

The Real UK Test (with answers)

These are questions suggested by ordinary Britons.

1. Explain the rules of Just a Minute.

A. You must talk about the given subject for one minute without repetition, hesitation or deviation.

2. How do you get a ticket for the Last Night of the Proms?

A. The majority of tickets for the Last Night of the Proms will be allocated by ballot to customers who have bought tickets to at least five other Proms concerts at the Royal Albert Hall. A further 200 tickets are allocated by the Open Ballot.

3. What time do you have to turn the radio off to avoid hearing The Archers?

A. Immediately after the 2pm or 7pm news or the Sunday morning 10am news

4. Explain which end of the High Street is the "top" and which end is the "bottom".

A. The top is where you are. The bottom is the other end. According to other sources, the top is where the nicer shops are.

5. Explain the difference between "Great Britain" and "The United Kingdom".

A. GB is a geographical term for the island of England, Scotland and Wales. The United Kingdom is a political unit and includes Northern Ireland.

6. Explain the difference between "grammar school", "comprehensive" and "secondary modern".

A. Children of higher ability are selected to go to grammar school. In some parts of the country this is still done by 11+ exam but in many places there is no exam as such. The children who are not selected go to the secondary modern school. In areas where there is no selection both high and low achieving children go to a comprehensive school. Comprehensives are non-selective so you don't get comprehensives and secondary moderns in the same area.

7. Name the four primary broadsheets and rank them in order from most conservative to most liberal. Bonus point: explain the political position of someone who reads the Sun.

A. Telegraph, Times, Independent, Guardian. People who read the Sun don't care who runs the country as long as she has big tits.

8. Parse this phrase: West or southwest, veering northwest later, 5 to 7, decreasing 3 or 4 for a time. Rough or very rough. Showers. Moderate or good.

A. The four parts of the shipping forecast are: Wind; sea state; weather; visibility.

9. "Trouble and strife" is slang for what?

A. Cockney rhyming slang for "the wife".

10. Explain what determines when the next parliamentary elections will be held.

A. They must be held at least every five years, but may be called earlier by the PM.

11. What famous comedy sketch focuses on a "Norwegian Blue"?

A. The Dead Parrot by Monty Python.

12. Sing "Jerusalem". For bonus points, get drunk first.

13. Explain the offside rule in (British) football.

A. If the player is in front of the ball when it is played and has not got at least two defending players closer to the defending goal line than they are, she or he is in an offside position.

14. How can you tell whether the British (Union) flag is flying right side up or upside down?

A. The broader (wider) diagonal white stripe should be at the top on the side of the flag nearest the flagpole.

15. Eat a piece of toast with marmite. Bonus point: without making a face.

16. The British drink porter, mild ale, pale ale, bitter, lager and stout. Which one(s) should be served chilled? Bonus point: explain the difference between cask and keg.

A. Lagers are served chilled. Generally, the lighter the beer, the colder it should be. Keg beers are pasteurized, filtered, and carbonated. Cask ales are unpasteurized and uncarbonated.

17. Explain why the British should continue to own the Falklands.

A. Almost any answer is acceptable here.

18. At what time on Christmas Day does the Queen give her speech?

A. 3pm

19. What substance(s) may only be sold in imperial measure?

A. Draught beer and cider

20. What are the Home Counties?

A. The home counties is a term which refers to the counties of South East England and the East of England which encircle London, but do not include the capital city itself. There is no exact definition of the term and the composition of the home counties is sometimes a matter of debate.

21. Put the honours (MBE, CBE, OBE) in ascending order and spell out the acronyms. Bonus point: explain how old you have to be to be called a "national treasure".

A. Member, Officer, Commander. Bonus point for any creative, amusing answer.

22. What is 'silly midoff'?

A. A cricket fielding position, in close to the batsman and slightly to the left

23. Explain whether you go "up" or "down" to study at Oxford or Cambridge.

A. You go up to study. You go down when you leave, either on holiday or permanently. To be 'sent down' is to be expelled.

24. If you have a Geordie accent, where are you from?

A. Tyneside or NE of England

25. What is the most popular dish to eat out in England?

A. Curry

26. Convert 16 stone into pounds.

A. 224 pounds (a stone is 14 pounds)

27. Solve this cryptic clue: 'The feeling that an old barbarian went to church.' (5)

A. Hunch

28. Explain the background for Guy Fawkes night.

A. Plot to blow up the House of Lords in 1605; James I introduced a national holiday on 5 November to give thanks that the plot was foiled.

