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The United Kingdom in Europe, the Commonwealth and the United Nations

The proposed syllabus for this section is a 'menu' for ESOL learners working towards Access 3, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2. It is not exhaustive. Below is a suggested list of topics which could be studied under this section.

The items in bold are those which have teachers' notes and learners' activities associated.

- What the EU does
- **Which countries are in the EU now**
- The UK's role in the EU
- The euro
- Other practical issues of EU membership: passport, rights to work, rights to health care...
- **What the Commonwealth does**
- **The UK's role in the Commonwealth**
- **Brief history of the Commonwealth and its legacy in the UK's multicultural society**
- Links to learners' own countries, where appropriate, and other similar organisations; for example, the African Union
- What the UN does
- The UK's role in the UN
- Head of the UN

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The United Kingdom in Europe, the Commonwealth and the United Nations

Sources of the material used in this section

- <http://europa.eu.int>
- www.un.org
- www.thecommonwealth.org

Sources of other useful material

- The EU Website has an online library, as well as an extensive 'Information, Contact and Sources' list. Information is available in 21 languages.
- The UN Website has information in English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic and Russian, and teachers' kits can be ordered free of charge. There is also a 'Cyber School Bus' Website (access via UN Website) which is a global learning and teaching project.
- See 'Useful Websites' for details of other relevant materials.

Useful Websites

Website	Web address	Description
BBC News	www.bbc.co.uk	This offers information on many countries throughout the world.
	www.bbc.co.uk/musiclive/commonwealth	Accessing information on the Commonwealth via music.
	www.bbc.co.uk/a-z	Full alphabetical range of topics on the BBC site.
	www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice	Europe today (world service) News translated into Arabic, Chinese and over 40 other languages.
Commonwealth Secretariat	www.thecommonwealth.org	Site offering a wealth of information about the commonwealth: health, work and education.
Europa	http://europa.eu.int	A multilingual site giving information on a variety of topics related to Europe. Information on the history and development of the EU.
EUROPARL	www.europarl.eu.int	EU multilingual home site showing up to date information on EU parliamentary activities and images of the building.
	www.europarl.org.uk	Profiles on MEPs and information on the UK office.
Europe in the Round	www.eun.org	A broad-based site on European affairs.
	www.gesvt.com/eitrweb	Information on educational issues and link up projects related to citizenship throughout the EU; CD-ROM available.
UNESCO	www.unesco.org	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
	www.unesco.org (theme: culture)	Interesting material on international cultures with translations.
United Nations	www.un.org	Official Website of the UN; contains a wide range of information on all aspects of the UN's work.
	www.un.org/aboutun/basicfacts	Details on the basic aims of the UN.

Type of resource	Online or downloaded?	Level/adaptability
Text based, easy to search.	Pictures and photo journals available online on Europe, the Commonwealth and the UK. Videos online .	E2 (✘ Acc 3/ Int 1)
Sound archive also containing images .	Online for best results, viewing videos and listening to music and so on.	E1+ (✘ Acc 3)
Initial texts simple and short, full articles more complex.	Online searches to find archive news articles.	E1+ (✘ Acc 3)
Pictures complement short, simple text . Short articles on news around Europe.	Archive of related news stories available online too.	Low E2+ (✘ Int 1)
Short films from 2–15 minutes long to illustrate the key events and work.	Images of the week, linked to text online . Young Commonwealth Secretariat much better, interactive quizzes and games online .	E2+ (✘ Int 1)
Lots of information on what the EU does by subject, text is brief but advanced. Highly text-based site.	Interactive serialised story online about the European Parliament (also in other languages as well as English).	E2+ (✘ Int 1)
Difficult text	Main site isn't interactive.	E2+ (✘ Int 1)
Contains some images , mainly dense text .	Possible to search online to find your MEP.	E2+ (✘ Int 1)
Sections for both teachers and students. Projects. Internal search engine can be refined for accurate searches.	Slide shows available. Lesson plans and worksheets available to download . Information on citizenship with literacy and numeracy too.	E2 (✘ Acc 3/ Int 1)
Translations into different languages. Text , also 2200 photos of places with accompanying simple short information. Graphs and statistics .	Quizzes, stories and photos online .	E1+ (✘ Acc 3)
Also translated into Spanish and French. Possible to go directly to the country/area of specific interest and get information on their relations to UNESCO.	Interactive map search of member countries online .	E1+ (✘ Acc 3)
Articles, news in brief.	Other articles to download .	E3+ (✘ Int 2)
Information on human rights and background information. Links to women and children, no pictures and quite difficult text .	Possible to click on member countries' flags to receive information in the language of that country. Photos, video and radio are available.	If images E1 (✘ Acc 3), text E2+ (✘ Int 1)
Dense text on what the UN does.	General maps, select region/country of interest; possible to zoom in using interactive toolbar.	High E2+ (✘ Int 1)

