

# ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS





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## Episode #142

### Scotland

19th Mar, 2021

[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:21] I'm Alastair Budge and today we are going to be talking about Scotland, one of the 4 countries that make up the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

[00:00:33] The other three being, of course, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

[00:00:38] In this episode you'll learn about the history of Scotland, and how it came to join forces with its [arch-rival<sup>1</sup>](#), England, to form a country.

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<sup>1</sup> main opponent

## Scotland

[00:00:48] We'll talk about some of the great inventions that come out of Scotland, and we'll consider what the future of Scotland might be.

[00:00:56] It's a super interesting story, and it's also a personal one.

[00:01:00] Although I might not sound like it, I'm a [quarter](#)<sup>2</sup> Scottish; my father's side of the family is from the north of Scotland, I spent a large [chunk](#)<sup>3</sup> of my childhood growing up in Scotland, and I can actually play the [bagpipes](#)<sup>4</sup>.

[00:01:14] I should also start by saying thanks to my dad, not just for being Scottish, but also for helping me with this episode - so, thank you dad.

[00:01:24] My final point before we get into the [meat](#)<sup>5</sup> of the episode is to quickly remind you that you can get all of the bonus episodes, plus the subtitles, the transcript, and the key vocabulary for this episode and all of our other ones over on the website, which is [leonardoenglish.com](http://leonardoenglish.com).

[00:01:42] This is where you can check out becoming a member of Leonardo English, and join a community of curious minds from all over the world, doing meetups, exchanging ideas, and generally, improving their English in a more interesting way.

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<sup>2</sup> one of four parts

<sup>3</sup> a significant amount of something

<sup>4</sup> traditional Scottish musical instrument

<sup>5</sup> the main part of something

Scotland

[00:01:57] So if that's of interest, and I certainly hope it is, then the place to go to is [leonardoenglish.com](http://leonardoenglish.com).

[00:02:07] OK then, Scotland.

[00:02:09] When most people think of Scotland, they think of [the highlands<sup>6</sup>](#), of [bagpipes](#), of men wearing [kilts<sup>7</sup>](#), the things that look a little bit like [skirts<sup>8</sup>](#), of Scottish whisky, and perhaps even of [haggis<sup>9</sup>](#), the famous Scottish [dish<sup>10</sup>](#).

[00:02:27] You can find all of these things in Scotland, but [beneath the surface<sup>11</sup>](#) is a fantastic history of [rivalry<sup>12</sup>](#) with its neighbour, of [entrepreneurship<sup>13</sup>](#), of [inventiveness<sup>14</sup>](#), and of [struggle<sup>15</sup>](#).

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<sup>6</sup> an area with mountains, especially in Scotland

<sup>7</sup> traditional scottish skirt for men

<sup>8</sup> a type of clothing without legs

<sup>9</sup> a traditional Scottish type of food

<sup>10</sup> food served on a plate

<sup>11</sup> if you take a better look

<sup>12</sup> competition for the same thing

<sup>13</sup> activities related to business

<sup>14</sup> the quality of creativity and originality

<sup>15</sup> fighting and facing difficulties

## Scotland

[00:02:41] Let's start with a few statistics, to give you an idea of how Scotland fits into the story of the United Kingdom.

[00:02:49] Scotland, in case you can't [picture](#)<sup>16</sup> it on a map, is found in the northern part of the UK, it's directly above England.

[00:02:59] Although the land area of Scotland forms a third of the total area of the UK, it has only 7.5% of the total population, just 5.5 million people.

[00:03:13] So, it is far less [densely](#)<sup>17</sup> populated, with only 70 people per square kilometre, vs 430 in England.

[00:03:23] And even within Scotland, the [vast majority](#)<sup>18</sup> of the population is found in a relatively small area, mainly the part between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

[00:03:34] There are huge [swathes](#)<sup>19</sup> of it with very few people living there.

[00:03:40] So, it is a small country, between Slovakia and Finland in population size, but it [packs a sizable punch](#)<sup>20</sup>, it has had a large impact on world history.

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<sup>16</sup> form an image in your mind

<sup>17</sup> when many things or people are concentrated in an area, thickly

<sup>18</sup> almost all

<sup>19</sup> large areas of land

<sup>20</sup> has a great effect

Scotland

[00:03:53] Scottish men and women are responsible for some fantastic [inventions](#)<sup>21</sup>, some amazing creations, and for things that we use every day.

[00:04:02] John Logie Baird [invented](#)<sup>22</sup> the television.

[00:04:05] Alexander Graham Bell [invented](#) the telephone.

