

Identity

1 Reading

What is the connection between fish and chips, bowler hats, double-decker buses and talking about the weather? Read the text and check your ideas.

Is It British?

When we think of national identity, we often think of certain objects, food or characteristics. Here are four things that people often think of when they hear the words *Britain* or *British*. Do you agree?

Fish and chips

When people talk about English food, fish and chips is one of the first on the list. It's certainly a common meal but not one that's eaten at home. When you want to eat it, you go to a special shop called a takeaway, buy your fish and chips wrapped in paper and then walk along the street eating with your fingers.

Bowler hat

Ask people around the world to describe a typical English man and it's quite likely they will give you the stereotypical view of a man dressed in a suit, wearing a bowler hat and carrying an umbrella. In fact, outside the City of London*, it's unlikely you'll see anyone dressed like this and even in London it's incredibly rare. Interestingly, the bowler hat was invented by a man who lived in the countryside, for people who rode horses!

Double-decker bus

Another British icon is the red double-decker buses in London. When people talk about London, they mention Big Ben, Buckingham Palace and double-deckers. Nowadays, you can find double-deckers in many cities around the world, from Hong Kong to Canada, but when they are red, people still associate them with Britain and, in particular, London.

Talking about the weather

Another stereotype is that British people always talk about the weather. Of course, people in other countries also talk about the weather, but usually only when it's excessively hot, cold or wet. British people don't talk a lot about the weather because they are obsessed with it, but simply because it is a safe topic to talk about with people you don't know very well.

Glossary

* the City of London – a small area in the centre of London with lots of banks and businesses



2 Comprehension

Read the text again and answer the questions.

1 Where do people eat fish and chips?

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2 How do people usually eat fish and chips?

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3 Where can you see people wearing bowler hats?

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4 Where did the man who invented the bowler hat live?

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5 What is special about the double-decker buses in London?

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6 Are double-decker buses only found in London?

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7 When do people in other countries talk about the weather?

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8 Why do British people talk about the weather so much?

.....

3 Vocabulary

Find words in the text which mean:

1 something which is usual and happens very often

.....

2 a restaurant that sells meals but doesn't have places for you to stay and eat

.....

3 covered so that it is easy to carry

.....

4 the way we think a particular group of people from one country or place behave, dress, etc.

.....

5 very unusual (two words)

.....

6 something or someone that represents a particular idea, country or culture

.....

7 a bus with two floors

.....

8 link or connect to one thing, person or place

.....

9 too much, more than is necessary or reasonable

.....

10 unable to stop thinking about something or someone all the time

.....

4 Speaking

Work in groups. Can you think of four things that represent your country or nationality?

5 Writing

Choose one of the ideas you had in exercise 4 and write a short paragraph about it.

Use the text on page 1 to help you.