5.1

The United Nations, the Commonwealth and the European Union: Quiz

Entry 1 (☒ Acc 3)	Entry 2 (☒ Acc 3/Int 1)	Entry 3 (☒ Int 1/Int 2)
Read and find out about the UN, the Commonwealth and the EU (with bilingual support). Understand multiple choice quiz format.	Read and find out about the UN, the Commonwealth and the EU. Express views and opinions.	Read and find out about the UN, the Commonwealth and the EU. Express views and opinions.

Suggested procedure (Entry 3) (☒ Int 1/Int 2)

- Ask learners to look at the EU/Commonwealth/UN symbols (these could be put on flashcards) and say what they think the symbols represent.
- Explain that the quiz is to find out how much learners already know about the organisations.
- Pair up EU and non-EU citizens.
- Set a time limit for the quiz.
- Learners discuss in pairs and agree an answer.
- Deal with vocabulary queries before or after they have done the quiz.
- Feedback – check answers.
- Learners form small groups to discuss question: In what ways does being part of the UN affect life in the UK?

Differentiation

- *Select discussion questions appropriate to the learners' levels, knowledge and experience.*

Language points

Integrate the following specific language points:

- ask learners to find all the noun phrases in the quiz. Ask learners to find the main verbs;
- ask learners to identify the relative pronouns;
- ask learners to complete sentences like:

The person in our class who _____ is _____

The point ofing _____ is _____.

Extension activities

- Ask learners to research one of the organisations and give a presentation.
- Ask learners to rank organisations in terms of
 - size;
 - usefulness;
 - relevance to their own lives.

Additional materials needed

- Flashcards of EU/UN/Commonwealth symbols.
- Pictures of the organisations' headquarters.
- Pictures of the Head of the Commonwealth, President of the EU, Head of the UN.

Answers to the quiz questions can be found in the answers section, p. 319.

The United Nations, the Commonwealth and the European Union: Quiz

5.1

Test your knowledge – work alone or with a partner

1. The Head of the Commonwealth is:
 - a. Tony Blair
 - b. Kofi Annan
 - c. Queen Elizabeth II
2. The United Nations Organisation was formed in:
 - a. 1953
 - b. 1945
 - c. 1900
3. The Commonwealth consists at present of member countries:
 - a. 53
 - b. 73
 - c. 93
4. The number of new countries joining the EU in 2004 was:
 - a. 8
 - b. 12
 - c. 10
5. The UN headquarters is in:
 - a. Brussels
 - b. New York
 - c. Geneva
6. The person who investigates problems of bad administration in the EU is:
 - a. the Ombudsman
 - b. the Secretary-General
 - c. the President
7. The Presidency of the Council of the EU rotates between the Member States every:
 - a. year
 - b. 2 years
 - c. 6 months
8. The current Presidency is with:
 - a. France
 - b. The UK
 - c. Italy

5.2 The European Union: Flags and countries

Entry 1 (☒ Acc 3)	Entry 2 (☒ Acc 3/Int 1)	Entry 3 (☒ Int 1/Int 2)
<p>Pronounce clearly the names of European Union countries.</p> <p>Read the names of the European Union countries and identify the flags.</p>	<p>Discuss when countries joined the EU.</p> <p>Pronounce clearly the names of European Union countries.</p> <p>Read the names of the European Union countries and identify the flags.</p>	<p>Write a chronological account of the European Union.</p> <p>Use ICT to research the EU.</p>

Suggested procedure (Entry 2) (☒ Acc 3/Int 1)

- Show learners the EU flag and elicit what it is and why it has 12 stars.
- Learners discuss which countries are in the EU, and when it was originally formed. Show a large map of Europe.
- Feedback. Check that learners have identified countries.
- Distribute Task sheet 1 and read the first two paragraphs together. Check understanding, clarifying new vocabulary.
- Learners work together to locate member countries on the map and match the flag to the country.
- They then discuss the dates when the countries joined the EU.
- Feedback: check answers.
- Task sheet 2: pre-teach any essential vocabulary.
- Learners read text and complete the table.
- Feedback and discussion.