[00:04:08] Adam Smith is the father of modern economics.

[00:04:11] JK Rowling wrote Harry Potter, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote Sherlock Holmes.

[00:04:17] For the sports fans, Sir Alex Ferguson, the [long-standing](#)<sup>23</sup> manager of Manchester United is a proud Scotsman.

[00:04:26] When it comes to politics, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown are from Scotland.

[00:04:31] And there are probably hundreds of Scottish people you have never heard of that have had an [outsized](#)<sup>24</sup> [impact](#)<sup>25</sup> on the world we live in, and you probably use things that they [invented](#).

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<sup>21</sup> things that have never been made before

<sup>22</sup> made/created something for the first time

<sup>23</sup> of long duration

<sup>24</sup> larger than usual

<sup>25</sup> strong effect or influence

Scotland

[00:04:44] A man called William Cullen is responsible for the technology behind [refrigerators<sup>26</sup>](#), behind fridges.

[00:04:51] A man called Ron Hamilton developed the [disposable<sup>27</sup> contact lens<sup>28</sup>](#), if you enjoy toast, you have a man called Alan MacMasters to thank, and if you have ever taken money out from an [ATM<sup>29</sup>](#), from a [bancomat<sup>30</sup>](#), then you also have another scotsman to thank, a man named James Goodfellow.

[00:05:12] Indeed, Winston Churchill, the most definitely English wartime Prime Minister, once said “Of all the small nations of this earth, perhaps only the ancient Greeks [surpass<sup>31</sup>](#) the Scots in their [contribution<sup>32</sup>](#) to mankind.”

[00:05:28] Scottish people are very proud of the [impact](#) Scots have had on the world, and [rightly so<sup>33</sup>](#), the world has a lot to be thankful to Scotland for.

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<sup>26</sup> equipment that uses cold temperature to keep food fresh

<sup>27</sup> something designed to be used once and then thrown away

<sup>28</sup> a small round plastic piece, worn on the surface of the eye to improve sight

<sup>29</sup> a machine where one can use banking services

<sup>30</sup> a machine where one can use banking services

<sup>31</sup> have done better than

<sup>32</sup> the giving of something helpful

<sup>33</sup> correctly, with good reason

## Scotland

[00:05:39] You might be thinking, if Scotland is such a fantastic, proud country with so many great [inventors](#)<sup>34</sup> and thinkers, why did it lose its independence and form another country with England?

[00:05:52] And didn't it recently vote to not be independent?

[00:05:57] These are both excellent questions.

[00:06:00] We'll get to the second one shortly, but to the first question of why did Scotland first [unite](#)<sup>35</sup> with England we need to go back in time a little bit.

[00:06:11] Starting as far back as the 13th century, Scotland has been a [fierce](#)<sup>36</sup> [rival](#)<sup>37</sup> of its closest neighbour, England.

[00:06:20] If you remember the film Braveheart—which you should certainly not [rely on](#)<sup>38</sup> for historical [accuracy](#)<sup>39</sup> by the way—you'll remember a character called William Wallace, who led a movement against the English forces who had occupied Scotland.

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<sup>34</sup> people who have created something for the first time

<sup>35</sup> come together, become one

<sup>36</sup> strong and violent

<sup>37</sup> someone who competes for the same thing

<sup>38</sup> trust or believe

<sup>39</sup> the fact of being exact and correct



Scotland

[00:06:36] One thing that the film doesn't get wrong though is that it doesn't end well for William Wallace.

[00:06:43] He is [hung](#)<sup>40</sup>, [drawn](#)<sup>41</sup> and [quartered](#)<sup>42</sup> - he is killed in a horrible way, his body cut up into four pieces and sent to four corners of the land as a warning to [obey](#)<sup>43</sup> the English king.

[00:06:57] For several hundred years after the death of William Wallace, in 1305, there was a period of [tension](#)<sup>44</sup> between England and Scotland.

[00:07:06] Scotland ended up forming an [alliance](#)<sup>45</sup> with France, out of a shared [hatred](#)<sup>46</sup> of England, and there were [intermittent](#)<sup>47</sup> periods of fighting between the Scots and their southern neighbour.

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<sup>40</sup> killed by tying a rope attached from above around his neck

<sup>41</sup> looking exhausted, in a very bad shape

<sup>42</sup> separated, split into 4 parts

<sup>43</sup> do as you are told by someone

<sup>44</sup> intense competition, hostility

<sup>45</sup> a union of countries formed in order to work together towards a common goal

<sup>46</sup> a very strong feeling of dislike and hostility

<sup>47</sup> not happening continuously

## Scotland

[00:07:18] It was only in 1707, relatively recently, [all things considered](#)<sup>48</sup>, that Scotland finally completely joined forces with its [arch-enemy](#)<sup>49</sup>, England, to form the United Kingdom.

