chips, soggy peas, kippers, high tea, bubble and squeak, spag bol

millennials, West Indians, British Asians, BME, LGBT, cockneys, Scousers, Mancs, Geordies, hipsters, tweens, toddlers, toffs, Benedict Cumberbatch, Beefeaters

M&S, newsagents, Boots the Chemist's, WH Smith's, greengrocer's, The Co-op Portobello, corner shop, Harrods,

the NHS, a stroke, high blood pressure, cholesterol, obesity, (local) surgery, midwife, casualty, a sniffle, the flu, heart attack, the dole, NI number

queuing, the magic word, gentlemanly, ladylike

reserved, indirect, cold, standoffish, polite

riot, strike, teenage pregnancy

skinhead, crew cut, number 2, 'tache, stubble

smart casual, trainers, hipsters, tracksuit, waistcoat, flat cap, kilt, Burton's, Top Shop, DMs/ Docs, goth

snake bite, tipsy/ wasted/ plastered, a pint of best, ale, bitter, half a pint, G&T, fag/ ciggie, roll ups, e-cigarettes, nicotine patches, a spliff/ a joint, marihuana/ cannabis/ grass/ hash, porter, IPA, pipe, cigar, 20 a day, a double, spritzer, your local, cider, offie/ off license, coke, Es, speed, shandy,

snooker, pool, pitch and putt, bar billiards, dartboard, The Gunners, The Hammers, The Championship, Spurs, cricket, Milwall, Ascot, FA Cup, Six Nations, rugger, footie/ soccer, The Ashes, test match, (lawn) bowls, The Oval

sparrow, squirrel, magpie, starling, black bird, Alsatian, robin, fox

The Special Relationship, Brexit

tabloid, broadsheet, Tate, the box, the telly/ the box, the Beeb/ Auntie, the FT, i-player, DAB, ITV, Channel 4, Downton Abbey, Sherlock, Broadchurch, Sky, Oasis, Turner Prize, Britpop, Metro, V&A, World Service, indie, dubstep, grime

The Tories, The Lib Dems, the PM, MPs, Parliament, House of Lords, House of Commons, UKIP, county council, mayor, Westminster

V sign, middle finger/ giving someone the bird, hug

Mixed topics

- **Accommodation (homes, hotels, etc)**
- **Appearance (body, face, hair, etc)**
- **Art and media (magazines, newspapers, etc)**
- **Body language and gestures (bodily contact, personal space, rude gestures, etc)**
- **Business and economics (office life/ working life, manufacturing, trade, economic growth, inflation, etc)**
- **Character/ Personality**
- **Climate/ Seasons/ Weather**
- **Clothes/ Fashion**
- **Drinking/ Smoking/ Drugs**
- **Education**
- **Etiquette/ Manners/ Taboos**
- **Festivals and celebrations**
- **Food and drink (eating out, typical meals, snacks, etc)**
- **Free time/ Hobbies/ Leisure**
- **Health and welfare**
- **History**
- **Holidays (public holidays, typical vacations, etc)**
- **International relations (good and bad relationships with other countries, etc)**
- **Language/ Dialects**
- **Law (regulations, crime, punishment, etc)**
- **Money (cost of living, methods of payment, the finance industry, etc)**
- **Nature (national parks, wildlife, natural disasters, etc)**
- **Nightlife/ Socialising**
- **People (young people, minorities, women, social classes, etc)**
- **Places (famous sights, regions, towns, cities, areas of cities, etc)**
- **Politics (political parties, head of state, etc)**
- **Problems (social problems like inequality, infrastructure problems like ageing public transport, etc)**
- **Relationships (use of names, marriage, dating, etc)**
- **Religion**
- **Shopping**
- **Sports and games**
- **Technology**
- **Time**
- **Transport and travel (rules of the road, standards of driving, public transport, etc)**

Suggested answers

History

1066, The Normans, The Tudors, Victoria, Waterloo, Victorian, Georgian, The Blitz

Holidays (public holidays, typical vacations, etc)

bank holiday (Monday), Boxing Day, May Day, Good Friday, city break, long weekend/ three day weekend/ Bank Holiday weekend, glamping, caravan, campervan, half term, Good Friday, Easter Monday

Accommodation (homes, hotels, etc)

B&B, bungalow, council estate, semi-(detached), detached (house), terraced house, ex-council, mortgage, two up two down, studio, second home/ holiday home, (thatched) cottage, granny flat, landlord/ landlady, central heating, double glazing, YHA, Travelodge, Premier Inn

Festivals and celebrations

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Language/ Dialects

cockney, scouse, Brummie, Gaelic, Welsh, Queen's English/ Oxford English/ RP, Estuary English, Geordie

Religion

C of E/ Anglican, agnostic, atheist, New Age, (Hindu) shrine, mosque, Westminster Abbey, (St Paul's/ Westminster) cathedral, vicar, (parish/ Protestant/ Catholic) church, Evangelicals, Jehovah's Witnesses, priest, bishop

Transport and travel (rules of the road, standards of driving, public transport, etc)

double decker, black cab, Jag, Land Rover, Bentley, Uber, Rover, MG, Triumph, the M25, the Tube, the underground, radio cab, Oyster Card, season ticket, travel card, Boris bikes, National Express, Eurostar/ Eurotunnel/ Channel Tunnel, Stanstead, EasyJet, BA, Heathrow, Gatwick, off peak (fare), single, Victoria coach station, park & ride, (double) yellow line, clamping, traffic warden, dual carriageway, motorway, A road, B road, first class carriage, Luton, Virgin Atlantic, speed bump/ sleeping policeman, 70mph, AA, RAC

Climate/ Seasons/ Weather

drizzle, bucketing it down/ raining buckets, fog, mist, a hundred degrees, April showers, white Xmas, frost, black ice, Indian summer, gales

Money (cost of living, methods of payment, the finance industry, etc)

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GBH, pickpocketing, mugging, cops/ Bobbies/ The Bill/ The Pigs/ The Feds/ The Filth, 999

Education

GCSEs, A levels, post-grad, fresher, BA, BSc, OU, secondary (school), primary (school), playschool, (private) tutor, league tables, academy, 6th form, Oxbridge, Eton, MBA, MA, MSc, PhD

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Health and welfare

the NHS, a stroke, high blood pressure, cholesterol, obesity, (local) surgery, midwife, casualty, a sniffle, the flu, heart attack, the dole, NI number

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Body language and gestures (bodily contact, personal space, rude gestures, etc)

V sign, middle finger/ giving someone the bird, hug

Places (famous sights, regions, towns, cities, areas of cities, etc)

The Walkie Talkie, the Gherkin, Zone 6, Canary Wharf, The East End, the West End, Leicester Square, Oxford Circus, Piccadilly Circus, the (West/ East) Midlands, Yorkshire, Dorset, The City/ The Square Mile, Whitehall, Downing Street, The Tate, The Houses of Parliament, Soho, Wimbledon, Chelsea, The North, The Southeast, Snowdon, Ben Nevis, The Pennine Way, East Anglia, The Highlands, Kent, The Home Counties, The Isle of Wight, The South Downs, Bath, The Shetlands, Windsor Castle, Hampton Court, Stonehenge, Elephant and Castle

Key words for checking/ clarifying phrases

mean

exactly

difference

stand

same

explain

understand

example

translate

translation