

ENGELSK

Commonwealth countries in Europe

MALTA



Velkommen til School To Go og dagens undervisning!

Dette er et forløb i faget "Engelsk" om "Commonwealth countries in Europe" i tre episoder, med de tre temaer: "United Kingdom", "Malta", og til sidst "Cyprus". Der vil både være lytte-tekster og øvelser i episoderne.

Introduction

Today, we're going to explore a fascinating country in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea—Malta. As you continue learning English, understanding different countries and their cultures can make your learning journey even more exciting. Malta is not just a beautiful island; it's a place rich in history, culture, and natural beauty.

Malta is one of the smallest countries in the world but don't let its size fool you; it has a huge personality. This island nation is known for its stunning landscapes, from sparkling blue waters to ancient walled cities. Malta's capital, Valletta, is a treasure trove of history, with buildings and fortifications that tell stories of knights, battles, and centuries of change.

But Malta isn't just about the past. Today, it's a vibrant community where traditional Maltese life meets modern living. The Maltese people are known for their warmth and hospitality, welcoming visitors from all over the globe. As a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, Malta has connections with countries around the world, sharing its unique culture and learning from others.

In Malta, you'll find a mix of languages, but Maltese and English are the official languages. This makes Malta a great place for English learners like you to practice and improve. Imagine walking through the streets of Valletta, ordering food in English, or chatting with friendly locals, all while surrounded by the island's rich history and culture.

As we dive into learning about Malta, you'll discover the importance of this small but mighty country in the Mediterranean. From its colorful festivals and delicious food to its contributions to art and science, Malta has a lot to offer. So, let's get started on this exciting journey to learn about Malta and its place in the world!

Learning objectives and goals:

- I should be able to recall key facts about Malta, including its location, capital city, and status as a Commonwealth country.
- I should be able to explain Malta's historical significance and how it became a member of the Commonwealth.
- I should be able to identify and describe the unique geographical features of Malta and how they influence the lifestyle of its people.

How has Malta's unique location in the Mediterranean Sea influenced its history and relationship with other nations?

Malta's journey through history is as captivating as the island itself, marked by its strategic position in the Mediterranean Sea. This location has made Malta a crossroads of cultures and a coveted prize for empires throughout the centuries.

Early History to the Knights of Malta

Thousands of years ago, Malta was already inhabited, with ancient temples that predate even the pyramids of Egypt. Its location made it a valuable trading post for Phoenicians and Carthaginians, later becoming part of the Roman Empire. Each of these civilizations left their mark on Malta, contributing to its rich cultural tapestry.

The Middle Ages and the Knights of Malta

In the Middle Ages, Malta came under the control of various powers, including the Arabs, who influenced the Maltese language. The most significant era began in 1530 when the Knights of St. John (also known as the Knights of Malta) took control. They transformed Malta, building the capital city of Valletta as a fortress and a masterpiece of baroque architecture. The knights defended Malta from a massive Ottoman invasion in 1565, an event that is still celebrated today as a pivotal moment in Maltese history.

The French and the British

The Knights' reign ended when Napoleon Bonaparte took Malta in 1798 on his way to Egypt. However, the French rule was short-lived. The Maltese, with British assistance, rebelled against the French, leading to Malta voluntarily becoming part of the British Empire in 1800. Malta's harbors, particularly the Grand Harbour, became a key naval base for Britain, especially during the World Wars. Malta's strategic importance was highlighted during World War II when it was heavily bombed but remained defiant against Axis powers, earning the island the title of "The Fortress Island" and the George Cross for bravery.

Independence and the Commonwealth

On September 21, 1964, Malta achieved its independence from Britain, becoming a sovereign nation. Despite this new independence, Malta chose to remain a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, an organization formed mostly of territories that were once part of the British Empire. This membership signifies Malta's ongoing connection to other Commonwealth countries, sharing cultural ties, values, and cooperating in various fields such as education and development.

Malta Today

Malta's unique position in the Mediterranean has always made it a melting pot of civilizations, cultures, and languages. Its history of being sought after by various powers has endowed it with a rich heritage, visible in its architecture, traditions, and the Maltese people's identity. Today, Malta is a vibrant, modern nation, proud of its history and its role in the international community, including its membership in the Commonwealth, the European Union, and other international organizations.

Malta's journey from ancient times through to its role as a strategic naval base and its status today as an independent Commonwealth country illustrates how its geographical location has shaped its history, culture, and relationships with other

nations. This small island nation stands as a testament to resilience and the blending of cultures, with a legacy that reaches far beyond its shores.

What are some traditional Maltese customs, foods, and festivals that reflect the island's diverse influences?

Malta, a small island in the Mediterranean Sea, is a place where centuries of history and a mix of cultures come to life in its daily routines, celebrations, and cuisine. The cultural heritage of Malta is like a colorful tapestry woven from threads of different civilizations that have called the island home, including the Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Knights of St. John, French, and British. Let's explore how this rich heritage is reflected in Maltese daily life, customs, foods, and festivals.