29. Why should you not go out in the woods alone today?

A. This is the day the teddy bears have their picnic.

30. If you are eating strawberries and cream, what sports tournament are you watching?

A. Wimbledon

31. What are the rules of "Mornington Crescent"?

A. MC is an 'improvisational game'. The game consists of each panellist in turn announcing a landmark or street, most often a tube station on the London Underground system. The apparent aim is to be the first to announce "Mornington Crescent", a station on the Northern Line. Interspersed with the turns is humorous discussion amongst the panellists and host regarding the rules and legality of each move, as well as the strategy the panellists are using. Despite appearances, however, there are no rules to the game, and both the naming of stations and the specification of "rules" are based on stream-of-consciousness association and improvisation. Thus the game is intentionally incomprehensible.

32. There are two organs in England with 64-foot pipes. Name one of them. Bonus point: Whose fault is it that all organists have to learn Widor's Toccata for weddings?

A. Liverpool Cathedral and Royal Albert Hall. Bonus point: Princess Margaret

33. Explain the relationship between the Rangers and Celtic.

A. Rangers' traditional support was largely from the native Scottish Protestant community, while Celtic's was largely from those of Irish Roman Catholic backgrounds.

34. Pronounce Llanrwst.

A. *clanroost

35. Where does 'disgusted' live?

A. Tunbridge Wells

36. Describe a "full English". Bonus point: what is the distinctive ingredient in Black Pudding?

A. A full English includes eggs, bacon, sausage, beans, tomatoes, mushrooms and possibly fried bread. Bonus point: blood.

37. Who is fifth in line to the throne?

A. Beatrice

38. On what occasion would the Queen's Scholars of Westminster shout "Vivat Regina"? Bonus point: whose music is this?

A. When they are singing for a coronation. Bonus: Parry

39. Name two dishes that contain suet.

A. Steak and kidney pudding; Xmas pudding; Jam roly-poly; Dead man's leg

40. Explain the phrase "as the actress said to the bishop".

A. Used to point out that a sexual double-entendre has just been made

41. Explain gender-swapping in Christmas pantomime.

A. The principal boy is usually played by a girl; the principal dame is usually a man in drag; the good fairy may also be a man in drag.

42. Explain the distinctive ingredients in a traditional Burns Night supper.

A. Haggis, neeps, tatties.

43. There are 650 members of Parliament. As of 2012, how many are women?

A. 145. Accept anything between 135 and 155.

44. What is The Glorious Twelfth?

A. The 12th of August is the start of grouse hunting season

45. What is the technical definition of a city? You may give either of two possible definitions.

A. A city is either a place with an Anglican Cathedral, or a place that has been granted Letters Patent

46. What is "the tube challenge"?

A. A competition to see who can travel through every London tube station in the least amount of time

47. Explain the difference between barristers and solicitors. Bonus point: what is the Scottish equivalent of a barrister?

A. Traditionally, solicitors gave advice to the public and, in criminal trials or litigation, prepared their cases for them while the main role of barristers was to represent them in court. Bonus: advocate.

48. Why should you always keep a hold of nurse?

A. For fear of finding something worse. (Cautionary Tales, Hilaire Belloc)

49. Who is the Beast of Bolsover and why is his existence the summit of democracy?

A. Dennis Skinner, who has been MP since 1970. He is known for his left-wing views, acid tongue and for never missing a Commons session. He has been suspended from Parliament at least ten times, usually for unparliamentary language.

50. Where is Black Rod's entrance? Bonus point: answer without smirking, please.

A. the public entrance nearest to the Victoria Tower on the west front of the Houses of Parliament

51. Somebody comes to your door with a piece of coal, salt and a bottle of whisky - what is the date?

A. It's New Year's Day. This is the practice of first-footing, and your first-foot visitor will bring you good luck.

52. What is worn under the kilt?

A. "Nothing, madam, it is all in perfect working order".

53. Explain gurning.

A. Gurning means producing a distorted facial expression. Gurning contests are a rural English tradition.

54. If you ask your spouse "do I look ok?" and they say "quite good", is that good, or not good?

A. It's not actually bad, but it's probably not as good as you hoped.

55. Who wrote the 'Scottish play' and where should you never mention it?

A. Macbeth. You should never mention it inside a theatre as this will cause a disaster.

56. How do you know if The Queen is at home?

A. The Royal Standard will be flying from the flagpole.

57. Why won't you find a snake in Ireland?

A. A legend tells that Saint Patrick banished all snakes from Ireland, but in reality snakes never returned to Ireland after the Midlandian Ice Age.

