

# Unpacking Britishness: A Historical Journey (1171-2020) - Be the Historian!

**Duration:** 90 minutes

## Materials Needed:

- Internet access for research
- Large paper/poster board OR digital timeline tool (e.g., Google Drawings, Miro, Canva)
- Markers, pens, colored pencils (if using physical timeline/creative piece)
- Materials for your chosen creative representation (e.g., craft supplies, digital design software)
- Optional: A list of suggested key events or trusted historical websites (teacher to provide if desired)

## Lesson Overview:

Today, you're not just learning history; you ARE the historian! We'll journey through centuries of British history, uncover pivotal moments, and explore how the echoes of the past resonate in the UK today. You'll create a timeline, discuss the shaping of 'Britishness,' and cap it all off with a unique creative project.

## Learning Goals for Today:

- You will analyze significant historical events in Britain between 1171 and 2020.
- You will create a chronological timeline detailing at least 10-15 key historical events and their immediate significance.
- You will explain how specific historical events have influenced modern ideas of 'Britishness.'
- You will design a creative, non-written piece to represent your understanding of these historical influences on British identity.

## Lesson Activities:

### Part 1: Setting the Scene - What is "Britishness"? (10 minutes)

1. **Quick Brainstorm (3 minutes):** What words, ideas, symbols, or values come to mind when you think of 'Britishness' today? Jot them down. No right or wrong answers!
2. **Introduction - The Historian's Lens (7 minutes):** We'll discuss how today's 'Britishness' wasn't formed overnight. It's a tapestry woven from centuries of events. Your mission, as a historian, is to identify some key threads in that tapestry by exploring events from 1171 to 2020.

### Part 2: Timeline Detective - Uncovering Key Events (40 minutes)

1. **Research & Selection (25 minutes):** Dive into British history from 1171 to 2020. Your goal is to identify 10-15 events you believe were crucial turning points or had a lasting impact. Think about:
  - Major conflicts (e.g., Hundred Years' War, World Wars)
  - Significant political changes (e.g., Magna Carta, Acts of Union, establishment of Parliament, devolution)
  - Social transformations (e.g., Industrial Revolution, Reformation, suffragette movement)
  - Periods of expansion or contraction (e.g., British Empire, decolonization)

- Key monarchs or leaders and their impact.
- Major cultural shifts.

*Tip: Don't get bogged down in too much detail for each event yet. Focus on identifying it and its core significance.*

2. **Timeline Creation (15 minutes):** Arrange your chosen events chronologically on your large paper or digital tool. For each event, include:
  - The approximate date(s)
  - A concise name for the event
  - A very brief note (1-2 sentences) on why it was significant or what changed because of it.Make it visually clear and easy to understand.

### **Part 3: Connecting the Dots - Past to Present (20 minutes)**

1. **Select & Reflect (5 minutes):** From your timeline, choose 3-5 events that you find particularly impactful or interesting in relation to modern Britain.
2. **Discussion - Shaping Britishness (15 minutes):** Let's talk about these selected events.
  - How might these events have contributed to the ideas of 'Britishness' you brainstormed earlier?
  - Think about influences on:
    - Language and culture
    - Political systems and laws
    - Social structures and attitudes
    - Britain's relationship with the world
    - National and regional identities within the UK

This is where you analyze and make connections!

### **Part 4: Creative Synthesis - A Symbol of Time (15 minutes)**

1. **The Challenge:** Now, using your historical insights, design a creative piece that represents your understanding of how history has shaped Britishness. This is NOT an essay. It should be primarily visual or symbolic. Some ideas (feel free to invent your own!):
  - A collage of images/words/symbols that tell a story.
  - A mind map using symbols and brief historical references to connect past events to current aspects of British identity.
  - The design for a new 'commemorative coin' or 'stamp' that captures a key theme of British historical development and its modern relevance.
  - A 'mood board' for a film or documentary about the evolution of Britishness through time.
  - A symbolic drawing or abstract design with a brief key explaining its elements.
2. **Create! (15 minutes):** Use the materials to bring your idea to life. Focus on conveying meaning through your creative choices rather than detailed artistic skill.

### **Part 5: Historian's Debrief (5 minutes)**

1. **Share & Explain:** Briefly present your creative piece and explain the historical connections it represents.
2. **Reflection:** What was the most surprising or interesting thing you learned today acting as a historian?

Well done, historian! You've journeyed through centuries and creatively explored the complex tapestry of British identity.