Daily Life and Customs

In Maltese daily life, family and community play a central role. Maltese people are known for their hospitality and friendliness, often going out of their way to help neighbors and visitors. Traditional Maltese houses, especially in older villages, have a unique character with colorful doors and balconies, reflecting the island's historical architecture. Many families still gather for large Sunday lunches, a tradition that emphasizes the importance of spending time with loved ones.

Traditional Foods

Maltese cuisine is a delicious reflection of the island's history, with influences from Italian, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern cooking. Some traditional dishes include:

Pastizzi: These are flaky pastries filled with ricotta or mushy peas. They're a popular snack found in cafes and street vendors across the island.

Ħobż biż-żejt: A simple yet beloved snack consisting of Maltese bread rubbed with ripe tomatoes and topped with olive oil, capers, onions, and sometimes tuna or anchovies.

Timpana: A baked pasta dish that's encased in pastry, filled with macaroni, Bolognese sauce, and eggs, then baked until golden. It's a hearty meal that showcases the Italian influence on Maltese cuisine.

Rabbit Stew (Stuffat tal-Fenek): Considered the national dish, this is a slow-cooked stew with rabbit meat, wine, garlic, and herbs. It's a testament to traditional hunting practices on the island.

Festivals

Malta's calendar is packed with festivals that celebrate the island's history, religion, and culture. These events are vibrant, colorful, and attended by locals and tourists alike.

Festa Season: Throughout the summer, villages across Malta and Gozo celebrate their patron saints' feast days. These festas are marked by fireworks, processions, brass bands, and decorations lining the streets.

Carnival: Held before Lent, Malta's Carnival is a week-long celebration featuring elaborate floats, costumes, and dances. The tradition dates back hundreds of years and is a lively, festive time for everyone on the island.

Holy Week and Easter: Reflecting Malta's strong Catholic heritage, Holy Week is observed with solemn processions and rituals. Easter Sunday, however, is a joyful celebration with church bells, feasting, and children receiving chocolate eggs.

Conclusion

The cultural heritage of Malta is a living, breathing part of the island that touches every aspect of life. From the languages spoken (Maltese and English) to the food, customs, and festivals, Malta's diverse influences are celebrated and preserved. Whether it's through enjoying a pastizz with friends, participating in a village festa, or simply walking through the historic streets, the spirit of Malta is experienced in its rich traditions and vibrant daily life.

What contributions does Malta make to the Commonwealth, and how does being a member benefit the country?

Malta, a small but vibrant island nation in the Mediterranean Sea, plays a unique and important role in the Commonwealth of Nations today. The Commonwealth is a group of 54 countries that work together to promote peace, democracy, and development based on their shared history and culture, mostly from being former territories of the British Empire. Let's explore how Malta contributes to this international organization and the benefits it gains from being a member.

Malta's Contributions to the Commonwealth

Diplomacy and Dialogue: Malta is often seen as a bridge between different cultures and regions, thanks to its strategic location and history. It has used its position to encourage dialogue and cooperation between Commonwealth countries, especially on issues like climate change, education, and health. Malta's ability to bring diverse nations together for meaningful conversations is one of its key contributions.

Conferences and Meetings: Malta has hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) multiple times, most recently in 2015. These meetings are crucial for setting the Commonwealth's agenda and priorities. Hosting such events allows Malta to influence discussions on global issues, from environmental protection to economic development.

Promoting Small State Interests: Malta is one of the smaller states in the Commonwealth. It advocates for the interests and challenges of small island nations, including climate change, sustainable development, and ocean conservation. Malta's voice helps ensure that these critical issues stay at the forefront of the Commonwealth's efforts.

Benefits to Malta

International Influence: Being a member of the Commonwealth gives Malta a platform to participate in global discussions and decisions. This participation helps Malta influence international policy on issues that directly affect the island and its people, such as climate change and trade.

Economic Opportunities: The Commonwealth is a network that facilitates trade and investment between member countries. For Malta, this means access to markets and capital across the globe, which can boost its economy, create jobs, and encourage innovation.

Cultural and Educational Exchanges: Malta benefits from cultural and educational programs within the Commonwealth. Maltese students and professionals can take advantage of scholarships, exchanges, and training opportunities offered by other Commonwealth countries. These programs enrich Malta's educational and cultural landscape and open up new opportunities for its citizens.

Support for Development and Governance: Malta receives support from the Commonwealth in various areas, including strengthening its democratic institutions, enhancing environmental sustainability, and improving public services. This support helps Malta tackle its challenges more effectively and ensures better quality of life for its people.

In summary, Malta's role in the Commonwealth of Nations is marked by active participation and leadership in addressing global challenges. The country contributes significantly through diplomacy, hosting important meetings, and advocating for small states. In return, Malta enjoys various benefits, including increased international influence, economic opportunities, cultural and educational exchanges, and support for sustainable development. Being a member of the Commonwealth helps Malta strengthen its position on the world stage and enhances the well-being of its citizens.

How do these characteristics shape the lifestyle and economic activities of the Maltese people?