58. What is an Eisteddfod?

A. The leading Welsh culture fair, held during the first week of August

59. Which vegetable do the Welsh wear and when?

A. According to legend, Saint David ordered his Welsh soldiers to identify themselves by wearing the vegetable on their helmets in an ancient battle against the Saxons that took place in a leek field. It is still worn on St David's Day each 1 March.

60. What is a 'cream tea'? Bonus point: how is this different from "giving the children their tea"?

A. A cream tea includes scones, clotted cream, and jam. Bonus: for children (or Yorkshiremen), tea means supper.

61. What is the difference between minced meat and mincemeat?

A. Minced meat is ground beef (or possibly ground lamb, pork or turkey). Mincemeat is a mixture of suet, dried fruit and spices.

62. When making tea, what is MIF and is it correct?

A. Milk in first. Yes, MIF is correct if your tea has been brewed in a separate pot. If you are making your tea in a mug, the tea bag and the milk must never, never be in the mug simultaneously. That's disgusting.

63. What is 'queue jumping' and why is it frowned upon?

A. Breaking into line. It's rude and disturbs the order of the cosmos.

64. What is unusual about the Brambles cricket match?

A. The Brambles Bank is a sandbar that is only exposed at low tide. The Bramble Bank is renowned as being the location of an annual cricket match between the Royal Southern Yacht Club and the Island Sailing Club. The match takes place when the bank is exposed but never lasts very long before the tide returns. The undulating surface with large puddles ensures it is more a social occasion than a serious cricket match. The ultimate example of this is the scoring - the victor of the game is pre-determined as the two clubs simply take it in turns to "win" the match, regardless of how the match progresses

65. In the expression "beyond the Pale", what is the Pale, and what is beyond it?

A. The Pale is a wall around Dublin. The English lived inside the Pale. Beyond it are the Irish, i.e. barbarians.

66. Explain the background of the phrase "I'm just going outside and may be some time".

A. Lawrence Oates, on Scott's Antarctic expedition, when he realised that his poor health was endangering the rest of the crew.

67. Under what circumstances do you say "I've got to see a man about a dog"?

A. To excuse yourself for an unspecified or secret reason, often used when you want to nip off to the loo.

68. Who goes by the nickname of "Brenda"?

A. The Queen (from Private Eye)

69. What is the main difference when bidding on property in Scotland and property in England or Wales?

A. In Scotland, you must bid above the asking price. Also, there is no exchange of contracts. Once the offer has been accepted on all points, you have entered into a legally binding arrangement and neither party can withdraw without potentially being held liable for the consequent losses of the other party

70. Explain the West Lothian Question, in no more than 25 words.

A. The West Lothian question refers to issues concerning the ability of Members of Parliament from constituencies in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to vote on matters that only affect people living in England. This has occurred because of the devolution of power from Westminster to the Welsh and Northern Irish Assemblies and Scottish Parliament.

71. What is a Glasgow Kiss?

A. This is Scottish slang for a headbutt.

72. Explain the difference between the Mayor of London and the Lord Mayor of London.

A. The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of London is the legal title for the Mayor of (and head of) the City of London Corporation. The Lord Mayor of London is to be distinguished from the Mayor of London; the former is an officer only of the City of London, while the Mayor of London is the Mayor of Greater London and as such governs a much larger area.

73. What is the Orange Order?

The Orange Institution (more commonly known as the Orange Order, the Orange Lodge or the Orangemen) is a Protestant fraternal organisation based in Northern Ireland, strongly linked to Unionism, and fond of parading through areas specifically selected to irritate the Nationalists.

74. What is Cullen skink?

A. Cullen skink is a thick Scottish soup made of smoked haddock, potatoes and onions. An authentic cullen skink will use finnan haddie, but it may be prepared with any other undyed smoked haddock.

75. Elizabeth Windsor is Elizabeth II of England. What number is she in Scotland?

A. Controversial. Some people say she is QEI of Scotland; some say there is no Queen of Scotland, there is only QE I of UK.

76. What is 'First Past The Post'?

A. A system of voting where the person with the most votes in a constituency wins the office even if he/she did not get a majority of the votes cast.