[00:07:31] This wasn't an immediate, [overnight](#)<sup>50</sup> change.

[00:07:35] Indeed, Scotland and England had been living in a slightly strange situation for just over a 100 years, where Scotland and England shared a king, they shared a [monarch](#)<sup>51</sup>, despite technically being different countries.

[00:07:52] This happened because in 1603, as Elizabeth The First had no children, she made her closest living [relative](#)<sup>52</sup>, James the Sixth of Scotland, also King of England.

[00:08:05] James' [heirs](#)<sup>53</sup>, his children and their children, became the Kings of both England and Scotland, and so there was a sort of unofficial union.

[00:08:16] And it wasn't until 1707 that there was the full, political and legal union of the two countries.

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<sup>48</sup> used for saying that you have thought carefully about something before expressing an opinion about it

<sup>49</sup> main enemy

<sup>50</sup> fast, within a duration of a night

<sup>51</sup> a single person that rules, king or queen

<sup>52</sup> a member of her family

<sup>53</sup> persons who are next in line to become kings or queens

## Scotland

[00:08:25] The reality is that the [unification](#)<sup>54</sup> of Scotland and England wasn't something that Scotland wanted to do, they did it out of necessity.

[00:08:35] The reasons were twofold, there were two of them.

[00:08:39] Firstly, Scotland had experienced a period of severe [famine](#)<sup>55</sup> in the late 1600s. Its population reduced dramatically, and it was struggling economically.

[00:08:52] The second reason involves a country that you might not expect to have had an impact in the [unification](#) of the United Kingdom.

[00:09:02] Panama, yes, Panama, the small country in central America.

[00:09:07] This was the height of [colonialism](#)<sup>56</sup>, and there was a plan formed for Scotland to [colonise](#)<sup>57</sup> Panama, and to control the route between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

[00:09:20] It sounded too good to be true, and almost every Scottish [landowner](#)<sup>58</sup> invested in the plan.

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<sup>54</sup> the act of becoming one

<sup>55</sup> lack of food, extreme hunger

<sup>56</sup> the practise of one country controlling another one

<sup>57</sup> send people to live in and take control of another country

<sup>58</sup> someone who owns land

## Scotland

[00:09:27] Indeed, anywhere from 15-40% of all of the money in Scotland went into this idea to [colonise](#) Panama.

[00:09:36] Unfortunately, it did not go to plan, the investors lost all of their money, and this had a huge impact on the Scottish economy.

[00:09:45] It was as if everyone in Scotland had lost between 15 and 40% of their money, almost [overnight](#).

[00:09:53] There were few options left for Scotland other than to accept a [unification](#) with its hated next-door neighbour, England.

[00:10:02] This was in 1707, and the union has remained in place ever since, Scotland has been united with England in the United Kingdom, ever since.

[00:10:13] How happy the Scots have been to remain in the union is another question.

[00:10:19] In order to keep the union intact, there have been recent [concessions](#)<sup>59</sup> to allow Scotland more powers of [self-governance](#)<sup>60</sup>.

[00:10:28] Although Scotland got its own [parliament](#)<sup>61</sup> in 1999, with limited powers around education, health and some parts of its tax system, it is still part of the United Kingdom, with major decisions being taken in Westminster, in London, in England.

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<sup>59</sup> things that are given, especially in response to demands

<sup>60</sup> the ability of a nation to be ruled by its people and not by outsiders

<sup>61</sup> a group of people who make the laws for their country

Scotland

[00:10:47] But, for how long that remains is another question.

[00:10:51] As you may remember, there was a [referendum](#)<sup>62</sup> on Scottish independence in 2014.

[00:10:58] 55% of the Scottish population voted to remain in the UK, while 45% voted to leave.

[00:11:08] After the results came out the Scottish National Party, the SNP, which was the party that had been pushing for independence, said that the matter had been settled for a generation, that there wouldn't be another [referendum](#) for 30 years.

[00:11:25] So, if that is the case, why might you have heard about a growing movement for another [referendum](#) on Scottish independence?

[00:11:35] In a word, Brexit.

[00:11:38] Unless you have been living under a rock for the past 5 years, you will remember that in 2016 the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, which it has now done.

[00:11:50] The [margin](#)<sup>63</sup> was close, overall it was 52% voting to leave, and 48% voting to stay.

