ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS



Episode #142
Scotland
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Transcript

[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**[1], England, to form a country.

[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.

[1] main competitor; the opponent it most wanted to beat

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

[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**[5] 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.

[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.

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

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

[2] one of four equal parts

[3] a part or amount

[4] a Scottish musical instrument with a leather air sack and several tubes that make sound

[5] the most important or interesting part

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

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

[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**[16] 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.

[6] the mountainous northern part of Scotland

[7] traditional knee-length clothing of checked wool, worn around the waist by Scottish men

[8] pieces of clothing that hang from the waist, worn mainly by women

[9] a Scottish food made from a sheep's heart, liver and lungs, mixed with oats and cooked

[10] a type of prepared food

[11] hidden under what you first see

[12] competition between two sides that each want to be better than the other

[13] starting and running new businesses

[14] the ability to create new and clever things or ideas

[15] a long, hard fight against difficulties

[16] imagine; see in your mind

[00:03:13] So, it is far less **densely**[17] populated, with only 70 people per square kilometre, vs 430 in England.

[00:03:23] And even within Scotland, the **vast majority**[18] of the population is found in a relatively small area, mainly the part between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

[00:03:34] There are huge **swathes**[19] 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**[20], it has had a large impact on world history.

[00:03:53] Scottish men and women are responsible for some fantastic **inventions**[21], some amazing creations, and for things that we use every day.

[00:04:02] John Logie Baird **invented**[22] 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.

[17] in a crowded way, with many people close together

[18] almost all; by far the largest part

[19] large areas

[20] has a much bigger effect than you would expect from its size

[21] new things that someone has created for the first time

[22] created or designed for the first time

[00:04:17] For the sports fans, Sir Alex Ferguson, the **long-standing**[23] 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**[24] **impact**[25] on the world we live in, and you probably use things that they **invented**.

[00:04:44] A man called William Cullen is responsible for the technology behind **refrigerators**[26], behind fridges.

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

[23] who has held the job for many years

[24] much larger than normal or expected

[25] effect or influence

[26] machines that keep food and drink cold

[27] made to be used once or for a short time and then thrown away

[28] a small, thin plastic disc worn directly on the eye to help you see better

[29] a machine, often in a wall, where you take out cash with a bank card

[30] a cash machine (the word used in Italy and some other countries)

[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**[31] the Scots in their **contribution**[32] to mankind."

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

[00:05:39] You might be thinking, if Scotland is such a fantastic, proud country with so many great **inventors**[34] 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**[35] 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**[36] **rival**[37] of its closest neighbour, England.

[31] do better than
[32] something given or done to help or add to something
[33] and this is fair and correct
[34] people who create new machines or ideas for the first time
[35] join together to become one
[36] very strong, aggressive and determined
[37] a country that competes with another

[00:06:20] If you remember the film Braveheart–which you should certainly not **rely on**[38] for historical **accuracy**[39] by the way–you'll remember a character called William Wallace, who led a movement against the English forces who had occupied 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, drawn and quartered**[40] - 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**[41] the English king.

[00:06:57] For several hundred years after the death of William Wallace, in 1305, there was a period of **tension**[42] between England and Scotland.

[00:07:06] Scotland ended up forming an **alliance**[43] with France, out of a shared **hatred**[44] of England, and there were **intermittent**[45] periods of fighting between the Scots and their southern neighbour.

[38] trust or depend on

[39] being correct and true in every detail

[40] killed by hanging, then cut open and cut into four pieces

[41] do what someone tells you to do

[42] a feeling of worry and unfriendliness between two sides that could lead to fighting

[43] an agreement between countries to work together

[44] a very strong feeling of dislike

[45] happening on and off; stopping and starting, not continuous

[00:07:18] It was only in 1707, relatively recently, **all things considered**[46], that Scotland finally completely joined forces with its **arch-enemy**[47], England, to form the United Kingdom.

[00:07:31] This wasn't an immediate, **overnight**[48] 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**[49], 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**[50], James the Sixth of Scotland, also King of England.

[00:08:05] James' **heirs**[51], 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.

[00:08:25] The reality is that the **unification**[52] of Scotland and England wasn't something that Scotland wanted to do, they did it out of necessity.

[46] when you think about everything involved

[47] main and most hated opponent

[48] happening in a very short time; very quickly

[49] a king or queen

[50] a member of her family

[51] people who receive a title, such as king, after someone dies

[52] the joining together of countries into one

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

[00:08:39] Firstly, Scotland had experienced a period of severe **famine**[53] 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**[54], and there was a plan formed for Scotland to **colonise**[55] 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**[56] invested in the plan.

[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.

[53] a time when there is not enough food and many people go hungry or die

[54] the practice of powerful countries taking control of other lands and their people

[55] take control of a place and send people to live there

[56] a person whose property includes large areas of countryside

[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**[57] to allow Scotland more powers of **self-governance**[58].

[00:10:28] Although Scotland got its own **parliament**[59] 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.

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

[00:10:51] As you may remember, there was a **referendum**[60] on Scottish independence in 2014.