Language points

Integrate the following specific language points:

- pronunciation of names of the countries;
- teach learners useful language for expressing opinions, agreeing and disagreeing;
- ask learners to focus on the use of punctuation, articles and prepositions in written sentences such as *'Ireland, Denmark and the United Kingdom joined the European Union in 1973'*;

- learners write a paragraph about when different countries joined the EU, using the past simple tense.

Extension activities

- 'Mingle' activity: (a) a country's date of joining the EU is put on separate cards; (b) learners are each given a sheet containing just the names of the countries and one or two cards (depending on numbers); (c) learners mingle, asking questions to find out, for example, *'When did Malta join?'*
- Learners research the flags of their country and explain what the symbols represent.
- Word games around the adjectives and/or people for each country, for example, France – French, Poland – Polish.
- A matching exercise involving matching the flags to the countries.

Additional materials needed

- Large wall map of Europe and smaller A3 maps that learners can share.
- Flag pins or stick pins.
- Flags of all the EU countries.
- Cards, one for each country, containing notes about the country's date of joining the EU (optional).

Answers to the activities on Task sheets 1 and 2 can be found in the answers section, p. 319.

The European Union: Flags and countries

5.2

Task sheet 1

The European flag is the symbol of the European Union and Europe's unity and identity. The circle of gold stars represents solidarity and harmony between the peoples of Europe.



The number of stars is not the same as the number of Member States. There are 12 stars because the number 12 is traditionally the symbol of perfection, completeness and unity, so the flag has not changed although new countries have joined.

First find the countries on the wall map and put a flag pin on them. Then match the 25 countries in the EU with the dates when they joined – some countries will have the same date:

Countries

Austria
Belgium
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
Poland
Portugal
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
United Kingdom

Dates

1957

1973

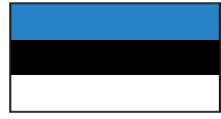
1981

1986

1995

2004

5.2 The European Union: Flags and countries



Austria

Belgium

Cyprus

Czech Republic

Denmark

Estonia

Finland

France

Germany

Greece

Hungary

Ireland

Italy

Latvia

Lithuania

Luxembourg

Malta

Poland

Portugal

Slovakia

Slovenia

Spain

Sweden

The Netherlands

United Kingdom

The European Union: Flags and countries

5.2

Task sheet 2

The UK and the European Union

Overseas trade has been very important to Britain's economy for hundreds of years. During the Industrial Revolution, Britain developed into an international trading centre. There was so much trade that it had a fleet of ships which was bigger than the rest of the world's put together. Today, the UK is part of the world's largest trading bloc, the European Union (EU).

In the past, the UK's trade was with the countries that made up the Commonwealth. Since joining the EU, the UK has traded less with these old partners because it must use other European countries.

The UK's decision to join the European Community in 1973 was mainly for political reasons. The UK wanted to become part of Europe and to have more contact with European countries. It was also useful to be a member for economic reasons. The UK is an island and depends a lot on trade with other countries for raw materials and food not found in the UK. The Single European Market of the EU gives UK companies a market of over 350 million customers. A wide range of goods can be imported, which gives UK customers lots of choice, and the free trade and duty-free arrangements with EU member countries makes trading simple. Nearly half of the UK's trade is with the rest of the European Union.

Read the text and complete this table:

The UK has been a member since:	
Main reason for joining:	
Other reasons for joining:	
Advantages of membership:	
The UK's main trading partners now:	

5.3 History of the Commonwealth

Entry 1 (☒ Acc 3)	Entry 2 (☒ Acc 3/Int 1)	Entry 3 (☒ Int 1/Int 2)
n/a	n/a	Read and understand a text about the Commonwealth. Develop vocabulary relating to the history of the Commonwealth.

Suggested procedure (Entry 3) (☒ Int 1/Int 2)

Part 1

- Remind learners of the quiz (activity 5.1) and discuss what they know about the British Empire and the Commonwealth. Show the map of the world and identify the UK. Learners work in pairs to list member states. Check this with a list downloaded from the Website www.thecommonwealth.org
- Hand out maps and ask learners to find some of these countries.
- Draw a line from the UK to the Commonwealth countries they name. Show that trade went in many directions across the globe. Elicit the advantages and disadvantages of these trade links.