[00:12:00] But in Scotland, it wasn't close at all.

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<sup>62</sup> a vote in order to make an important decision about a country's future

<sup>63</sup> the amount by which something is different from something else



Scotland

[00:12:03] In Scotland, only 38% of the population voted to leave, 62% voted to remain in the EU.

[00:12:13] And one of the important reasons that people had voted for Scotland to remain part of the UK back in 2014 was that, if Scotland had broken away from the UK, it might have had to reapply for EU membership, there was no guarantee that Scotland could have left the UK but stayed in the EU.

[00:12:35] So, after the Brexit vote, there was a growing feeling in Scotland of “[hang on](#)<sup>64</sup>, we voted for something back in 2014, but the rules have changed. If we had known that the UK would have voted to leave the EU in 2016, we might not have wanted to remain part of it back in 2014.”

[00:12:58] And as far as the [opinion polls](#)<sup>65</sup> are concerned, it does suggest that if a [referendum](#) on Scottish independence were held today then Scotland would vote to leave the United Kingdom and become an independent country.

[00:13:14] If this did happen there would be all sorts of consequences that would be felt far outside the British Isles.

[00:13:22] Would Scotland be allowed to easily join the European Union?

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<sup>64</sup> wait a minute

<sup>65</sup> acts of asking people questions to discover what they think about a subject

Scotland

[00:13:27] [Presumably](#)<sup>66</sup> any attempt would be made difficult by Spain, as if this were easy, it would be a strong sign to Catalonia that it could try a similar thing.

[00:13:39] Scotland would need to find its own [currency](#)<sup>67</sup>, its own money, as it wouldn't be able to immediately join the Euro.

[00:13:48] And in terms of social spending, Scotland spends more per citizen than the rest of the UK, and contributes less per head to the UK taxpayer.

[00:14:00] So, long story short, Scotland would either need to find additional ways to make money, or would need to cut costs in order to maintain the same level of spending on its people.

[00:14:13] And then there's the question of a border.

[00:14:16] As anyone who has been following the Brexit [negotiations](#)<sup>68</sup> and the question of the border with Northern Ireland, you will know that there are no easy answers.

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<sup>66</sup> based on what we know, although not entirely sure

<sup>67</sup> the money used in a particular country

<sup>68</sup> discussion aimed at reaching an agreement

## Scotland

[00:14:27] As far as I'm [concerned](#)<sup>69</sup>, as someone who is Scottish, English and Welsh, if Scotland were to leave the United Kingdom it would be a great loss both for Scotland and for the UK.

[00:14:41] Although there is still huge [rivalry](#) between the two countries, they have been through a lot together, and there is a lot of shared [cultural heritage](#)<sup>70</sup> between the two.

[00:14:52] From fighting side by side in two world wars through to the fact that the two countries are literally part of the same country, there is more that unites the two than divides them.

[00:15:05] But, as with any [alliance](#), any union, it needs to be based on equality and on [mutual](#)<sup>71</sup> respect.

[00:15:13] Each party should feel like they are stronger united than apart. And certainly Scotland, and the people of Scotland, should have the right to decide for itself whether it still feels that it is the case.

[00:15:28] Voltaire once said “We look to Scotland for all of our ideas of civilisation.”

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<sup>69</sup> involved, related to something

<sup>70</sup> ways of living passed from one generation to another

<sup>71</sup> having the same feeling and behaviour towards each other

Scotland

[00:15:34] Speaking as an Englishman and also a [partial](#)<sup>72</sup> Scotsman, it would be a great [shame](#)<sup>73</sup> for those ideas of civilisation to break from an [imperfect](#)<sup>74</sup> union, but still one that is [preferable](#)<sup>75</sup> to no union at all.

[00:15:51] OK then, that is it for today's episode on Scotland.

[00:15:57] I hope it's been an interesting one, that you've learnt something new, and if you do go to Scotland, well then you'll now know a little bit more about this fantastic country.

[00:16:08] If you are interested in learning more about the differences between Scotland, England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and you have always wondered what the difference between the UK and Great Britain is, then I'd recommend listening to Episode 25, which is on the differences between the UK and Great Britain.

[00:16:26] That certainly clears that question up.

[00:16:30] As always, I would love to know what you thought of this episode.

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<sup>72</sup> not complete, only in part

<sup>73</sup> an unfortunate and regrettable situation

<sup>74</sup> not perfect, problematic

<sup>75</sup> more desirable and useful

**Scotland**

[00:16:33] For the members out there, you can head right in to our community forum, ask me questions about Scotland, Brexit, and the UK, and whatever you want.

