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SLANG TERMS FOR BRITS

If there's one thing Brits are known for, it's having a good sense of humour. Which is just as well considering some of the name-calling that has gone on over the years ...

Limey: a somewhat dated North American term, originally referring to British sailors who were given rations of lime juice to prevent scurvy. It is not (as some think) derived from the cockney phrase 'Cor, blimey', the contracted form of 'God blind me!'.

Pom or Pommy: used in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The origin is unknown, although the strongest theory is that it's a contraction of 'pomegranate', which was once Australian rhyming slang for immigrant.

Rosbif: a French term referring to the British national cuisine of roast beef but also subsequently to the British themselves. In Portugal, 'bife' also refers to the British, with 'bifa' referring to British female tourists.

Sassenach: used by the Scots and Irish to describe the English. The term is derived from the Scottish Gaelic for 'Saxon'.

Les goddams: a historic term of abuse coined by the French to denote the English, who were notorious for frequent swearing (God Damn!) during the Hundred Years War (1337–1453).

Taffy: a derogatory term for a Welshman, made popular by the English nursery rhyme, 'Taffy Was a Welshman'. The origin is unknown, although it may be a merging of the Cardiff river Taff and the common Welsh name 'Dafydd'.

Jock: refers to the Scots. Jock is a Scottish derivation of the forename John.

THE UNION JACK

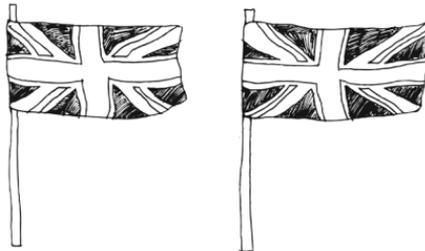
The national flag of the United Kingdom is popularly known as the Union Jack. (The origin of the word 'jack' may be derived from Charles II's proclamation that the Union flag be flown only by the Royal Navy as a jack, a small flag.) It is a composite of three individual flags: the red St George's cross of England, the red diagonal cross (saltire) of Saint Patrick, and the white saltire of St Andrew.

The current flag dates back to 1801, after the union of Great Britain with Ireland. Wales was not originally recognized on the Union flag because, following its annexation by Edward I in 1284, it was deemed part of the Kingdom of England.

FLYING THE FLAG

As the Union Jack is not symmetrical, there is a right way and a wrong way to fly it. The thick white parts of the diagonal cross nearest the flagpole should be placed above the thinner white parts. The difference is subtle, which means the flag is frequently flown incorrectly.

On 3 February 2009, a table top version of the flag was flown upside down at a trade agreement ceremony involving Chinese premier Wen Jiabao, the then British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Trade Secretary Lord Mandelson. Historically, flying the flag upside down was seen as a signal of distress, and Tory MP Andrew Rosindell called it 'an unbelievable flaw in protocol for Number Ten.' In a statement that followed, Downing Street said, 'It is regrettable that, on this occasion, the Union flag was not displayed correctly. We have looked into how this happened and have taken steps to ensure it is correctly displayed at all times in the future.'



NATIONAL EMBLEMS

From roses and thistles to dragons and bulldogs, the crests of the British Isles run the gamut.

ROSE

The Tudor rose is used as the symbol of England. Following the end of the Wars of the Roses, Tudor king Henry VII conjoined the white rose of York and red rose of Lancaster to create the Tudor rose.



THREE LIONS

They feature on the Royal Arms of England, symbolizing England and all its monarchs. Royal emblems featuring lions were first used by William the Conqueror (1066–1154) and have continued to appear on the royal arms of England, as well as more recently on the badge of the England national football team and the British £1 coin.

