

Text A – Living in Northern Ireland

Where it is

Northern Ireland is part of the UK but is physically separated from mainland England, Wales and Scotland by the wild and sometimes treacherous Irish Sea. Northern Ireland has sea to the north and east, and borders the Republic of Ireland on the west and south, making it the only UK country with a European border.

Unsurprisingly these physical characteristics affect the mindset of its population, and it is not unusual to find some people who feel simultaneously a UK citizen, an Irish citizen and a European citizen. In a population of 1.5 million nearly 60% are under 40, making it a country with an influential youth culture.

Question 1)

Answer 1)

Question 2)

Answer 2)

Text B – Living in Northern Ireland

Religion and identity

Religious background can be a significant factor in shaping identity in Northern Ireland. Protestant communities often identify with Britain and the United Kingdom. Conversely, Catholic communities may have a stronger affinity with Irish identity and a united Ireland. As with any such sweeping statement there are many exceptions to the rule, and Northern Ireland is home to many people of other religions and cultural identities. There are also a huge number of people from both the Protestant and Catholic communities who value each other as friends and fellow citizens, and for whom religion takes a back seat.

Language

In common with the UK, people in Northern Ireland speak English (with a distinctive accent). There are also the lesser-used languages of Irish and Ulster Scots and many associated cultural activities.

Question 1)

Answer 1)

Question 2)

Answer 2)

Text C – Living in Northern Ireland

Political devolution

Northern Ireland shares the Westminster government with the UK but has had its own devolved Assembly. This means it has the power to make laws on a wide range of issues that affect the everyday lives of people in Northern Ireland, such as education, but it doesn't have all the same powers as the UK Parliament at Westminster. The Assembly uses a power-sharing model. This means the main political parties in Northern Ireland must work together to form a government. This is a process that can create challenges at times and has sometimes led to Assembly being suspended.

Stereotypes and claims to fame

Stereotypical images of Northern Ireland often centre on its troubled and violent past, particularly the conflict about the status of Northern Ireland as either independent from or united with Great Britain. Northern Ireland also has many positive claims to fame. These include building the Titanic, the Giants Causeway World Heritage Site, Game of Thrones filming locations and musicians such as Van Morrison and Snow Patrol. The common stereotype of the divide between Catholics and Protestants does not reflect the wide range of experiences within Northern Ireland

Question 1)

Answer 1)

Question 2)

Answer 2)