

While you listen

The *Britain is Great* series tells you about some of the things that make Britain so great. There's a lot of fun facts – and lots of good language, too. See if you can answer the questions while you watch the video.

Comprehension Task 1 - What topics do Richard and Roger talk about? Choose all the right answers.

- a) the number of items in the British Library
- b) how English has evolved over time
- c) the impact of Shakespeare on English
- d) the impact of the Industrial Revolution on English
- e) the impact of the Internet on English
- f) a famous printer
- g) the first dictionary of English
- h) the first text message ever sent
- i) the versatility of English

Comprehension Task 2 - Fill in the missing information with words or numbers from the video.

1. The British Library has existed for over _____ years.
2. Every year, they have to add _____ kilometres of shelves to house the new items.
3. The library has _____ items from all over the world.
4. A thousand years ago, English was similar to _____.

5. The first English book was printed about _____ years ago.
6. Chaucer wrote the first _____ in the English language.
7. Caxton spells the word French as both '_____' and 'Frenshe' on the same page.
8. A poem which dates from _____ uses 2 for 'to' and 4 instead of 'for', just like modern SMS language.

Language Task 1 - The nineteenth century poet wrote "I wrote 2 you b4", instead of 'I wrote to you before'. How good is your SMS English? Translate these messages into 'correct' English, one word in each space.

1. Luv u. C u l8r

I _____ . _____ .
_____ .

2. Ru OK? Pls call me asap.

_____ OK? _____ call me
_____ .

3. My hols wr gr8 - & yrs?

My _____ - _____
_____ ?

4. Wld u like dnr 2nite?

_____ like _____ ?

5. I need 2 c u b4 I leave.

I need _____
I leave .

Language Task 2 - Richard says 'The British Library's collection just keeps on growing'. 'Keep on' is a phrasal verb that means 'continue'. Choose the best phrasal verb in these sentences - the first six are from the video.

1. Extra shelves have to be _____ every year.
 a) built up
 b) got in
 c) made up
 d) put up

2. The British Library is a good place to come to _____ about the English language.
 a) find out
 b) look up
 c) pick up
 d) sort out

3. We have documents here that _____ a thousand years.
 a) go back
 b) date from
 c) take on
 d) turn up

4. In Shakespeare's period, printing had already _____ .
 a) come across
 b) come in
 c) ended up
 d) turned out

5. William Caxton later _____ to print Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

- a) came out
- b) got on
- c) turned up
- d) went on

6. William Caxton often had to _____ how to spell words himself.

- a) call up
- b) get across
- c) make up
- d) see to

7. Texts written in Old English are very hard to read, and it can be difficult to _____ the meaning.

- a) get into
- b) work out
- c) take on
- d) turn out

8. Many changes have _____ in the English language since the Internet was invented.

- a) broken out
- b) come about
- c) gone through
- d) got on

9. You've spelt 'necessary' wrong. You've _____ the second 's'.

- a) left over
- b) missed out
- c) taken off
- d) turned out

10. SMS language has really _____ in the last ten years - everyone understands the more common abbreviations now, even my mum!

- a) broken out
- b) caught on
- c) grown up
- d) taken up

Comprehension Task 1: a; b; d; e; f; i;
Comprehension Task 2: 1.250; 2.12; 3.150 million; 4.German; 5. 500; 6.best-seller; 7.Frensshe; 8. 1867/the nineteenth century;
Language Task 1: 1. I love you. See you later.; 2. Are you OK? Please call as soon as possible.; 3. My holidays were great - and yours?;
4. Would you like dinner tonight?; 5. I need to see you before I leave.
Language Task 2: 1.d; 2.a; 3.a; 4.b; 5.d; 6.c; 7.b; 8.b; 9.b; 10.b