[57] things given or allowed to end a disagreement or keep someone satisfied

[58] the right of a country or region to make its own laws and decisions

[59] a group of elected people who make the laws

[60] a vote by all the people on one important question

[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**[61] 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.

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

[61] the difference between the numbers of votes

[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**[62], 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**[63] 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?

[00:13:27] **Presumably**[64] 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.

[62] wait a moment

[63] surveys that ask people what they think about something

[64] probably; it seems likely that

[00:13:39] Scotland would need to find its own **currency**[65], 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**[66] and the question of the border with Northern Ireland, you will know that there are no easy answers.

[00:14:27] **As far as I'm concerned**[67], 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.

[65] the system of money used in a country

[66] formal talks to try to reach an agreement

[67] in my opinion

[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**[68] 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**[69] 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.”

[00:15:34] Speaking as an Englishman and also a **partial**[70] Scotsman, it would be a great **shame**[71] for those ideas of civilisation to break from an **imperfect**[72] union, but still one that is **preferable**[73] to no union at all.

[68] traditions, history, art and customs passed down from earlier generations

[69] felt or done equally by both sides

[70] not complete; only to some degree

[71] a sad or disappointing thing; a pity

[72] having faults or problems; not ideal

[73] better or more wanted

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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]

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Arch-rival	main competitor; the opponent it most wanted to beat
Quarter	one of four equal parts
Chunk	a part or amount
Bagpipes	a Scottish musical instrument with a leather air sack and several tubes that make sound
Meat	the most important or interesting part
The highlands	the mountainous northern part of Scotland
Kilts	traditional knee-length clothing of checked wool, worn around the waist by Scottish men
Skirts	pieces of clothing that hang from the waist, worn mainly by women
Haggis	a Scottish food made from a sheep's heart, liver and lungs, mixed with oats and cooked

Dish	a type of prepared food
Beneath the surface	hidden under what you first see
Rivalry	competition between two sides that each want to be better than the other
Entrepreneurship	starting and running new businesses
Inventiveness	the ability to create new and clever things or ideas
Struggle	a long, hard fight against difficulties
Picture	imagine; see in your mind
Densely	in a crowded way, with many people close together
Vast majority	almost all; by far the largest part
Swathes	large areas
Packs a sizable punch	has a much bigger effect than you would expect from its size

Inventions	new things that someone has created for the first time
Invented	created or designed for the first time
Long-standing	who has held the job for many years
Outsized	much larger than normal or expected
Impact	effect or influence
Refrigerators	machines that keep food and drink cold
Disposable	made to be used once or for a short time and then thrown away
Contact lens	a small, thin plastic disc worn directly on the eye to help you see better
ATM	a machine, often in a wall, where you take out cash with a bank card
Bancomat	a cash machine (the word used in Italy and some other countries)
Surpass	do better than
Contribution	something given or done to help or add to something

Rightly so	and this is fair and correct
Inventors	people who create new machines or ideas for the first time
Unite	join together to become one
Fierce	very strong, aggressive and determined
Rival	a country that competes with another
Rely on	trust or depend on
Accuracy	being correct and true in every detail
Hung, drawn and quartered	killed by hanging, then cut open and cut into four pieces
Obey	do what someone tells you to do
Tension	a feeling of worry and unfriendliness between two sides that could lead to fighting
Alliance	an agreement between countries to work together

Hatred	a very strong feeling of dislike
Intermittent	happening on and off; stopping and starting, not continuous
All things considered	when you think about everything involved
Arch-enemy	main and most hated opponent
Overnight	happening in a very short time; very quickly
Monarch	a king or queen
Relative	a member of her family
Heirs	people who receive a title, such as king, after someone dies
Unification	the joining together of countries into one
Famine	a time when there is not enough food and many people go hungry or die
Colonialism	the practice of powerful countries taking control of other lands and their people

Colonise	take control of a place and send people to live there
Landowner	a person whose property includes large areas of countryside
Concessions	things given or allowed to end a disagreement or keep someone satisfied
Self-governance	the right of a country or region to make its own laws and decisions
Parliament	a group of elected people who make the laws
Referendum	a vote by all the people on one important question
Margin	the difference between the numbers of votes
Hang on	wait a moment
Opinion polls	surveys that ask people what they think about something
Presumably	probably; it seems likely that
Currency	the system of money used in a country
Negotiations	formal talks to try to reach an agreement

As far as I'm concerned	in my opinion
Cultural heritage	traditions, history, art and customs passed down from earlier generations
Mutual	felt or done equally by both sides
Partial	not complete; only to some degree
Shame	a sad or disappointing thing; a pity
Imperfect	having faults or problems; not ideal
Preferable	better or more wanted

Language spotlight

1. Beneath the surface

- **Meaning**: Hidden behind what can be seen or noticed at first.
- **Synonyms**: deep down, underneath, at heart
- **Antonyms**: on the surface, at first glance, outwardly
- **Examples**:
    - He seems calm, but **beneath the surface** he is very nervous about the exam.
    - The town looks peaceful, but **beneath the surface** there are many problems.

