

An independent Scotland?

Is Scotland going to leave the United Kingdom? Will it break away and become an independent country? That's the question. The Union has lasted more than 300 years - yet Scottish Nationalist party leader Alex Salmond would like to break away from it and form an independent Scotland. If so, will Great Britain suddenly become a little less great? The United Kingdom, which currently includes England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, would then be not so 'United'. The Union Jack would suddenly be without its blue colours. Northern Ireland and Wales have indicated they would prefer Scotland to remain in the UK. Ironically in a recent poll whilst 52% of Scottish people voted to leave the UK 59% of English people wanted them to leave! The English want an independent England!

The British government has said a referendum can be held in Scotland to vote on the issue. The questions on it have still to be thrashed out. The British Prime Minister favours a referendum as soon as possible, while Salmond, head of Scotland's semiautonomous government, prefers to wait as long as possible, preferring it in the autumn of 2014*, as he reckons it will maximise the yes to breakaway vote. Westminster is said to favour a single question on the ballot question, with a yes or no to independence rather than a third option - the so called 'devolution max' - for greater powers for Scotland. Alex Salmond said, "I think Westminster parties have got to start understanding - all Westminster politicians - that this has to be a referendum made, built, and run in Scotland." Salmond does not want to be dictated to by British Prime Minister David Cameron.

What does Scotland hope to gain by breaking away? Independence for one. There are also huge energy reserves in the North Sea that can be used to boost its own treasury. Edinburgh would be its capital. But would Scotland be wiser to remain in the UK? The current economic climate isn't good. Would it have to give up the pound? Could it automatically qualify for the euro or would it have to have its own currency? How would investors react? Would Scotland take on the Royal Bank of Scotland debt? What about defence or subsidies? Certainly there needs to be rational debate on these issues. One thing is for certain - it will be the biggest decision in 300 years in the Union. Will the Scots vote for independence? Only time will tell.

Category: United Kingdom / Scotland / UK breakup (*see page 4)

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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EXERCISES

1. Scotland: Think of three things you know about Scotland. Go round the room swapping details with others.

2. Dictation: The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

3. Reading: The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

4. Vocabulary: Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

5. The article: Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?
- c) Can you think of any other countries that have split?

6. Geography: Scotland: What part of Europe is Scotland? What is its capital? Draw a map on the board then **look on Google maps** to help you.

7. An independent Scotland: In pairs think of five good reasons why Scotland should become independent. Then add five reasons why it may be an idea to remain in the United Kingdom. Write them below. Discuss together.

For	Against
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

8. Let's roleplay 1: Scotland FM: In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *Scotland FM* radio studio. Today's interview is about: *An independent Scotland*.

1	A Scottish person	3	An English person
2	Alex Salmond	4	David Cameron

The teacher will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

An independent Scotland? – 30th January 2012

9. **Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **Scotland**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

10. **Let's roleplay 2:** In pairs. You are in a bar in Edinburgh. Start a conversation about: 'An independent Scotland'. *5-minutes*.

11. **Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Name the British Prime minister.
- 2) Name the Scottish Nationalist party leader.
- 3) What does Westminster favour?
- 4) Who does not want to be dictated to by whom?
- 5) What has lasted 300 years?

Student B

- 1) Who wants to leave whom?
- 2) What do 59% of people want?
- 3) What countries make up the United Kingdom?
- 4) Name the Scottish capital.
- 5) What does Scotland have huge reserves of?

12. **Economic and business:** Think of three economic and business reasons why Scotland would benefit by becoming independent. Then add three reasons why it shouldn't. Discuss together with your partner.

13. **Scotland:** In pairs, think of 10 things about Scotland. Write them below. Discuss together. What does it tell you about Scotland?

1	6
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class

14. **Presentation:** In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a two minute presentation on: **An independent Scotland**. Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation to the class. The class can vote on the best presentation. Class – After the presentations go through the good and weak points on each presentation. Learn from the results.

15. **Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **An independent Scotland**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

16. **Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

a) Scotland _____

b) Edinburgh _____

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Would you like to see an independent Scotland?
- 3) Have you ever been to Scotland?
- 4) Think of three things Scotland is famous for.
- 5) If you were a Scot how would you vote?
- 6) Which way will the referendum go? Or is it too early to say?
- 7) Do you think it is a wise decision to break up the United Kingdom?
- 8) Would you like to live in Scotland?
- 9) Do you know any Scottish people?
- 10) What do they eat in Scotland?

Student B questions

- 1) Do you think more tourists will visit Scotland if it became independent?
- 2) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?
- 3) Can you think of a business opportunity if Scotland became independent?
- 4) Would an independent Scotland be able to enter the Eurovision song contest?
- 5) Would you visit an independent Scotland?
- 6) Have you ever been to the Edinburgh Festival or to Hogmanay (last day of the year celebration) on December 31st?
- 7) What do you think the politicians in London think about a breakaway Scotland?
- 8) Is Alex Almond right to want a breakaway Scotland?
- 9) Do you think more jobs would be created in an independent Scotland?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

NOTE: From page 1: *2014 is precisely 700 years since the battle of Bannockburn between the English and Scots which the Scots won independence from Edward II. Perhaps this is another reason why Salmond wants to have the vote in 2014.

SPEAKING

Let's discuss! An independent Scotland – Yes or No?

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

Debate the issue...

Consider: 10 things for independence – 10 things against independence

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING:

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

An independent Scotland?

Is Scotland going to leave the United Kingdom? Will it break away and become an (1)_____ country? That's the question. The Union has lasted more than 300 years - yet Scottish Nationalist party leader Alex Salmond would like to break away from it and (2)_____ an independent Scotland. If so, will Great Britain suddenly become a little less great? The United Kingdom, which (3)_____ includes England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, would then be not so 'United'. The Union Jack would suddenly be without its blue colours. Northern Ireland and Wales have indicated they would prefer Scotland to (4)_____ in the UK. (5)_____ in a recent poll whilst 52% of Scottish people voted to leave the UK 59% of English people wanted them to leave! The English want an independent (6)_____!

