

Would independence help Scotland?

Level: Intermediate upwards

Timing: 90 minutes plus

Summary: A lesson on whether or not becoming independent would be beneficial for Scotland. In this lesson, students will:

1. make a list of things they associate with Scotland;
2. study one of two texts about Scottish independence and exchange information about their text with a partner;
3. summarize the main arguments of a text;
4. give their own opinion on the topic;
5. research others' views on Scottish independence.

Material needed: One copy of the worksheet per student; one copy of the vocabulary record per student; one copy of text A for half the students and one copy of text B for the other half

Group size: Minimum of two students; no maximum

Teaching and learning strategy: Extending the classroom-life of time-sensitive articles

If you are reading this after the end of September 2014, then the referendum in Scotland will already have taken place. But you can still use this lesson plan successfully. Just introduce a few additions and tweaks to the tasks to bring the lesson up to date. Here are some suggestions on how you could do that:

- Add a second warmer question:
 - *What was the result of the Scottish referendum?*
- Tasks 2 and 4 can remain unchanged.
- Task 3 can be completed as in the lesson plan and followed up by further questions about which of these factors most likely influenced voters in the referendum.
- Add further discussion questions and research tasks, such as:
 - *What is likely to happen next?*
 - *Find quotes from celebrities and politicians on the results of the referendum.*

- Finally, you could talk about other territories that might also like to become independent (for example: Northern Ireland; Catalonia and the Basque Country in Spain; Tibet in China), what resources those places have and what the consequences or benefits of independence might be. Of course, carefully consider the nationalities of your students and any possible sensitivities.

Warmer

Hand out the worksheet and tell students to complete task 1. Individually, students should write a list of ten things that they associate with Scotland. Encourage students to write down their ideas no matter strange or irrelevant they may seem. They should then compare their lists with other students and see what they have in common.

Key words

Students work together to match the words and expressions from the two articles with the definitions. Do not confirm the answers yet. Instead, give half of the students text A and the other half text B to look at. The students should then read their article and find the key words. Ask whether they want to change any of the definitions now that they've read the words in the context of the article. Finally, go through the correct answers as a class.

Key:

Article A – Yes!

1. j; 2. k; 3. d; 4. b; 5. a; 6. c; 7. l; 8. e; 9. h; 10. g; 11. i; 12. f

Article B – No!

13. d; 14. k; 15. g; 16. b; 17. l; 18. a; 19. i; 20. e; 21. c; 22. h; 23. j; 24. f

The arguments

This is a three-part task. First, students write the main arguments from the article they read into the appropriate column of the table on the worksheet. Then, they get information from a student who looked at the other article in order to complete the table. Make sure students know that they must not just read and copy what the other student has written – the idea is that they *talk* to their partner to get the information. Finally, when the

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table contains as much information as possible, the students should try to look at it objectively and decide who makes the most convincing argument.

Key: (suggested answers):

For independence – Yes!	Against independence – No!
Scotland contributes more tax per person than other parts of the UK.	The decision is irreversible so it must be the right one.
It's the UK's second-wealthiest and most productive region after London.	The three parties against independence still want more powers for the Scottish parliament, so a 'No' vote would strengthen devolution as more decisions would be made in Scotland.
It has world-leading industries.	Scotland would lose the support that they get from being part of the UK.
If it became independent, it would be the world's 14th-richest country.	Scotland benefits from being part of the UK, which is the third-largest economy in Europe and the sixth largest in the world.
It has Europe's largest renewable-energy potential and an oil industry with £1 trillion in reserves.	Major employers who invest in Scotland want access to the 64 million people in the UK and not only the five million in Scotland.
Scotland's economy is so strong that people against independence have to talk about technicalities.	Being part of the UK means more jobs in Scotland.
Welfare cuts in the UK hurt people in Scotland more than the other countries in the UK.	The IFS report says Scotland is stronger as part of the UK.
Politicians who live in Scotland would make better decisions for Scotland than those in distant London.	An independent Scotland's deficit would grow, leading to tax rises and spending cuts.
A Scottish government would prioritize Scotland's economic and social needs.	As part of the UK, money is better protected and public services aren't at risk in Scotland.
Scotland is ready to be a democratic and responsible nation.	A 'Yes' vote could lead to instability.