2. Pack a sizable punch

- **Meaning**: To have a strong effect or a lot of power, often more than you would expect.
- **Synonyms**: have a big impact, make a strong impression, be powerful
- **Antonyms**: have little effect, fall flat, make no impression
- **Examples**:
    - This little car **packs a sizable punch**, so don't judge it by its size.
    - Her short speech **packed a sizable punch** and changed many people's minds.

3. Rely on

- **Meaning**: To trust someone or something to be good, correct or helpful when you need it.
- **Synonyms**: depend on, count on, trust
- **Antonyms**: doubt, distrust, be suspicious of
- **Examples**:
    - You can always **rely on** Maria to help when you move house.
    - Don't **rely on** the bus timetable, because the buses are often late.

4. All things considered

- **Meaning**: When you think about every part of a situation, both good and bad.
- **Synonyms**: on balance, overall, taking everything into account
- **Antonyms**: at first sight, on the face of it, superficially
- **Examples**:
    - The weather was terrible, but **all things considered**, we had a lovely holiday.
    - **All things considered**, the new manager has done a good job in her first year.

5. Hang on

- **Meaning**: An informal way of asking someone to wait a moment, or of showing that you have just noticed something surprising or wrong.
- **Synonyms**: wait a moment, hold on, just a minute
- **Antonyms**: go ahead, carry on, hurry up
- **Examples**:
    - **Hang on**, I need to find my keys before we leave.
    - **Hang on** a second, this bill is much higher than last month's.

Quiz

Listening Comprehension Multiple Choice Questions

1. Why does Alastair say this episode is a personal one for him?

a) His family has Scottish roots and he grew up partly there

b) He has written several books about Scottish history

c) He once worked for the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh

d) He recently moved to Scotland with his wife and children

2. Where does most of Scotland's population live?

a) In the highlands in the far north

b) In the area between Edinburgh and Glasgow

c) Close to the border with England

d) On the islands off the west coast

3. Which country did Scotland form an alliance with during its centuries of tension with England?

a) Spain

b) Ireland

c) France

d) Panama

4. What were the two reasons that Scotland joined with England in 1707?

a) A war with France and the death of its last king

b) A lost battle and pressure from the English king

c) A deadly disease outbreak and a sharp fall in trade

d) A severe famine and a failed plan to colonise Panama

5. Why has support for another referendum on Scottish independence grown?

a) The SNP promised to hold a new vote every five years

b) Scotland voted to remain in the EU, unlike the UK overall

c) The 2014 result was found to have been miscounted

d) Scotland's parliament lost its powers over education

True or False

6. Scotland makes up about a third of the land area of the UK. (True/False)

7. Scotland is more densely populated than England. (True/False)

8. Elizabeth the First made James the Sixth of Scotland King of England because she had no children. (True/False)

9. In the 2014 referendum, most Scottish voters chose to leave the UK. (True/False)

10. Alastair thinks it would be a great loss if Scotland left the United Kingdom. (True/False)

Fill in the Blanks

11. So, it is a small country, between Slovakia and Finland in population size, but it packs a sizable _____, it has had a large impact on world history.

12. Starting as far back as the 13th century, Scotland has been a fierce _____ of its closest neighbour, England.

13. This wasn't an immediate, _____ change.

14. This was the height of _____, and there was a plan formed for Scotland to colonise Panama.

15. But, as with any alliance, any union, it needs to be based on equality and on _____ respect.

Vocabulary Practice

16. What does "**swathes**" mean in the description of where few people live in Scotland?

a) Long strips of cloth

b) Small, scattered villages

c) Large areas of land

d) Steep mountain ranges

17. What does "**long-standing**" mean in the description of Sir Alex Ferguson?

a) Having held the job for many years

b) Very tall and physically strong

c) Only recently given the job

d) Always standing during matches

18. What does "**intermittent**" mean in the description of the fighting between Scotland and England?

a) Lasting a long time without any break

b) Extremely violent, with many deaths

c) Happening only once in a long period

d) Happening on and off, not continuously

19. What does "**concessions**" mean when Alastair talks about keeping the union intact?

a) Cheaper tickets for students

b) Things allowed to keep someone satisfied

c) Formal complaints made to a government

d) Small shops that sell food at events

20. What does "**margin**" mean when Alastair talks about the Brexit vote?

a) The blank space at the edge of a page

b) The total number of people who voted

c) The difference between the two results

d) The date when the vote took place

Answers

1. a) His family has Scottish roots and he grew up partly there
2. b) In the area between Edinburgh and Glasgow
3. c) France
4. d) A severe famine and a failed plan to colonise Panama
5. b) Scotland voted to remain in the EU, unlike the UK overall
6. True
7. False
8. True
9. False
10. True
11. punch
12. rival
13. overnight
14. colonialism
15. mutual
16. c) Large areas of land
17. a) Having held the job for many years
18. d) Happening on and off, not continuously

19. b) Things allowed to keep someone satisfied

20. c) The difference between the two results