77. Who were the 'Whigs'?

A. The Whigs were a party in the Parliament of England, Parliament of Great Britain, and Parliament of the United Kingdom, who contested power with the rival Tories from the 1680s to the 1850s. The Whigs' origin lay in constitutional monarchism and opposition to absolute rule. The Whigs played a central role in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and were the standing enemies of the Stuart kings and pretenders, who were Roman Catholic.

78. If an English person asks you to lunch, what time should you leave?

A. Not before 4.30pm, or not before you have been served coffee, whichever comes last.

79. Whose bust is in the Royal Albert Hall?

A. Henry Wood, first conductor of the Proms.

80. Which monarch first 'authorised' an English version of Christian scripture?

A. The Great Bible was the first authorized edition of the Bible in English, authorized by King Henry VIII of England to be read aloud in the church services of the Church of England. The Great Bible was prepared by Myles Coverdale, working under commission of Sir Thomas Cromwell, Secretary to Henry VIII and Vicar General.

81. Where is the highest point in England?

A. Scafell Pike, Cumbria or Lake District

82. Where, according to the French, is The Sleeve?

A. The English channel

83. In which county does The Thames begin?

A. Gloucestershire

84. On what island are The Cullins?

A. The Isle of Skye in Scotland.

85. What is inscribed on the letter box of 10 Downing Street?

A. First Lord of the Treasury

86. What were the Roundheads fighting for?

A. The goal of the Roundhead party was to give the Parliament supreme control over executive administration. Most Roundheads appear to have sought a constitutional monarchy, in place of the absolutist monarchy sought by Charles I.

87. Where do you place the apostrophes in the following sentence: Its on Tuesdays when James children join other pupils rehearsals for the schools prom.

A. It's on Tuesdays when James' children join other pupils' rehearsals for the school's prom.

88. What is the difference between a British citizen and a British subject?

A. Until 1949, nearly everyone with a close connection to the United Kingdom was called a British subject. And all citizens of Commonwealth countries were British subjects until January 1983. Since that date, very few categories of people have qualified as British subjects. You are a citizen if your parents are UK citizens or legally settled in the UK at the time of your birth.

89. Translate "thirty-second note" into correct English musical terminology.

A. Demisemiquaver.

90. What's the difference between a pound and a guinea?

A. A pound was 20 shillings; a guinea was 21 shillings.

91. Explain why private schools are called public schools.

A. The term "public" (first adopted by Eton College) refers to the fact that the school is open to the paying public, as opposed to a religious school, which was open only to members of a certain church. It also distinguished it from a private education at home (usually only practical for the very wealthy who could afford tutors) However, nowadays Public Schools are top-level Private schools. In the UK we distinguish between Public and Private Schools (which are paid for) and State Schools (providing free education).

92. If someone says "How about elevenses?" what should you prepare for?

A. Morning tea and little snack.

93. In the quote "Some people think X is a matter of life and death. I assure you, it's much more serious than that", what does X refer to? Bonus point: who said this?

A. Football. Bonus: Liverpool manager Bill Shankly

94. What do you get to take to a desert island?

A. eight recordings, the Bible, the complete works of Shakespeare, one other book, and one luxury

95. Explain the origin of "Bob's your uncle".

A. the phrase dates to 1887, when British Prime Minister Robert Cecil, Lord Salisbury decided to appoint Arthur Balfour to the prestigious and sensitive job of Chief Secretary for Ireland. Lord Salisbury was Arthur Balfour's uncle.

96. What are the correct colours of the Tory, Labour and Lib Dem parties, respectively?

A. Tory's are blue, Labour is red, Lib Dem is yellow

97. Where are you allowed to get married?

A. Marriages can only take place in authorised premises where the marriage can be legally solemnised. Venues include register offices, premises that have been approved by the local authority (for example, stately homes, castles and hotels), churches or chapels of the Church of England and Church in Wales, and other churches that have been registered by the registrar general for marriage including naval, air force and military chapels. The marriage of house-bound and

detained persons can also be arranged by obtaining a special licence from the registrar general.

98. Explain the difference between leasehold and freehold property.

A. Freeholders own a land or a building absolutely. They lease it on long leases (99 years is common) to leaseholders.

99. When would you hear the tune "Sailing by"?

A. Before the late Radio 4 shipping forecast, around 00.45

100. Where is the London Stone?

A. 111 Cannon Street, opposite the entrance to Cannon Street station.