Malta is a small island nation located in the Mediterranean Sea, with unique environmental and geographical features that have a big influence on the daily life and economy of its people. Let's dive into what makes Malta special and how these features affect those who live there.

Environmental and Geographical Features

Island Nation: Malta consists of three main islands - Malta, Gozo, and Comino. Being surrounded by the sea means that Malta has a beautiful coastline with lots of beaches, which are enjoyed by both locals and tourists.

Climate: Malta has a Mediterranean climate, which means hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters. This sunny weather is perfect for outdoor activities all year round, from swimming in the summer to hiking in the winter.

Limited Natural Resources: Malta has limited natural resources, particularly fresh water and arable land. This scarcity has made the Maltese inventive in using what they have efficiently.

Unique Flora and Fauna: The islands have unique plants and animals, some of which are found nowhere else in the world. Conservation efforts are important to protect these species.

Impact on Lifestyle

Outdoor Living: The warm climate encourages an outdoor lifestyle. Many Maltese people enjoy spending time outside, whether it's on the beach, in public gardens, or at outdoor cafes.

Water Conservation: Because fresh water is scarce, Maltese people have become very good at conserving water. They use techniques like rainwater harvesting and desalination (turning sea water into drinking water) to meet their needs.

Agriculture: The limited arable land has influenced what crops can be grown. Traditional Maltese cuisine often features locally grown fruits and vegetables like tomatoes, olives, and citrus fruits, as well as seafood from the surrounding waters.

Impact on Economic Activities

Tourism: Malta's beautiful landscapes, historical sites, and warm climate make it a popular tourist destination. Tourism is a major part of the economy, providing jobs in hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions.

Shipping and Trade: Malta's location in the Mediterranean has made it an important hub for shipping and trade for centuries. Today, its ports are busy with cargo and cruise ships, contributing significantly to the economy.

Crafts and Manufacturing: The Maltese are known for their crafts, such as lace-making and glass-blowing. These traditional skills, along with newer manufacturing industries like electronics and pharmaceuticals, are important for the economy.

Fishing: Fishing has always been an important activity for the Maltese, with the surrounding sea providing a rich source of food. While it's not as big as tourism or manufacturing, fishing still contributes to the local diet and culture.

In summary, Malta's environmental and geographical features have a big influence on how people live and work on the islands. The warm climate encourages outdoor activities and tourism, while the scarcity of resources like water and arable land has led to innovative solutions and conservation efforts. Malta's economy benefits from its strategic location through tourism, shipping, and trade, while traditional crafts and fishing remain important parts of Maltese life.

Let us hear 5 to 10 new words about the topic to expand vocabulary

- **Arable Land:** Land that is suitable for growing crops.
- **Conservation:** The protection and preservation of natural resources and the environment.
- **Desalination:** The process of removing salt from seawater to make it safe for drinking and irrigation.
- **Ecosystem:** A community of living organisms and their physical environment interacting as a system.
- **Geographical:** Relating to the natural features, population, industries, etc., of a region.
- **Harvesting:** The process of gathering mature crops from the fields.
- **Indigenous:** Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native.
- **Maritime:** Connected with the sea, especially in relation to seafaring commercial or military activity.
- **Sustainable:** Using natural products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment.
- **Tourism:** The business of providing services such as transport, places to stay, or entertainment for people who are visiting a place for pleasure.

Let's try using these new words in sentences to see how they help us talk about the topic.

Now it's time to do a few tasks and think about what we just learned.

Tasks:

1. Writing Task: Write a short essay on how Malta's geography influences its culture and economy. Focus on aspects like climate, island life, and historical sites.
2. Listening Task: Listen to a podcast or watch a video documentary about a day in the life in Malta, focusing on cultural practices, language, and food. Note down interesting facts to share with the class.
3. Speaking Task: In pairs, discuss the differences and similarities between Malta and your own country's approach to education, holidays, and food. Prepare a short presentation to share your findings with the class.
4. Reading Task: Read an article about Malta's history and its path to independence and membership in the Commonwealth. Summarize the key points in a paragraph.

Once you have answered the tasks, this episode ends.

Here start the ideas for the teachers:

Ideas for the teacher

- Interactive Lecture: Introduce Malta with a focus on its location, significance in the Commonwealth, and cultural heritage. Use maps, photos, and videos to make the session engaging.
- Group Discussion: Facilitate a discussion on the impact of geography on culture and lifestyle, using Malta as a case study. Encourage students to share their thoughts on how Malta's island status influences its identity.
- Cultural Exchange Day: Organize a day where students can experience Maltese culture through food tasting, traditional music, and learning basic phrases in Maltese. If possible, invite a guest speaker from Malta.
- Environmental Debate: Host a classroom debate on the benefits and drawbacks of tourism in Malta, focusing on economic growth versus environmental preservation. This encourages critical thinking and persuasive speaking skills.
- Creative Project: Assign students to create a travel brochure or digital presentation about Malta, highlighting its attractions, Commonwealth heritage, and why it's a unique travel destination. Encourage creativity in design and content.