[00:16:41] You'll find the community forum at [community.leonardoenglish.com](https://community.leonardoenglish.com).

[00:16:46] And as a final reminder, if you are looking to improve your English in a more interesting way, to join a community of curious minds from all over the world, to unlock the transcripts, subtitles, and key vocabulary, then the place to go to is [leonardoenglish.com](https://leonardoenglish.com).

[00:17:05] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:17:10] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

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## Key vocabulary

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Arch-rival</b>	main opponent
<b>Quarter</b>	one of four parts
<b>Chunk</b>	a significant amount of something
<b>Bagpipes</b>	traditional Scottish musical instrument
<b>Meat</b>	the main part of something
<b>The highlands</b>	an area with mountains, especially in Scotland
<b>Kilts</b>	traditional scottish skirt for men
<b>Skirts</b>	a type of clothing without legs
<b>Haggis</b>	a traditional Scottish type of food
<b>Dish</b>	food served on a plate
<b>Beneath the surface</b>	if you take a better look
<b>Rivalry</b>	competition for the same thing

Scotland

<b>Entrepreneurship</b>	activities related to business
<b>Inventiveness</b>	the quality of creativity and originality
<b>Struggle</b>	fighting and facing difficulties
<b>Picture</b>	form an image in your mind
<b>Densely</b>	when many things or people are concentrated in an area, thickly
<b>Vast majority</b>	almost all
<b>Swathes</b>	large areas of land
<b>Packs a sizable punch</b>	has a great effect
<b>Inventions</b>	things that have never been made before
<b>Invented</b>	made/created something for the first time
<b>Long-standing</b>	of long duration
<b>Outsized</b>	larger than usual
<b>Impact</b>	strong effect or influence
<b>Refrigerators</b>	equipment that uses cold temperature to

Scotland

keep food fresh

**Disposable**

something designed to be used once and then thrown away

**Contact lens**

a small round plastic piece, worn on the surface of the eye to improve sight

**Atm**

a machine where one can use banking services

**Bancomat**

a machine where one can use banking services

**Surpass**

have done better than

**Contribution**

the giving of something helpful

**Rightly so**

correctly, with good reason

**Inventors**

people who have created something for the first time

**Unite**

come together, become one

**Fierce**

strong and violent

**Rival**

someone who competes for the same

Scotland

thing

**Rely on**

trust or believe

**Accuracy**

the fact of being exact and correct

**Hung**

killed by tying a rope attached from  
above around his neck

**Drawn**

looking exhausted, in a very bad shape

**Quartered**

seperated, split into 4 parts

**Obey**

do as you are told by someone

**Tension**

intense competition, hostility

**Alliance**

a union of countries formed in order to  
work together towards a common goal

**Hatred**

a very strong feeling of dislike and  
hostility

**Intermittent**

not happening continuously

**All things considered**

used for saying that you have thought  
carefully about something before  
expressing an opinion about it

Scotland

<b>Arch-enemy</b>	main enemy
<b>Overnight</b>	fast, within a duration of a night
<b>Monarch</b>	a single person that rules, king or queen
<b>Relative</b>	a member of her family
<b>Heirs</b>	persons who are next in line to become kings or queens
<b>Unification</b>	the act of becoming one
<b>Famine</b>	lack of food, extreme hunger
<b>Colonialism</b>	the practise of one country controlling another one
<b>Colonise</b>	send people to live in and take control of another country
<b>Landowner</b>	someone who owns land
<b>Concessions</b>	things that are given, especially in response to demands
<b>Self-governance</b>	the ability of a nation to be ruled by its people and not by outsiders



Scotland

**Parliament** a group of people who make the laws for their country

**Referendum** a vote in order to make an important decision about a country's future

**Margin** the amount by which something is different from something else

**Hang on** wait a minute

**Opinion polls** acts of asking people questions to discover what they think about a subject

**Presumably** based on what we know, although not entirely sure

**Currency** the money used in a particular country

**Negotiations** discussion aimed at reaching an agreement

**Concerned** involved, related to something

**Cultural heritage** ways of living passed from one generation to another

**Mutual** having the same feeling and behaviour

towards each other

**Partial**

not complete, only in part

**Shame**

an unfortunate and regrettable situation

**Imperfect**

not perfect, problematic

**Preferable**

more desirable and useful

*We'd love to get your feedback on this podcast.*

*What did you like? What could we do better?*

*What did you struggle to understand?*

*Let us know in the forum [community.leonardoenglish.com](https://community.leonardoenglish.com)*