Language point

Students reorder the words to make a phrase from the *No* article. They should try to paraphrase it and then use it to talk or write about a completely different subject. For example, *Some people claim that sport is bad for you, but, in fact, nothing could be further from the truth.*

Key:

nothing could be further from the truth

Discussion

Students talk about doing business with Scotland. It doesn't matter if their companies have no dealings with Scotland – if that is the case, they can just discuss the second question.

Research tasks

In task a, students should search the internet to find out which celebrities have publically commented on the subject of Scottish independence. Suggested search terms for this task are: *Scottish independence + celebrities*, or *pro Scottish independence* and *anti Scottish independence*.

In task b, basic facts about Scotland can be found in many places, perhaps online or in an atlas or encyclopaedia. Make sure students make a note of their sources in case they find differing facts.

Vocabulary record

Here, students should be encouraged to record all of the new and useful vocabulary they have learnt during the lesson, not only in the form presented in the article but also in related forms.

Related topics on onestopenglish

The following lesson plan contains listening activities around the question *Why do you think Edinburgh is so popular with tourists?:*

<http://www.onestopenglish.com/skills/listening/live-from-authentic-interviews/live-from-edinburgh-tourists/156484.article>

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1 Warmer

Make a list of ten things that you associate with Scotland.



1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Compare your notes with other students.

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2 Key words

Match the words on the left with the meanings on the right. Then, read either the *Yes* or *No* article to find and underline the key words.

Article A – Yes!

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. treasury | a. ideas or discussion about what might happen |
| 2. in reserves | b. details about a particular subject that are understood only by an expert |
| 3. opposed to | c. when someone does not have enough money to pay for their basic needs |
| 4. technicalities | d. against |
| 5. speculation | e. in a bigger or smaller amount than it should be in comparison to something else |
| 6. poverty | f. something such as money, workers or equipment; or oil, wood, coal, etc. |
| 7. welfare | g. money that the government gives for a specific purpose, which does not need to be paid back |
| 8. disproportionately | h. choose someone by voting so that they represent you |
| 9. elect | i. in a position where people have the right to criticize you or ask you why something happened |
| 10. cash grant | j. the government department responsible for a country's financial matters |
| 11. accountable | k. available to be used |
| 12. resources | l. money or care provided by the state for people in need |

Article B – No!

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 13. irreversible | a. not connected to or influenced by one particular person or group |
| 14. status quo | b. the process of taking power from a central authority or government and giving it to smaller and more local regions |
| 15. referendum | c. produce an emotional effect on |
| 16. devolution | d. impossible to change or bring back a previous situation |
| 17. knock-on effect | e. reductions in the amount of money that a government spends |
| 18. impartial | f. large, noticeable or important |
| 19. deficit | g. an occasion when everyone in a country can vote to make a decision about one particular subject |
| 20. spending cuts | h. anything that prevents progress or makes it difficult for someone to achieve something |
| 21. resonate with | i. the difference between the amount of money or goods that a country or business has and the amount that it has spent or that it owes |
| 22. barriers | j. try hard to get or achieve something |
| 23. push for | k. the present situation or the way that things usually are |
| 24. significant | l. the indirect result of something |

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3 The arguments

- Write the main arguments from your article (A or B) into the appropriate column of the table.
- Talk to someone who read the other article. Complete the other half of the table with information provided by your partner.
- Decide who makes the strongest argument – David Brook or Murdo Fraser.

For independence – Yes!	Against independence – No!

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4 Language point

Reorder the words to make a phrase from the *No* article. What does it mean? Explain it in your own words. Then, use it to talk about another topic.

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5 Discussion

- Does your company, or do you, do business with Scotland?
- Would you be more or less willing to do business with an independent Scotland? Why?

6 Research tasks

- Search the internet to find celebrities who have spoken out on the subject of Scottish independence.
 - Who is for Scottish independence?
 - Who is against it?
 - Who doesn't want to share their opinion/s?
- Complete the table with basic facts about Scotland. Add any further information you consider to be useful.

Scotland – the basic facts	
size	
population	
languages	
currency	
main industries	
capital city	
largest city	
national day	
geographical features	

Would independence help Scotland?

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Article A

On 18th September 2014, the Scots are voting to decide whether Scotland should be independent. But would an independent Scotland be better off or not? VICKI SUSSENS hears arguments for and against.



YES!

