### Religion in Great Britain

British religion used to be closely connected with kings, queens and politics. England was a Roman Catholic country until 1534.

In 1525 King Henry VIII decided to divorce his queen, Catherine of Aragon, because he fell in love with Anne Boleyn. But when Henry asked the Pope for permission to divorce Catherine, he refused.

Henry was so angry with the Pope that he ended all contact between England and Rome. He divorced Catherine of Aragon without the Pope's permission and married Anne Boleyn.

In 1534 Parliament named Henry head of the Church of [England](http://www.learnenglishbest.com/topic-england-angliya.html). This was the beginning of the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church did not start as a Protestant Church and Henry certainly did not regard himself as a Protestant. However the Protestant movement in Europe was growing very b at that time. When Henry quarreled with Rome and ordered the Bible to be translated into English, the way was open for Protestantism to spread in England.

Over the next years many people changed to this new religion. In 1553 Mary, Henry's daughter by Catherine of Aragon, became Queen of England. The country re-entered the Roman [Church](http://www.learnenglishbest.com/dict/Church), because she was a Roman Catholic.

Protestants were glad when Mary died, because while she was Queen, many Protestants were burned for their beliefs. After Marry, Elizabeth became head of the Anglican Church and Roman Catholicism was never again the official religion in England.

The Church of England is still the established church in England nowadays. But in spite of the great variety of forms of worship, only a minority of people regularly go to church in Britain today. Most people see Sunday more as a day for relaxing with the family or for doing jobs around the house and the garden.

### Education is a very important part in the life of British youth

Most 19 and 20 year-olds in Britain are quite independent people. English people say that children grow up more quickly now. Relationships within the British family are different now. Children have more freedom to make their own decisions.

For example, children aged 13 may be employed part time in Great Britain. Age 15 is legally a "young person" not a "child". Age 16 is a school leaving age. They can leave home, drive a moped, marry with "parents' consent" buy beer. Age 17 can drive a car. Age 18 can vote, get married, drink in pubs.

Education is a very important part in the life of British youth. One can't become an independent person without it. When time comes to enter a college a young Englishman chooses one far away from home. It is a necessary part of becoming adult.

During the last 30 years there were a lot of different trends in youth movements. All of them were characterized by their own philosophy, way of life, style of dressing. Each tendency was born by the influence of economic and political changes in the society. Those trends are known as the "hippies" the "punks" the "rockers".

But certainly there are different traditional youth organizations in Great Britain. Among them — the Scout Association, the Girl Guides Association, the National Union of Students, the Youth Club. The latter offers, for example, a wide range of sporting and social activities.

The National Union of Students was founded in 1922. It operates through local branches in colleges and universities. It promotes the educational, social and general interests of students.

But certainly the most numerous is the Scout Association, founded in 1908 for boys and in 1910 for girls by Lord Baden-Powel. The Scout movement is to encourage a sense of adventure and of responsibility for others among young people. The programme of training is planned to develop intelligence and practical skills, to promote health and a sense of service.

Scout training is complementary to the ordinary education. Scouts train in mapping, signalling, first aid and all the skills that arise from camping and similar outdoor activities.

British scouts take part in international scout meetings, which are held approximately every four years.

The membership in this or that youth organization is not compulsory in Great Britain but everyone can find the activity he likes most.