Part 2

- Pre-teach/check key vocabulary such as 'disintegrate', 'nations', 'states', 'colony'.
- Hand out the question sheet and ask learners discuss the questions and answers.
- Learners check answers in text and the vocabulary sheet. Discuss any difficulties.

Language points

Integrate the following specific language points:

- focus on verb forms in the text: past simple and present simple;
- focus on grammatical and lexical cohesion. Learners re-order 'jumbled' text, noting lexical and grammatical features that help them do this;

- learners focus on the use of the definite article in the text, especially names of organisations, for example, 'The Commonwealth', 'The British Empire'. Build up a list of other organisations and countries that need the definite article, such as 'the EU', 'the USA';
- focus on prepositions, for example, 'an association of', 'variety of', 'headed by'.

Extension activities

- Discuss the pros and cons of the Commonwealth.
- Learners research the Commonwealth and write a short account or give a presentation of their findings.
- Learners research international aid agencies.
- Learners find out the population of ten specific countries in the Commonwealth, compile a chart and practise making comparisons.
- Learners research the flags of their country of origin.
- Invite an MEP to be a guest speaker.

Additional materials needed

- A list of Commonwealth member countries (download from www.thecommonwealth.org or from www.bbc.co.uk)
- A large wall map of the world, plus smaller ones for learners to use.

Answers to the activities can be found in the answers section, p. 319.

History of the Commonwealth

5.3

Question sheet

1. Why did the modern Commonwealth start to develop?

- a) Because the British Empire started to break up.
- b) Because the British Empire became larger.
- c) Because the British Empire did not exist.

2. When did the nations become the 'British Commonwealth of Nations'?

- a) 1918
- b) 1931
- c) 1947

3. What caused the Commonwealth to grow in the 1950s and 1960s?

- a) Many European countries joined.
- b) Former British colonies gained their independence and joined.
- c) The United States of America joined.

4. When was the Commonwealth Secretariat in London established?

- a) 1960
- b) 1957
- c) 1965

5. As Head of the Commonwealth, how much real power does the Queen have?

- a) Very little.
- b) A lot.
- c) Some.

5.3 History of the Commonwealth

Reading text

- 1 The Commonwealth is a unique family of 53 nations around the world. It is a voluntary association of independent states which have many different religions, races, languages and cultures.
- 2 The modern Commonwealth began in the nineteenth century when the British Empire began to disintegrate. In 1867, Canada became the first colony to be transformed into a self-governing 'Dominion'. Other parts of the Empire became Dominions too: Australia (1900), New Zealand (1907), South Africa (1910) and the Irish Free State (1921).
- 3 After the end of World War I (1914–1918), there were more changes. By 1931, the Dominions had become independent nations within the British Empire, equal in status and united by their allegiance to the Crown. They were known as the British Commonwealth of Nations.
- 4 Further changes occurred after India and Pakistan gained independence in 1947: the word 'British' was dropped from its name, allegiance to the Crown was removed from the statute and, as more former colonies gained independence in the next two decades, they became members of the Commonwealth. This greatly increased the diversity and variety of the Commonwealth.
- 5 In 1965, the leaders of the Commonwealth established the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, headed by a Secretary-General. The Commonwealth has no constitution or charter, but meetings are held every two years for the Commonwealth Heads of Government.
- 6 The Queen is Head of the Commonwealth and, although she has little real power, she is recognised as the "symbol of their free association". She attends the Commonwealth summits and the Commonwealth Games, which are held every four years. Today, the Commonwealth is committed to racial equality and national sovereignty. It promotes democracy, good government, human rights and economic and social development.

History of the Commonwealth

5.3

Look at the text again and choose the correct meaning of the following words:

Paragraph 1: '*unique*'

- a) Being the only one of its type. b) Special. c) Very large.

Paragraph 2: '*to be transformed*'

- a) To be improved. b) To be made worse. c) To be changed.

Paragraph 3: '*allegiance*'

- a) Belief. b) Loyalty, faith and support. c) Concern and interest.

Paragraph 4: '*statute*'

- a) List. b) Book. c) Law.

Paragraph 4: '*diversity*'

- a) Differences. b) Size. c) Quantity.