“Scotland has the resources to succeed”
DAVID BROOK

- 1 On 18 September, we will decide whether or not we want to become an independent nation again. Much of the debate is focused on the economy and whether Scotland would be successful. To understand what the future might bring, it helps to know a little about Scotland's economy.
- 2 According to the Treasury, Scotland has been a net contributor to the UK economy for the past 33 years. It pays a bigger proportion of tax than the UK average – £1,200 per person more in the past five years. After London, it is the UK's wealthiest and most productive region, with world-leading industries in areas such as food, drink, finance, energy, manufacturing and tourism.
- 3 If it were independent, it would have a GDP per head much higher than that of the UK and would become the world's 14th-richest country. It has Europe's largest renewable-energy potential and an oil industry with an estimated £1 trillion in reserves. Indeed, the strength of Scotland's economy is such that those opposed to a “yes” vote

focus their argument on technicalities about the currency, EU membership and negative speculation about the future.

4 So why is a country with such wealth considering becoming independent? Scotland has one of the highest levels of inequality in the developed world and child poverty has reached shocking levels. It is estimated that at least 20 per cent of Scottish children live in poverty. The number is growing, with 65,000 families depending on food banks in 2013. The UK is moving towards a minimal welfare and privatized healthcare system, which is disproportionately damaging for Scotland.

5 Scotland has poor levels of local and national democracy, and parties govern from London, even when a majority of Scots did not elect them. Although there is a Scottish Parliament, it has limited powers and relies mostly on a cash grant from London. This is a key argument in favour of independence – the people who live here would make better decisions than a distant and unrepresentative government in London. We should use our wealth to build a strong economy and a fairer society. A Scottish government would not only be democratically accountable but would put Scotland's economic and social needs first.

6 All countries in Europe have different economic strengths and weaknesses. They trade across borders and make compromises based on shared currencies, resources and opportunities. Scotland is ready to be a democratic and responsible nation and it has the resources and intelligence to succeed – just like every other country in Europe.

DAVID BROOK owns a marketing company and is a member of Business for Scotland, a network of firms that support an independent Scotland.

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Article B

On 18th September 2014, the Scots are voting to decide whether Scotland should be independent. But would an independent Scotland be better off or not? VICKI SUSSENS hears arguments for and against.



NO!

“A ‘no’ vote is a vote to strengthen the Scottish Parliament”
MURDO FRASER

That is undoubtedly very attractive to the many major employers who invest in Scotland, helping them to continue to grow. Our partnership with the UK means businesses investing in Scotland have access to a market of 64 million across the UK and not just the five million in Scotland. It also has a knock-on effect on the Scottish economy, which means creating even more jobs.

Two reports by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) make clear exactly why we are stronger together, with Scotland part of the UK. The expert and impartial economists at the IFS said that a separate Scotland's deficit “would be around three per cent of GDP larger than that for the UK as a whole”. That would mean big tax rises or deep spending cuts if we left the UK. Being part of the UK means our money is better protected and public services across Scotland aren't put at risk.

A “no” vote that is a vote for more powers for the Scottish Parliament is a message that is resonating with the public. We need more growth, more jobs and more opportunities for future generations. We don't need uncertainty, instability and barriers. Scotland's First Minister Alex Salmond (who is pushing for independence) is asking businesses to take a significant risk with their future on the empty promise of “it'll be all right”. That is unacceptable.

MURDO FRASER is a Scottish Conservative MSP. He is also convenor of the Scottish Parliament's Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee.

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1 We will soon make the biggest decision our country has ever made. It is an irreversible decision, so it is important that we get it right.

2 The Nationalists like to paint a “no” vote as a vote for the status quo. Nothing could be further from the truth. All three parties who want Scotland to remain in the UK have made proposals for more powers for the Scottish Parliament after a “no” vote in September's referendum.

3 A “no” vote is a vote to strengthen devolution and to build on the success we've had since the Scottish Parliament was created in 1999. It is a positive vote to see more decisions being made here in Scotland without losing the support that comes from being part of the UK.

4 As a partner of the UK, we are part of the third-largest economy in Europe and the sixth largest in the world.

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Vocabulary record: Would independence help Scotland?

verb	noun	adjective (+ opposite)	adverb (+ opposite)
damage			
	vote		
		productive	
			disproportionally

Vocabulary record