England

currently

remain

form

independent

ironically

The British government has said a (1)_____ can be held in Scotland to vote on the (2)_____. The questions on it have still to be thrashed out. The British Prime Minister favours a referendum as soon as possible, while Salmond, head of Scotland's semiautonomous government, prefers to wait as long as possible, preferring it in the autumn of 2014, as he reckons it will (3)_____ the yes to (4)_____ vote. Westminster is said to favour a single question on the ballot question, with a yes or no to independence rather than a third (5)_____ - the so called 'devolution max' - for greater powers for Scotland. Alex Salmond said, "I think Westminster parties have got to start understanding - all Westminster (6)_____ - that this has to be a referendum made, built, and run in Scotland." Salmond does not want to be dictated to by British Prime Minister David Cameron.

politicians

issue

referendum

option

maximise

breakaway

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

An independent Scotland?

Is Scotland _____ United Kingdom? Will it break away and become an independent country? _____. The Union has lasted more than 300 years - yet Scottish Nationalist party leader Alex Salmond would like to break away from it and form an _____. If so, will Great Britain suddenly become a little less great? The United Kingdom, which currently includes England, Scotland, _____ Wales, would then be not so 'United'. The Union Jack would suddenly be without its blue colours. Northern Ireland and Wales have indicated they would prefer Scotland _____. Ironically in a recent poll whilst 52% of Scottish people voted to leave the UK 59% of English people wanted them to leave! The English want _____!

The British government _____ can be held in Scotland to vote on the issue. The questions on it have still _____. The British Prime Minister favours a referendum as soon as possible, while Salmond, head of Scotland's semiautonomous government, _____ long as possible, preferring it in the autumn of 2014, as he reckons it will maximise the yes to breakaway vote. Westminster is said to favour a single question on the ballot question, _____ independence rather than a third option - the so called 'devolution max' - for greater powers for Scotland. Alex Salmond said, "I think Westminster parties have got to start understanding - all _____ - that this has to be a referendum made, built, and run in Scotland." Salmond does not want to be dictated to by _____ David Cameron.

GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

An independent Scotland?

Is Scotland going to leave the United Kingdom? Will it break away and become an independent country? (1)___'s the question. The Union has lasted more (2)___ 300 years - yet Scottish Nationalist party leader Alex Salmond would like to break away from it and form an independent Scotland. If so, (3)___ Great Britain suddenly become a little less great? The United Kingdom, (4)___ currently includes England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, (5)___ then be not so 'United'. The Union Jack would suddenly be without its blue colours. Northern Ireland and Wales have indicated (6)___ would prefer Scotland to remain in the UK. Ironically in a recent poll whilst 52% of Scottish people voted to leave the UK 59% of English people wanted them to leave! The English want an independent England!

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The British government has said a referendum (1)___ be held in Scotland to vote on the issue. The questions on it have still to be thrashed out. (2)___ British Prime Minister favours a referendum as soon as possible, while Salmond, head of Scotland's semiautonomous government, prefers to wait as long as possible, preferring it in the autumn of 2014, as he reckons it will maximise the yes to breakaway vote. Westminster is said to favour a single question on the ballot question, with (3)___ yes or no to independence rather than a third option - the so called 'devolution max' - (4)___ greater powers for Scotland. Alex Salmond said, "I think Westminster parties have got to start understanding - all Westminster politicians - that this has to be a referendum made, built, (5)___ run in Scotland." Salmond does not want to be dictated to (6)___ British Prime Minister David Cameron.

the

and

can

a

by

for

SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	independent	11	certainly
2	referendum	12	investors
3	Scotland	13	decision
4	United Kingdom	14	rational
5	semiautominous	15	react
6	breakaway	16	subsidies
7	rather	17	Edinburgh
8	economic	18	treasury
9	automatically	19	ballot
10	qualify	20	devolution

LINKS

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/will-britain-break-up-uk-government-to-offer-scotland-powers-for-binding-independence-vote/2012/01/10/gIQAPzfhnP_story.html

<http://news.sky.com/home/uk-news/article/16146457>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-16561604>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/jan/13/scotland-independence-berwick-upon-tweed>

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: An independent Scotland? Is Scotland going to leave the United Kingdom? Will it break away and become an **independent** country? That's the question. The Union has lasted more than 300 years - yet Scottish Nationalist party leader Alex Salmond would like to break away from it and **form** an independent Scotland. If so, will Great Britain suddenly become a little less great? The United Kingdom, which **currently** includes England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, would then be not so 'United'. The Union Jack would suddenly be without its blue colours. Northern Ireland and Wales have indicated they would prefer Scotland to **remain** in the UK. **Ironically** in a recent poll whilst 52% of Scottish people voted to leave the UK 59% of English people wanted them to leave! The English want an independent **England!**

The British government has said a **referendum** can be held in Scotland to vote on the **issue**. The questions on it have still to be thrashed out. The British Prime Minister favours a referendum as soon as possible, while Salmond, head of Scotland's semiautominous government, prefers to wait as long as possible, preferring it in the autumn of 2014, as he reckons it will **maximise** the yes to **breakaway** vote. Westminster is said to favour a single question on the ballot question, with a yes or no to independence rather than a third **option** - the so called 'devolution max' - for greater powers for Scotland. Alex Salmond said, "I think Westminster **parties** have got to start understanding - all Westminster politicians - that this has to be a referendum made, built, and run in Scotland." Salmond does not want to be dictated to by British Prime Minister David Cameron. **(V2)**

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