5.4 History of the Commonwealth

Entry 1 (☒ Acc 3)	Entry 2 (☒ Acc 3/Int 1)	Entry 3 (☒ Int 1/Int 2)
n/a	Reading and understanding information about the Commonwealth. Developing vocabulary relating to the Commonwealth and countries.	n/a

Suggested procedure (Entry 2) (☒ Acc 3/Int 1)

- Bilingual support may be needed with this activity. Alternatively, learners can use bilingual dictionaries.
- Remind learners of the quiz (activity 5.1) and discuss what they know about the British Empire and the Commonwealth. Show the map of the world and identify the UK. Learners work in pairs to list member states. Check this with the list downloaded from the Website www.thecommonwealth.org
- Hand out maps and ask learners to find some of these countries.
- Draw a line from the UK to the Commonwealth countries they name. Show that trade went in many directions across the globe. Elicit the advantages and disadvantages of these trade links.
- Hand out the information sheet, list of member countries (downloaded from Website) and the question sheet.
- Pre-teach key vocabulary in the first paragraph, using bilingual dictionaries for terms such as 'dependency', 'colony'.
- Learners complete task sheet in pairs.
- Check and discuss answers.

Differentiation

- *Bilingual support may be needed for those with weak literacy skills.*

- *Learners with good first language literacy and ICT skills can use the Internet to find out more.*

Language points

Integrate the following specific language points:

- pronunciation of the names of the countries: drill;
- pronunciation of numbers;
- vocabulary development.

Extension activities

- Discuss the pros and cons of the Commonwealth.
- Learners research the Commonwealth using the Internet and write a short account or give a short presentation of their findings.
- Learners make a wall display with pictures and brief information on each Head of State.
- Learners research the flags of their country.
- Learners do a project on currencies.

Additional materials needed

- A large wall map of the world, plus smaller ones for learners to use
- Dictionaries (bilingual and/or monolingual)

Answers to the questions can be found in the answers section, p. 319.

History of the Commonwealth

5.4

What is the Commonwealth?

Formerly known as the British Commonwealth of Nations, the Commonwealth is a voluntary association of former British colonies, dependencies and other territories – plus Mozambique, which has no historical links with Britain.

Facts

Founded:	1931
Members:	53 states
Headquarters (Secretariat):	Marlborough House, London
Population:	1.8 billion (30 per cent of world population)
Leader:	Queen Elizabeth II
Secretary-General:	Donald McKinnon (from New Zealand)
Constitution or Charter:	No
Frequency of CHOGM* meetings:	Every two years
Commonwealth Games:	Held every four years

What does the Commonwealth do?

It promotes:

- democracy;
- good government;
- human rights;
- economic development;
- racial equality;
- national sovereignty;
- economic and social development;
- the reduction of poverty.

The Commonwealth can take action against members who do not follow Commonwealth principles, for example economic sanctions and suspending their membership.

* CHOGM = Commonwealth Heads of Government

5.4 History of the Commonwealth

Antigua and Barbuda		Jamaica		St Vincent and the Grenadines	
Australia		Kenya		Samoa	
The Bahamas		Kiribati		Seychelles	
Bangladesh		Lesotho		Sierra Leone	
Barbados		Malawi		Singapore	
Belize		Malaysia		Solomon Islands	
Botswana		Maldives		South Africa	
Brunei Darussalam		Malta		Sri Lanka	
Cameroon		Mauritius		Swaziland	
Canada		Mozambique		Tonga	
Cyprus		Namibia		Trinidad and Tobago	
Dominica		Nauru		Tuvalu	
Fiji Islands		New Zealand		Uganda	
The Gambia		Nigeria		United Kingdom	
Ghana		Pakistan		United Republic of Tanzania	
Grenada		Papua New Guinea		Vanuatu	
Guyana		St Kitts and Nevis		Zambia	
India		St Lucia			

History of the Commonwealth

5.4

The Commonwealth – Task sheet

Read the information about the Commonwealth and answer the questions.

Question	Answer
1. What year was the Commonwealth founded?	
2. How many countries are there in the Commonwealth today?	
3. List three countries that are members of the Commonwealth.	1. 2. 3.
4. List two principles that the Commonwealth promotes.	1. 2.
5. Who is the leader of the Commonwealth?	
6. What happens every four years?	
7. What country does the current Secretary-General come from?	
8. How many people are in the Commonwealth today?	
9. What happens if a country does not follow Commonwealth principles?	
10. Does the Commonwealth have a constitution or charter?	

